



City of Freeport
Informational Meeting
Re: Pec Bicycle Path through 3rd Ward
Taylor Park School ♦ 806 East Stephenson Street ♦ Freeport, IL 61032

MINUTES
INFORMATIONAL MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2018
6:00 P.M.

An informational meeting was held on Thursday, February 22, 2018, at Taylor Park Elementary School at 806 East Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois at 6:02 p.m. regarding improvements to the Pecatonica Bicycle Path through the 3rd Ward.

Representatives of the City of Freeport in attendance were: City Manager Lowell Crow, Director of Public Works Dennis Carr, Finance Director and Bicycle Path Representative Randy Bukas, Alderpersons Art Ross and Sally Brashaw. City Clerk Dovie Anderson was present to take minutes.

Also present: Mark Rice from McClure Engineering

Manager Crow stated that the federal grant has been approved and the environmental study has been completed. This informational, town hall-style meeting was the last phase of the requirements in the grant process.

The federal grant is in the amount of \$1.9 million. The City's match is \$127,000. Stephenson County and the Freeport Park District will each match \$127,000.

The path will join in at the bridge by Bowen Oil. It runs along the property owned by Mowery's Auto Parts and under the Hancock Bridge, along Hancock and Album, continuing along the old railroad trail that the Park District currently controls, and ending just after it crosses Highway 75.

The bid is expected to go out in August with construction beginning 45 to 60 days later. The environmentalists have already been cleared. Manager Crow expects it to be a two-year project.

A brownfield has been cleared along Album Street. A restroom facility will be built at Tutty's Crossing as part of this grant.

A question/answer session was held.

There was a question regarding the Stephenson County Board not approving their third of the match for the section of bike path from the Winnebago County line to the bike path on the east side of Freeport. Manager Crow stated that he and Jack Carey of the Park District met with County Board Chairman Hadley recently, and Chairman Hadley has agreed to take it before the County Board again in June.

The restrooms will be built next summer. A septic system will be needed because of the location in relationship to the flood plain.

The road surface material from the end of Album Street to the east will be crushed limestone. To the west of that, Album will remain as is. West of Hancock to Bowen Oil will be paved because it goes along the Pecatonica.

The only City street involved is along Album. Otherwise the path is mainly along abandoned railroad. Old warehouses along the proposed route will be torn down over the next two years.

There was clarification on what was meant by the Hancock bridge. It is the Hancock viaduct that goes into the Arcade. Vehicle and bicycle traffic will go under the viaduct.

Mark Rice provided a map of the Grand Illinois Trail. Manager Crow has spoken with Bike Illinois. Once the section is completed from the western edge of Winnebago County to Freeport city limits, it will complete a large bike path circuit from Chicago to Galena. Freeport will be the halfway point and an overnight destination on a two-day ride. This will benefit Freeport's economy. The Pecatonica Prairie Path also ties to the Jane Addams Trail which goes to Madison. It is the goal of Bike Illinois to complete this circuit.

The owner of the gas station in Orangeville spoke about the economic advantage of bicyclists stopping at his store and snowmobilers stopping for gas. He feels that once the trail is complete, it will increase traffic for all stopping points. He believes these trails bring an unbelievable amount of tourism to the area. Manager Crow encouraged him and other members present to give their input to the County.

One speaker stated that there is illegal dumping in this area and asked how the community and volunteers can help clean that up. Manager Crow stated that the City will take custody of some of the property to address that issue. This property will be partially paid for with this grant money. The whole community will be encouraged to keep it clean.

With last year's flood, it was questioned how much of this area was under water. Manager Crow stated that the current flood level of the Pecatonica River was currently at 15.6 feet. A portion of the proposed path was already under water.

One speaker stated that the State legislature has designated bicycling as the official Illinois state exercise.

There was a question regarding which properties the City will take custody of. Manager Crow stated that south of Album Street there are two abandoned properties. Because they are in the 100-year floodplain, they can't be built on anyway. On the opposite side of Album, there is a brownfield area and the City already controls that property. This will eventually be developed into a park.

Manager Crow stated that another goal is to have the junk yard property owner clean up their property.

Aldersperson Brashaw stated that some constituents have asked if there are other properties the City will be purchasing at this time. Manager Crow stated that the City will be purchasing an easement behind an empty factory through a state tax sale. City Council approved that a couple of weeks ago. The City is waiting for appraisals on other properties as soon as flood waters recede, and we will eventually purchase those easements as well.

Aldersperson Brashaw asked the length of the construction of the new path. Mark Rice stated that it will be 2.8 miles. Manager Crow added that it will be from the bridge that crosses near Bowen Oil to the edge of Highway 75 at the old Henney property. This will give access to River Road.

The Informational Meeting ended at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dovie L. Anderson
City Clerk