

Colonial Heights in City's Urban Renewal Plan

By Jim Rudisill

An urban renewal plan established in 2000 was amended by the Columbus Junction City Council during its January 27 meeting. Under the amendment, a planned nine-unit assisted living facility being constructed near the Colonial Manor will be included in the plan. The council acted following a public hearing on the proposal. There were no public comments submitted during the hearing.

The original urban renewal plan was established as part of the Colonial Heights subdivision project. Development of the plan eventually led to the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, which was used to construct street, sewer and water improvements. Under a TIF, as properties are developed, the increase in the property taxes are used to repay the cost of constructing infrastructure. Officials said TIFs normally expire in 10 years, although communities can request a five-year extension.

In addition to approving the urban renewal expansion at its meeting last week, the council also approved the first reading and waived the two required additional readings of an ordinance to extend the TIF district to the expanded area. The council must still hold a public hearing on the TIF extension and then give final approval to that proposal. The public hearing was set for February 10.

Council member Mark Huston, who is a member of the Colonial Heights Board of Directors, said the estimated cost for the assisted living facility would be \$1 million. He abstained from voting on the proposals presented to the council.

In other action, the council approved a reimbursement agreement with Joe Reid, who was recently hired as a city police officer. Under



Progress to date at Colonial Heights Assisted Living Facility

the agreement, the city will cover the cost for Reid to attend the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. If Reid leaves the city's employment within four years, he would be required to repay a portion of the tuition cost under a graduated scale.

The council also agreed to hold a public hearing on its 2010-2011 budget on February 24.

In final action, Mayor Dan Wilson said he had received information from the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) advising him the city's application for federal funding to construct a new water treatment plant was apparently

progressing.

Wilson said a review period for the project had recently passed, but an additional review period had now started. He said the additional review should be completed in the next couple of weeks. However, he was not convinced that would be the end of the reviews.

"I assume some time in mid February we'll get another email saying it's under another review," he said, adding however the news did show the city's application was still pro-

gressing.

Council member Hal Prior also announced the SEIRPC had recently met to discuss the city's rental property concerns. Prior said one issue discussed was establishing an occupancy permit. Other officials also indicated inspections, training and other concerns might also be under review.

Officials said the commission and the city would continue the discussions.

Estate planning classes offered

The topic of Farm and Family Estate Planning is one that is sometimes thought about, seldom discussed among the family, and often put off for a rainy day. Whether people have done some sort of estate planning in the past, have never done any estate planning, or are planning on doing an estate plan, now would be a good time to act. An introductory seminar, provided free to you thanks to sponsorship from the Wapello Branch of the Iowa State Bank, will be held on February 11th at 6:00 pm at the Louisa County Extension West Wing Meeting Room.

The present estate planning laws are about to be addressed in congress and you will probably hear a lot more about what they might do as 2010 progresses. Now is a good time to review what might have been done in the past and make plans for what needs to be done in the future. Not doing anything is really saying that

you agree with what the State of Iowa inheritance laws have already planned for your possessions.

The program deals with the importance of estate planning and helps prepare you for an action plan. Knowing who to go to and what questions to ask will provide you with a good plan at a reasonable cost.

This workshop will prepare you to start the process of ensuring that your property is passed to the next generation intact. Advance registration is recommended by calling the Louisa County Extension Office at 319-523-2371. Registration is free, thanks to Iowa State Bank, but optional workbooks will be \$5.00 each and available the night of the class. The fees for service will be used to offset direct expenses and to support the Louisa County Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Program.

JEL members expose truth



Middle school and high school students from Columbus and Wapello schools gathered Friday night to share an important message with spectators at the Varsity basketball game between Columbus and L-M. During halftime, a dozen members of JEL from the Wapello and Columbus chapters took the stage (or gym floor, as it were) to inform the audience about some of the chemicals found in tobacco smoke. While two students read aloud the names of some of the cancer-causing chemicals to the audience, other members held up other props to represent other products in which those chemicals can be found, such as rat poison, nail polish remover, moth balls, and even gasoline. Once the audience was informed of the chemicals found in cigarette smoke, more students took over the gym wearing gas masks, gloves, and Tyvek suits. Their job was to clean up the mess of chemicals left on the gym floor, just as it is the job of JEL to "clean up" Iowa schools and communities by informing youth and community members about the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure. After the performance, JEL members were on hand in the student center to answer questions about JEL membership and resources available to help tobacco users end their addiction. For more information about JEL in Louisa County, contact Kaitlyn Wintermeyer, Tobacco Control Project Coordinator for Louisa County Extension at 319-523-2371 or kmwinter@iastate.edu.

