

September 25, 2024

A special meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 111 N. Wood River Avenue, with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Clerk called the roll and reported that the following members were:

PRESENT: David Ayres  
Bill Dettmers  
Jeremy Plank  
Scott Tweedy  
Tom Stalcup

and that a quorum was present and in attendance.

CITIZEN/CITY OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Bill Rogers stated that he thinks it would be a good idea if the Citizen Comments section of the agenda was listed after Presentations because that might help answer some of the questions that people may have. He asked if the improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians will be handicap accessible. He stated that if they are not handicap accessible, they will not be compliant with the ADA. He asked that if the City is doing this to bring foot traffic to Downtown Wood River, what will be the draw. He stated that people will not go downtown if there is not anything to draw them there. He stated that the City needs to work simultaneously not only to do the improvements for the bicyclists and pedestrians so that there will be more foot traffic but there also needs to be improvements done to attract businesses to the downtown area. He stated that throwing money at developers who pull out of the projects before they are completed accomplishes nothing. Lastly, Mr. Rogers would like to know where the City's portion of the cost is coming from. He stated that when this project came up before, the City claimed lack of funds. He wants to know what changed. He also asked how safe the projected improvements will be.

City Manager Steve Palen introduced Scott Dunakey from Heartlands Conservancy who has been assisting the City with the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Grant Application.

Scott Dunakey explained that this is Phase 3 of the City of Wood River's Streetscape Project. He then gave a presentation on the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Grant Application showing the improvements that have been suggested and what will be submitted with the grant application. The presentation is available in the City Clerk's Office at City Hall.

Councilman Dettmers asked if the area being presented is from Wood River Avenue to Fourth Street. Mr. Dunakey explained that the new sidewalk will be from Second Street to Fourth Street, but the rest of the streetscape improvements will go from Haller Street to Fourth Street.

Discussion ensued regarding how the project that is being presented tonight is separate from the City of Wood River's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. However, the goal is to have the paths connect as the bicycle pedestrian network that was laid out in the City's plan starts filling in. Mr. Dunakey explained that the project being presented tonight is a shared bike lane on Ferguson Avenue making it a safer environment for bicyclists. City Manager Steve Palen explained that eventually the plan is for the Wood River Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan to go from the Confluence Trail all the way to Belk Park. More discussion ensued regarding why the streetscape will end at Fourth Street. City Manager Steve Palen explained that the Downtown Business District ends at Fourth Street per the City's Zoning Map.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of light poles that will have the light fixtures upgraded versus the new poles that will go in and will belong to the City from Second Street to Fourth Street.

Mr. Dunakey explained that the funding baseline for this grant program is 80% grant, 20% local match. The project has a few ineligible costs including the downtown gateway sign and trash receptacles totaling around \$150,000.00. He also explained that the Illinois Department of Transportation offers what they call local match assistance. The qualifying community score changes every round because they cannot compute the scores until they get the applications. Based off the City's score in 2022, the City would have automatically qualified for a full match meaning IDOT would cover the City's match expenses. There is an excellent opportunity here for the City of Wood River. More discussion ensued

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regarding the total cost of the project that the City would be responsible for, when the money is due, and how the grant is a reimbursable grant. Mr. Dunakey explained that if the City qualifies for the full match, the City's portion would be around \$150,000.00, which are the ineligible costs versus the City paying 20% plus the ineligible costs for the project.

Councilman Dettmers asked Director of Public Services Michael Velloff if the City has replaced any sidewalks from Second Street to Fourth Street during the current sidewalk project. Director Velloff replied in the negative. It was confirmed that the sidewalks that are part of this project will be ADA accessible as it is a grant requirement.

The deadline for the grant application is Monday, September 30, 2024; however, Mr. Dunakey does not expect to know if the City will be awarded the grant until Spring 2025.

Councilman Dettmers asked what the intended benefit is for this project other than the new sidewalks. Mr. Dunakey explained that one of the key things that is hindering further development in downtown is the City's transportation infrastructure so this project would address the transportation infrastructure making it safer and more attractive through downtown, which would in turn draw more people to downtown. It will also help with economic development. Councilman Dettmers asked what other types of projects the City should consider to benefit other areas of the City to attract businesses. Discussion ensued regarding the City's Comprehensive Plan and how the projects outlined in the plan are all good projects to help the entire City. It was confirmed that the Comprehensive Plan encompasses the entire City and is a goals-oriented document to help guide the City over the next twenty years. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is more project oriented as it lays out a bicycle and pedestrian system throughout the City and this streetscape project is sort of the start of that plan. The Comprehensive Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are both on the City's website at [www.woodriver.org](http://www.woodriver.org).

Councilman Dettmers stated that the 129 light poles that are currently located in the downtown area are owned by Ameren. Discussion ensued regarding the light fixtures needing to be updated and if the City should be responsible to replace them or if Ameren should be responsible. More discussion ensued regarding Ameren not allowing the City to hang banners for the Heroes Program on the poles located in the downtown area. Councilman Dettmers believes that if the City replaces the light fixtures, Ameren should allow the City to hang the banners on the poles. Mr. Dunakey explained Ameren's policy stating that if a municipality wants decorative poles, the municipality has to purchase the poles and would then be responsible for repairing and replacing the poles. The proposed project shows 48 new light poles being placed from Second Street to Fourth Street and there are currently 129 light poles that Ameren owns located in the downtown area. Discussion ensued regarding the City taking over the 129 poles so that banners can be hung on the poles in addition to 48 new poles being placed as a part of the proposed project. Councilman Ayres asked if switching to LED lights will save on the City's electric bill. City Manager Steve Palen replied in the affirmative.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2086: APPROVING A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AN ILLINOIS TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (ITEP) GRANT APPLICATION FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS IN AND AROUND DOWNTOWN WOOD RIVER:**

Councilman Plank made a motion to approve a resolution in support of an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Grant Application for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in and around Downtown Wood River, as submitted by the City Manager, seconded by Councilman Tweedy

Councilman Dettmers made a motion to amend the approval of a resolution in support of an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Grant Application for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in and around Downtown Wood River to state that the City Manager is to communicate with Ameren in an attempt to negotiate an agreement with Ameren to allow the City to put banners on their poles for the Heroes Program, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and the amendment was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)

NAYS: None (0)

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The approval of a resolution in support of an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Grant Application for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in and around Downtown Wood River, with the amendment, was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)

NAYS: None (0)

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the Special Meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

  
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Mayor

  
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City Clerk