



Dunkirk project delayed

Permits were submitted to the state April 2

Mary Freda, Reporter

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DUNKIRK — Residents who were looking to eat at Firehouse BBQ this spring might need to find an alternative.

Dunkirk City Council on Monday discussed the progress of the project in the former Todd Opera House building.

It also approved donations and tabled ordinance changes.

After the city awarded \$75,000 to Todd Opera Building Group in May 2017, some of the construction hasn't moved forward because lack of permits.

During the Feb. 12 council meeting, Mayor Gene Ritter said Ray Willey — a co-developer and part of the project — told council that contractors were moving forward with cleaning the brick and installing wainscoting, but were holding off on installing plumbing and electricity until they received county permits.

Originally, council member Jack Robbins said it would take three to four weeks for the county permits to get approved. Ritter said the county permits were approved.

However, state permits were not submitted until April 2. Now, the state permits will take five to six weeks to come through, he added.

Two 2,550-square-foot restaurants will occupy the downtown Dunkirk building by July 2020, according to the agreement.

In November 2017, Wiley said he anticipated having Firehouse BBQ in one half of the building by spring 2018 and a Mexican restaurant in the other half by 2019.

Also Monday, council members Jesse Bivens, Bryan Jessup, Tom Johnson and Robbins, absent Lisa Street, approved various donations, including a \$500-donation to A Better Life – Brianna's Hope; \$100 to West Jay Community Center for its summer camp, which begins June 4; and a \$500 general donation to Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department.

Additionally, council tabled two ordinance changes. During its February council meetings, council discussed amending an ordinance that put all of Dunkirk City Pool's funds in the park department's non-reverting funds. The non-reverting funds come from user fees, which help pay for capital improvement projects.

However, city attorney Wes Schemenaur pointed out that the ordinance, which was approved in 2010, wasn't in compliance with state statute because the concession stand funds went into the non-reverting fund as well.

The issue was tabled Monday and moved to the agenda for the April 23 meeting so Schemenaur can provide council with a clean copy of the ordinance.

Council also discussed amending the city's ordinance regarding its board of public works and safety. In 1984, council passed an ordinance that required the board include:

- The mayor



- Two council members

While council members would like to retain one council member on the board, it indicated Monday that it would like to follow Indiana Code 36-4-9-8, which says the board should include:

- The city executive (the mayor)
- Two or four persons appointed by the executive.

Council plans to vote on the amended ordinance, which will say the board will consist of the mayor, an appointed person and a city council member, during the April 23 meeting.

Currently Ritter, Robbins and Mike Shannon serve on the board.

In other business, council:

- Heard from Bivens, who gave a reminder that there will be a public hearing at 3 p.m. April 16 in the city building regarding Dunkirk's stormwater project.
- OK'd spending no more than \$1,500 on a new couch for Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department.
- Approved a \$13,112 pump repair from Peerless Midwest.
- Agreed to host the Dunkirk Fire Department boot drive from 3 to 5 p.m. April 27.
- Heard from Robbins the S595 Bobcat is anticipated to arrive Tuesday morning. Robbins said during the summer the Bobcat will be used to help fill potholes and grate alleyways.
- Approved spending \$3,347 on new computers for the clerk's office from Progressive Office Products in Portland and \$2,249 for a security system from Secret Security Systems in Portland for the city building. The system will include cameras and a panic button.
- Adjusted two water bills.
- Approved claims totaling \$121,542.92.

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