There is still time to give to United Fund

Have you made your annual donation to United Fund of Columbus Junction yet? As the local United Fund celebrates 50 years in the community, the goal this year is to collect and distribute \$20,000. Although there is still \$3,000 to be raised, the shortfall is not unusual. It simply takes time to reach hundreds of community members with information about how to give and where the money goes.

Each year United Fund gathers thousands of dollars from community members and distributes the money to non-profit organizations. Beneficiaries include Friends of the Library, fire departments, the senior center and the Columbus pool. The funding these organizations receive is used to address the very important issues of education, safety, health and recreation; the very things which make our community a great place to raise a family and enjoy retirement.

The money which United Fund gives away each year starts with donations, not necessarily large ones. The majority of contributions take the form of payroll deductions made by employees at Tyson, Columbus Schools and other area employers including those in other counties. United Fund supporters pledge to have a small amount deducted from their checks each pay period which result in annual donations averaging \$25 to \$100. Please check with your human resources department if you would like to give in this convenient way. United Ways in Muscatine, Iowa City and Johnson County of-

ten serve as intermediaries collecting donations and passing them on to United Fund of Columbus Junction quarterly.

Another source of donations is local businesses. Our two banks lead the effort with donations of \$500 each. They are joined by retailers, grocers, car dealers, restaurateurs and more. You may become part of this cycle of giving by patronizing your local businesses so they may have money to give.

Lastly, many families and individuals make philanthropy a part of their household routine. They provide financial support weekly, monthly or annually to organizations and causes they believe in. United Fund of Columbus is fortunate to have many such supporters. By pooling donations and dividing the larger amount, United Fund allows an individual or family to support more organizations than they might otherwise be able to on their own.

If you have not already made a donation to the 2010 United Fund of Columbus Junction campaign please consider participating. Together we can have a great impact on the community. You may give, by contacting your employer about payroll deductions, or you may contact any United Fund board member. The board members are: Phil Kaalberg, John Carpenter, Mallory Smith, Nitza Castillo, Tessa Pugh, Carlotta Ramirez and Sue O'Donnell. Donations can be mailed to United Fund, PO Box 263, Columbus Junction, IA 52738.

Tri-Rivers Foundation Auction set

The Fourth Annual Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation Auction will be held Saturday, February 27 at Delzell Brothers at the intersection of Highways 78 and 61. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the auction and program begin at 7:00.

Proceeds from the auction benefit Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation. For nineteen years the foundation has worked to provide financial support to projects primarily in the areas of environmental education, park improvements and public awareness. Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation is currently fund raising to provide matching funds for a fed-

eral Scenic Byways grant awarded to the Louisa Interpretive Center project.

Tickets are \$15/person or \$25/couple and are available in advance from board members and Louisa County Conservation as well as at the door. Admission includes appetizers and dessert buffet, wine, beer and a bid number.

To order tickets or for more information contact Mallory Smith, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation at 319-527-4530, 319-321-3808 or tririvers@lccb.org. For more information and an auction list visit www.tririvers.org.

Briefly -

Legion Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet on Tuesday evening, February 9th at 7 p.m., at the home of Kathleen Sands. Please remember to bring two cans of food to be taken to the food pantry.

CWO Prince and Princess of Hearts

The Columbus Women's Organization is looking for candidates for their annual Prince and Princess of Hearts Contest. Children 0-5 years of age are eligible for the contest, which will run from Friday, January 29th through Friday, February 12, 2010. Deadline for entry and photos is Wednesday, January 27th at noon with all entry material delivered to Twyla Peters at the Columbus Medical Clinic, or Kirsten Shellabarger at Horak Insurance. Prince and Princess of Hearts will be determined by the largest amount of money donations in that child's name at these locations: Columbus Junction State Bank, The Community Bank and the Econ-O-Mart, between Friday, January 29th through Friday, February 12th, 2010. The Prince and Princess will be crowned on Saturday, February 13th, 2010 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the American Legion in Columbus Junction. The winners will each receive a \$50 Savings Bond donated by Community Bank and the Columbus Junction State Bank, and get to ride in the Columbus Day parade. **MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN!** All proceeds from the contest benefit the Senior Girls Dinner, annually sponsored by the C.W.O.

