



Peoria council hears ways to offset upcoming stormwater fees

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PEORIA — Pavement was in the spotlight at Tuesday's Peoria City Council meeting.

Public Works Director Scott Reeise outlined some of the programs residents and businesses can take advantage of to offset stormwater utility fees the city will start charging in June.

Among the ways to save money include using rain barrels, putting in detention basins or replacing concrete parking lots and driveways with permeable pavers, he said.

The city will have programs that will fund up to 75 percent of a \$10,000 construction job or, on large-scale projects, up to 75 percent of professionally run efforts up to \$100,000, said Reeise, adding that public meetings on the credit program would be held in the next several weeks.

At Large Councilman Sid Ruckriegel asked if the city could help provide information on what taxpayers might pay before May 1, when the city plans to launch a website providing specific information on stormwater utility costs.

Reeise said the city is busy digitizing the entire city but could provide help if the public would recognize that initial figures provided would be estimates.

Richard Helm of United Presbyterian Church, 2400 W. Northmoor Road, suggested increasing credit discounts while questioning city policy of requiring an application fee for information the city already had, noting that the church put in a detention basin in 2006. He also noted that water went directly into Big Hollow Creek, not using any city infrastructure.

While too much pavement is a problem for the city when it comes to stormwater runoff, there's not enough when it comes to Peoria roadways. Reise provided a pavement management update, noting that only 48 percent of city roads are considered good or satisfactory.

He reported that \$19.5 million will be expended in 2018 on the city's roads and bridges, \$15.6 million of that on arterial roads.

At Large Councilwoman Beth Akesson asked about the use of permeable pavers on city roads. At present, only 2 percent of the city's roads are brick, said Reise.

"If we see a residential street that needs reconstruction, my recommendation would be to go with permeable pavers if it's alright with residents," he said.

Council members also discussed the possibility of raising the minimum age to buy tobacco products in Peoria from 18 to 21. No vote was taken Tuesday. In cities such as Evanston and Chicago that adopted the higher age limit, teen smoking has been reduced by a third, said a representative of the American Heart Association who addressed the council.

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