



Stormwater utility costs dominate Peoria council meeting

By Steve Tarter

Journal Star city of Peoria reporter

Posted Nov 28, 2017 at 8:26 PM

PEORIA — Costs associated with the city's stormwater utility tax that goes into effect next June started to come into focus at Tuesday's Peoria City Council meeting.

Jim Montelongo, the 4th District Councilman, said that businesses in his district like Westlake Shopping Center and Weaver Ridge Golf Course questioned what kind of utility charges that will be assessed.

Westlake wanted to know what kind of credit the center would receive for brick pavers installed in its parking lot, he said.

City Engineer Bill Lewis said that the pavers would need to be evaluated along with the rock they put under it. "It depends on how much water will be retained," he said.

Montelongo said that Weaver Ridge feared spending \$10,000 on stormwater retention efforts at a time when golf activities are declining.

The 4th District councilman said that businesses and developers need to know what they have to do in order to receive credits to defer some of the costs to be assessed when the utility goes into operation next summer.

City Manager Patrick Urich said the city would try to provide "guidance and counsel" when it came to helping homeowners and businesses find ways to control stormwater and curb costs.

The rate for the stormwater utility will be set at the Dec. 5 council meeting set for 5 p.m. when the 2018-2019 budget will be finally approved.

“This is happening. This is your wake-up call,” said 3rd District Councilman Tim Riggerbach, referring to public understanding of the costs involved with solving the city’s stormwater problem.

“This (utility) won’t exempt anybody,” he said, referring to charges that will be assessed on every parcel of land in the city.

In an answer to At Large Councilwoman Beth Jensen’s question, Urich said the stormwater utility tax alone will not pay for what the city expects to be a \$200 plus million tab to fix the problem. “We’ll need a combination of both: utility charges and higher sewer rates,” he said.

Some members of the council expressed growing impatience with the pace of negotiations between the city and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on approving a plan keeping sewage out of the Illinois River that would meet federal guidelines.

“Maybe some of us will be here when a settlement is reached,” said Grayeb of negotiations that started in the 1980s.

Other council issues such as the adoption of a new city signage policy, approval of the city’s strategic plan through 2032 and a request to raise the Special Service Area sales tax rate at Westlake were all deferred to future meetings.

Steve Tarter covers city and county government for the Journal Star. He can be reached at 686-3260 or Follow him at and facebook.com/tartersource.



SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL

Wake up to the day’s top news, delivered to your inbox

