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Council delays action on liquor license request

By Jim Rudisill

There are some things that seem to make natural combinations, but a proposal to seek a liquor license for an auto parts store caused some bewilderment for Columbus Junction city officials during the city council's regular June 23rd meeting.

Mayor Dan Wilson reported that Antonio Sosa was applying for the license for his New York Dollar Auto Parts Store, which Wilson said Sosa planned to open in a building located south of the viaduct previously owned by Ross Masonholder. Wilson indicated the combination did not seem appropriate. "It seems like a strange combination (and) I have some concerns about a liquor license for an auto parts store," he told the council.

Sosa's identification on the liquor license application that the business would be a convenience store, created more uncertainty; as did the application's design plan, which included restaurant and bar facilities.

Wilson's concerns were shared by council members Phil Kaalberg and Hal Prior, who agreed the combination and the varying descriptions of the business left quite a few questions unanswered. "I'd like him to come to the council and explain," Kaalberg said, explaining Sosa's proposal could open the door for other unusual requests. "I'm not crazy setting a precedent," he said. Prior agreed he was not in any rush to see more places in the community selling liquor. "We're probably leading the state in per capita number of liquor licenses," he told the council, adding he did not favor granting a license for an auto parts store.

Council member Mark Huston wondered if the council's opinions would mean anything if it turned down Sosa's application. "He can appeal to the state," he pointed out.

Council member Curt Pierce also did not want to immediately turn thumbs down to Sosa's application, pointing out the location of the proposed business could help that area of town. "It would be nice to have it developed," he said, adding he was not eager to see more bars in the community. "We don't want a bunch of (bars) in town, but it is a nice business," he said.

Pierce's mild defense of the application led to some good-natured ribbing over his family's furniture and mortuary business. "I never understood how furniture and (funeral directors went together)," Prior said. "Yeah, but we never sold liquor," Pierce quickly replied. "Maybe (Sosa's proposal) is just ahead of its time," Huston added.



Area on Main Street proposed for combination auto parts store and bar

Wilson agreed the city needed to keep an open mind, but that would mean a better description of how Sosa intended to operate the new business. "We're not trying to step on any toes, but I think we need more information," he told the council. City clerk Julie Heindel said she would contact officials with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division to discuss Sosa's application. The council agreed to table action on the application until Heindel reports on her query.

In other action, the council agreed to authorize Wilson to apply for funding to upgrade the city's levee system. City officials want to raise the existing levee to provide greater flood control on the Iowa River. However, a request for funds to the Iowa Department of Economic Development was turned down several months ago.

Wilson has been seeking other potential funding sources and identified programs through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Services Agency and the State of Iowa Jobs Program as two potential funding sources.

"Sooner or later (the levee improvement) must be done," Wilson said, adding the recent rainy weather only increases the potential for new flooding. He said initial discussions with Rural Services personnel have been promising. Prior said the city needed to act. "The levee problem won't go away and I'd hate to have

(flooding) in a couple of years because we didn't apply," he said. Council member Dave Duncan agreed. "It doesn't cost anything to apply," he said. Wilson said he would continue researching the potential applications and would keep the city council informed on his actions.

The council also agreed to hire French-Reneker, Fairfield, to complete survey work on a property where the city intends to relocate its water treatment plant. The survey is expected to cost around \$2700. Wilson said the survey would provide officials with the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, which is handling the administration of nearly \$4 million in grant funding for the project, with the necessary information to move forward with land acquisition.

In final action, the council met with Jim Gabriel, chair of the city's new parks and recreation board to discuss possible recreation development projects in the community. "There are some really neat spots and we are in charge of keeping them looking good and making them better," he told the council. He pointed out the board was now investigating park rule signs, upgrading the new buyout properties along Fifth Street and other areas. Gabriel said that could include soccer fields, sand volleyball and basketball courts and other facilities.

The board also received a community development report from Nitzia Lopez and assistant Nina Ortiz. The two updated the council on a new Spanish-language brochure recently completed by Jorge Malagon, Columbus High School Spanish teacher and his students. "It was something the kids wanted to do," Ortiz explained.

Other activities highlighted in their report included:

- * SRI grant, which provides training opportunities for Lopez and community development board director Mallory Smith;

- * Update on the farmers market and distribution of grant funds to vendors to improve signage and other marketing efforts;

- * Plans by Smith to meet July 8 with Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission officials to launch a Resource Enhancement and Protection grant application to fund park and trail improvements;

- * Working with several agencies to begin new English as a Second Language classes for the Burmese community;

- * Discussing business improvement ideas with the owners of the Columbus City market and Fulton Ct. Apartments;

- * Discussed with school officials possible community development programs that could complement the school's efforts to improve student achievement.

Just a few thoughts on the Farmers' Market

A great crowd on hand last Friday at the Market

By Mary Wilson

I went to the Farmer's Market last Friday night, and it was a happening place. Food, people, laughter, great smells—what more could anybody want on a sunny evening in downtown Columbus Junction?

Then I started to look around. There were some new additions. Some guy was grilling spare ribs, hot dogs, and sandwich meat. There were people with food on a stick—mangoes and sweet corn. The baked goods around made my mouth water. The vegetables and fruits from local gardens were absolutely beautiful. Then there were the flowers, herbs, and spices. I felt like I was in Des Moines at the State Fair!

Next I noticed that several people were walking around eating, including me. I had purchased some fresh pineapple that had lemon juice squeezed over it with some kind of spice sprinkled on it. I loved it! Then I saw a fruit salad, with fresh strawberries and other fruits with a special topping in a bowl ready to eat. I wanted to buy it, but I was afraid it would spill in my car on the way

home. I also wanted to buy the sweet corn on a stick that was covered in something with a cheese sprinkle on it; but again I didn't know how to get it home.

I got to thinking. Why don't people just come here for a meal? But how do you eat all this wonderful food here? Maybe the answer is bring your own table and chairs. Yes, I know that sounds like a lot of work, but think about it. Just throw your card table or small fold-up table and a few lawn chairs in the trunk or back of your vehicle. Bring a few paper plates, plastic silverware, and have a picnic at the farmer's market. If you really want to get into this big time, call your friends and fill your table. There is no sense eating alone! You could even get fancy if you want to work at it: have real plates and silver, a tablecloth, flowers (which you could buy there).

I can just imagine it now. Tables of people in downtown CJ, passing from booth to booth, planning their meal, eating in courses. And what a meal it would be! Then dessert—you wouldn't know where to begin. Friendship, visiting with all sorts or people, laughter, great food, being outside. That's what living in a small town is all about. Just a thought.



Vendors and customers meet at the Market last Friday

Cotter Alumni Banquet

The Cotter Graduating Class of 1947 will host the Cotter Alumni, and spouses, on Sunday afternoon, July 25th, at the Senior Center in Columbus Junction, starting at 1 p.m. Also invited are those students who were juniors, sophomores and freshmen in 1957, who graduated from Columbus Junction in 1958, 1959, and 1960. There will be a short meeting, refreshments and reminiscing. We encourage all alumni to contact classmates and other graduates to make sure everyone gets the message.

Wapello All-Alumni Banquet

The planning committee for the Wapello All-Alumni Banquet needs to know if any graduates did not receive letters regarding the July 17 event. Anyone who did not get the letter is asked to contact Jean Brauns at 319-523-3462 or by email at bjbrauns@mchsi.com or Paula Buckman at pbuckman@louisacomm.net. The letters are needed for making reservations.

Turn to Page 6 for all the 4th of July events in Louisa County

Briefly -

Columbus City changes council date

Columbus City will hold their regular July Council meeting on Wednesday, July 7, 2010, at 6 p.m., at City Hall, due to the 4th of July holiday.

This week at the Farmers' Market

The Columbus Junction Farmers' Market is held Fridays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. through October 8 at the American Legion parking lot, 99 Second St., Columbus Junction. The market features regional vendors selling Iowa-grown produce, plants, baked goods, eggs, snacks, crafts and more. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, IFMNP/WIC checks, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition checks and Louisa Bucks are welcome. Buy local and taste the difference! This week we'll have free CJ Farmers' Market refrigerator magnets thanks to the community Foundation of Louisa County and free marigold seeds courtesy of Keep Columbus Beautiful.

Gazette early deadline

Due to the 4th of July Holiday deadlines for news and advertising for next week's Gazette will be at Noon on Friday.

4th of July sanitation routes

In observance of the Fourth of July holiday, all Rueckert Sanitation routes scheduled for Monday, July 5th will be picked up on Tuesday, July 6, 2010. Customers are asked to set their garbage out for an early Tuesday morning pickup. Have a safe and enjoyable 4th of July.

No Visual Support Group meeting

There will be no Louisa County Visual Support Group in July due to the many activities surrounding Chief Wapello Days. We will continue our meetings on the third Thursday in August.

Conservation Center closed for 4th

In observance of the 4th of July Holiday, the Conservation Education Center at Marr Park will be closed Monday, July 5th. The Washington County Conservation Board wishes everyone a fun, safe holiday weekend. We hope you find some time to get out and enjoy our parks!

Red Cross swimming lessons

Red Cross lessons begin Tuesday, July 6th at the pool. Lessons are from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., July 6th – 16th. Cost is \$30.00; please register at the pool prior to Tuesday. This is a good opportunity to provide your children with the chance to learn how to swim. Class sizes will be small.

Roundy Library open for summer

Every Wednesday through the end of July, the Roundy Elementary library will be open from 9:00 a.m.-12:30p.m. Kids can come in to check out books or sit and read.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark club will meet Thursday July 8th at 11:30 a.m. at Johnnie "B" in Wapello. Please note the change of date.

Business accounting classes

Keep track of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves. Attend a small business accounting class and learn how to use Quick Books software to keep track of your pennies and dollars. As a result your business will run more profitably and be easier on your nerves. The Iowa Small Business Development Center at Southeastern Community College is partnering with Louisa County Extension and LIFE Microlending to offer a Basic Business Accounting course. Two five-week sessions will be held: Wednesdays, June 30-August 4 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the Columbus Junction Community Development Center, 232 Second St. and Wednesdays, August 25 through September 22 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Louisa County Extension office, 317 Van Buren, Wapello. There is a materials fee of \$15. To register, or for more information please contact Louisa County Extension at 319-523-2371.

Meeting set to help with down payment assistance

Louisa County is applying for dollars that will assist low to moderate income families with rehabilitation and down payment assistance. This is part of the Great River Housing Trust Fund's application to the Iowa Finance Authority. A meeting is scheduled for Thursday July 1st at 7:00 p.m. in the Morning Sun City Council Chambers at City Hall, 11 East Division Street. Representatives from the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) and the Great River Housing Trust Fund will be available to explain the program. Such items as to who is eligible, what work items can be done to homes, the application/verification procedure, and other program procedures will be discussed. If you have any questions, please call Dan Eberhardt of the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (753-5107).

2010 County Fair dates set

The dates for the 2010 Louisa County Fair are: July 24 - Parade and Fair Kickoff; and Fair - dates July 26-31. Dates for the Iowa State Fair are August 12-22.

Wyman School Alumni Banquet

The 75th Wyman School Alumni Banquet will be held on Saturday July 10, 2010 in the United Church of Crawfordsville with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. and the banquet starting at 6:30 p.m. all alumni, former school employees, anyone who ever attended Wyman School, and all other friends who have an interest in the school and community are invited to attend. The committee is planning on a record attendance in recognition of this very special occasion, 75 years of Wyman Alumni Banquets! Honored classes will be 1940, 1950, and 1955.

For more information, or to make reservations, please call Frieda Finke 319-658-2316 before June 30.

The class of 1956 was the last to graduate from Wyman High School before the school became a part of the Winfield-Mt. Union School District. The Wyman School building was then used as an elementary center for the WMU School District until it was closed in 1978.