Walk for Exercise at Roundy

Do you walk for exercise, would you like to walk inside? Roundy Elementary School is open to the public for anyone that wishes to walk inside. The school's hallways are open from 6:00 - 7:30 a.m. and 3:45 - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday whenever school is in session. There is no need to call before coming, but if you have questions, please give the school a call at 319-728-6218.

Embroidery Club to meet

The Embroidery Club will again meet this month at OUR SHOP. The Afternoon group will meet Wednesday, February 3rd at 1:00 PM until 4:00 pm. We will be fishing up hardanger, so be thinking what you want to do next. The evening group will meet February 15th from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. We will still be working on hardanger. Anyone is welcome to this. Call Carol at 319-728-5648 if you would like to come.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, February 9th, at 1:30 p.m., at the Columbus City Methodist Church. Hostesses are Martha Murry and Arlene Buckman. Program: Mallory Smith - What's Going On. Roll Call: It's going to be a surprise.

Reception planned for David Jamison

A reception, hosted by Karen Elkin, will be held for David Jamison, Story County Treasurer, running for State Treasurer of Iowa, on Thursday, Feb. 4th in the Board of Supervisors office, at the courthouse. It will be held from 5:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Area Legislative forums

A Legislative Forum will be held on Saturday, February 6, 2009, with Senators Jim Hahn and Tom Courtney and Representatives Tom Sands, Jeff Kauffmann and Nathan Reichert. Location: The Muscatine Community College Student Center from 9:00 - 10:30 AM. A Legislative Forum will be held on Saturday, February 6, 2009, with Senator Tom Courtney and Representative Tom Sands at the State Bank of Wapello Community Room from 11:15 AM to 12:15 PM.

Pleasant Grove Church supper

Pleasant Grove Community Church is having their annual Sausage and Pancake Supper today, Wednesday, February 3rd, from 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Join us for a night of fellowship and good food, as we hope to see everyone there. Free Will Offering.

Post Prom Committee to meet

Parents of Columbus High School Juniors who are interested in helping with the Post Prom are encouraged to attend a meeting at the Student Center on Wednesday, February 10th at 6:30 p.m. Contact Linda Pierce at 728-7483 if you have questions.

Legion Fish and Chicken Fry

The American Legion will be holding a fish and chicken fry on Saturday, February 13, 2010 at the Legion Building. Serving will be from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The price is \$8.00.

School Board to meet

The Columbus School Board will meet on Monday, February 8, 2010, at 6:30 p.m. at the Roundy Elementary School Library.

Pheasants Forever Banquet

The Pheasants Forever Banquet will be held on Saturday, February 6th at the Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds. Doors will open at 4:00 p.m., with dinner at 6:00 p.m. There will be a live and silent auction, games and raffles. All proceeds will benefit habitat for pheasants. Tickets are available at the door.

Women's Health Luncheon

A Women's Health Luncheon will be held March 6th at 12 noon in the East Room of the Corner Market, 340 North 2nd, Wapello.

Mexican Supper for Guatemala

A Mexican Supper, hosted by Ruben Zuniga and his family will be held on Saturday, February 6, at the Catholic Church Basement in Columbus Junction. Ruben Zuniga, has been making an annual trip to Guatemala with the surgical staff he works with at the University of Iowa, to perform free cleft lip/palette surgeries on local children. Although many of the expenses for the trip are paid by generous sponsors, Ruben still has some expenses for the trip. In order to raise money to help cover those expenses, he and his family are serving the Mexican Supper. Serving is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. Families are welcome to eat-in or take-out. The cost for each meal is \$5.50 for adults and \$3.50 for a child's plate. The meal will feature chicken taquitos and/or beef and bean tostados, rice, beans, a drink and a dessert. To call-in an order, the church kitchen number is 728-2810. Any proceeds left over from Ruben's expenses will go to families in Guatemala.

Fredonia City meetings

All Fredonia city meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month at city hall beginning at 5:30 p.m. Sewer and trash bills are due by the 20th of each month. If they are not paid by the 20th, a \$25 late charge will be assessed. If you have any questions regarding city business, Mayor Al Sonderberg can be contacted at 563-571-0226.