



City Commission Meeting Highlights Tuesday, December 17, 2013 at City Hall

Columbia Theatre Conceptual Plan Presentation

Matthew Jennings and Paul Siemborski of Westlake, Reed, & Leskosky provided the Mayor and Commissioners an overview of the preliminary Concept Study prepared for the Columbia Theatre located on Broadway in downtown Paducah. The City Commission approved engaging the firm to complete the study in June of this year. At this meeting, the presentation included an assessment of the theatre, the proposed concept, and a cost estimate. Siemborski says, "The existing building is in good shape. We have good bones regarding the structure." Jennings and Siemborski propose renovating the Columbia Theatre into primarily a film house with three movie screens plus the ability to have live music and comedy events. They don't recommend utilizing the Columbia as a performing arts center mainly due to the limited space behind the stage area. At the beginning of their study, Jennings and Siemborski talked with local organizations such as the Carson Center and Market House Theatre. Siemborski says, "We got to know your community and your needs for the arts here." The concept study suggests reducing the number of seats in the lower level of the theatre to 280 which would provide more space to add additional restrooms and concessions near the lobby. Upstairs, the balcony area would be split into two smaller film areas with 142 and 114 seats. The Columbia Theatre currently is a mix of two styles, Adamesque and Skouras. Siemborski and Jennings recommend keeping the mix of styles. Jennings says, "I haven't found any other theatre with these two styles working together. You have a gem." The estimate is \$5.88 million to renovate the 17,300 square foot building. An additional 20-25% of the construction cost should be considered for costs such as design fees, legal fees, and fundraising costs. Westlake, Reed, & Leskosky estimates that \$3.15 million is available in grants and state and federal tax credits for the project. Siemborski says, "It's a trifecta. The Columbia is eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits, state tax credits, and new market tax credits." Jennings adds, "Generally people underestimate the effects of opening a theatre in an area. This will be great for your downtown." The presentation ended with a slide that read, "Theatres such as the Columbia speak to the spirit of a place, helping tell the unique story of Paducah and its inhabitants. Generations of patrons hold these cherished memories close to their hearts and are willing to make great efforts to assure that the physical touchstone to these memories, the theatre itself, is not lost." Siemborski ended the presentation to the Mayor and Commission by listing seven items as next steps: 1) Apply to have the Columbia listed on the National Register of Historic Places; 2) Develop a business plan (which is underway by the Columbia Theatre Task Force); 3) Start the tax credit process; 4) Start fundraising support; 5) Commence the remediation of any hazardous materials; 6) Continue cleaning and light demolition; and 7) Engage in some remediation work specifically sealing and tuck-pointing the structure on the side adjacent to St Francis de Sales Church. The City of Paducah has owned the Columbia Theatre, which was built in 1927, for nearly 10 years. To find out more about the Columbia Theatre, visit the Columbia Theatre on Facebook.

Hotel Development Agreement

The Mayor and Commissioners approved an ordinance for the development agreement for a downtown hotel. A news conference was held December 10 to provide the public details regarding the hotel agreement between the City of Paducah and the developers, Senate Hospitality, Clark Development, and David Puckett. Independence Bank is providing a large portion of the financing for the project. The \$19.2 million hotel project is planned for the site next to the Julian Carroll Convention Center in the same location where the City inflates the dome pavilion. The hotel will be a 121-room, six story, branded, upscale hotel with a restaurant and bar. It will be attached to the Julian Carroll Convention Center with a pedestrian bridge over the floodwall. Parking will be available adjacent to the hotel and on a portion of the former Executive Inn site. Developers plan to begin construction on the six-story hotel in late spring or early summer 2014 with an



opening date by June 1, 2015. The developers are in the process of making an application to the Kentucky Tourism Development Commission for sales tax credits.

Loan to Paxton Park Municipal Golf Course

The Mayor and Commissioners approved an ordinance for a \$225,000 loan from the City's Fleet Enterprise Fund to the Paxton Park Municipal Golf Course Board. In return, Paxton Park will repay the loan plus interest over a period of ten years. Paxton Park will use the funds for various facility improvements and equipment purchases including the purchase of mowers and a sod cutter. The funds also would be used for new roofing on the clubhouse and paving projects. Paxton Park also plans to improve the golf course by adding lakes at holes #5 and 8.

Cooperation Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Levee Repairs (vote January 7)

The Mayor and Commissioners introduced an ordinance for a Cooperation Agreement between the City and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for rehabilitation assistance for damages sustained to the floodwall levee during the 2011 flood. In May 2011, the Ohio River reached a level of 55 feet at Paducah. The City sent correspondence to USACE in June 2011 documenting the damages and requesting assistance. USACE inspected the damage in March 2012 and approved the rehabilitation work last month. The repairs include repairing approximately 300 feet of riverbank slope failure, repairing the loss of vegetation at three locations totaling 3.6 acres, and repairing rutting along the crown and toe of the floodwall. USACE will cover the cost of the repairs which are estimated by USACE at \$1.66 million with the City of Paducah providing the soil fill material. The estimated cost of the fill material is \$10,000-\$15,000.

Quick Highlights

- Boards and Commissions: Dr. Frank Hideg, Greg McKeel, and Howard Finley reappointed to the Brooks Stadium Commission.
- Ordinance approved for the contract between the City and Peel & Holland for the administration of the City's health insurance. The contract amount is for \$71,900 with an additional fee of \$200 per hour subject to a minimum retainer of \$5000 for services requested by the City or the City's legal counsel for issues that arise in connection to employee bargaining, legal matters, disputes, etc.
- Ordinance approved for a two-year contract between the City of Paducah and Edumedics, LLC for consulting and management services for chronic health conditions for employees covered by the City's health insurance plan.
- The Paducah Riverfront Development Authority (PRDA) meets tomorrow at 1:15 p.m. in the basement of City Hall. The meetings are open to the public.
- Due to the high water on the Ohio River, boaters cannot launch a boat at the foot of Broadway. However, the Ohio River Boat Launch at 6th and Burnett Streets is open and has plenty of parking.
- The new positions being created as part of the Main Street Department reorganization, Downtown Development Specialist and Special Events Coordinator, are posted on the City's website. After the first of the year, the Paducah Renaissance Alliance office on Broadway will close to the public.
- There is still a need for a church to volunteer to be a warming center for January. Currently Grace Episcopal Church is providing a warming center in the evenings when the temperature is around 32 degrees or lower.
- Commissioner Richard Abraham had to miss last week's hotel development agreement news conference due to his participation as first vice president of the Kentucky Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials. The organization was planning its 2014 calendar to include a spring conference in Bardstown.

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