

Sirens to stay as they are

Written by Chris Lee

Safety became the big player in Holyoke City Council members' decision to keep the daily sirens just as they are and not include anything on the ballot.

Options of different wordings for ballot questions were discussed, but then it was mentioned the sirens would need to be tested regularly to ensure they were all working properly for fire and tornadoes.

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Tillie Fisbeck said someone called the city office to alert them the siren on the west side of town located on Walsh Ave. was not working at all recently. This brought concern to council members.

With the recent problem concerning one of the sirens, council members decided to not even toy with the idea of eliminating the daily sirens.

The idea of having the sirens only go off one time a day was raised but with the current system, it is either all three times or none.

City Supt. Mark Brown said city crews can test the downtown whistle regularly to ensure it is in working order.

Application for grant is tabled

A request to pursue a grant for the purchase of an X26 Taser and training for the code enforcement officer was tabled for further discussion at Tuesday's meeting. The deadline for the grant is at a later date, and the council still has time to discuss it.

The use of mace and pepper spray was discussed and the effectiveness against dogs. The idea for getting the taser is to use against dogs.

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City Attorney Al Wall said he has seen different lawsuits pop up with other cities as a direct result from code enforcement officers using tasers and said it wouldn't be a good idea.

Reports of city officials

Mayor David Nygaard said he was contacted by someone concerning the intersection of S. Interocean Ave. and Emerson St. Emerson used to be a one-way street heading away from Interocean Ave.

Visibility is poor when numerous vehicles are parked along the street, making it difficult to pull safely onto Interocean Ave. from either East or West Emerson St.

Police Chief Phil Biersdorfer said there hasn't been an accident at the intersection for a while. "That could be because we raised everyone's awareness," he added.

Nygaard just wanted to make council members aware of the concern and said it is something they can be thinking about.

Wall said he would like to see a committee formed to look into the medical marijuana issue. He said things will need to be looked at soon as the moratorium date looms and dispensaries are beginning to appear in neighboring counties.

"We're going to be faced with addressing this so we need to start looking at some of the different ideas," Wall said.

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Those appointed to the committee were Wall, Biersdorfer, J.C. Peckham and Kevin Scott. They will keep an eye on legislation regarding medical marijuana.

Concern with progress on the library was reported by Orville Tonsing. He attended one of the library board meetings to address the issue and said the board is concerned with the progress of the restoration project. Weather is a major factor, Tonsing said. Applying paint in cold weather is not a good idea, and he said they want to see it done correctly.

Other business

In other business Feb. 16, council members:

—accepted travel requests for for Phil Biersdorfer to attend ICS 300 training and for Kathy Olofson to attend the CEBT regional renewal conference in Sterling.

—held a 35-minute executive session for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations.