

Fairview Heights City Council approves TIF for new development

BY WILL BUSS
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The Fairview Heights City Council has voted to approve a proposed tax increment finance district to begin planning for a new commercial and residential development near the city's MetroLink station.

The development calls for construction along Illinois 161 adjacent to the light rail station. The new building would house a commercial tenant on the first floor and residential space on the second and third floors.

The Council unanimously approved the ordinance during the first reading at the last council meeting earlier this month.

On Tuesday night, three ordinances calling to create the tax increment finance district passed by an 8-1 vote, with only Ward 1 Alderman Dennis Baricevic voting "no." Ward 2 Alderman Roger Lowry was absent.

Tax increment financing districts draw any tax revenue generated by a development into a fund to help pay for project costs - such as new infrastructure - within the district for a certain period of time, rather than to local taxing bodies. City administrator Jim Snider said creating a tax increment finance district brings economic development to an area that would have otherwise remained undeveloped.

"But if not for the TIF, this would never happen," Snider said. "This is what

TIF was made for."

In other City Council activity, city representatives narrowly approved a resolution to approve the City of O'Fallon's plans to construct a roundabout at Old Collinsville Road and Milburn School Road by allowing the city to use streets in Fairview Heights as a detour route.

The Council had unanimously elected to approve an initial resolution in 2009 calling to provide alternative routes along city streets to neighboring communities for such instances.

The measure passed by 5-3 vote with Ward 5 Alderman Bill Poletti voting "present." Among the dissenters, were Ward 4 Alderman Harry Zimmerman and Ward 5 Alderwoman Denise Williams.

"I won't support anything like this that goes through my ward," Zimmerman said.

"It's going to be a headache," Williams said. "It's going to cause problems."

In another move, the Council approved a resolution for the city to hire an engineer to investigate and provide a solution to an often flooded subdivision in town.

Horner & Shifrin Inc. has been hired to provide engineering that will help provide better storm water drainage from occasional flooding at the Fox Creek neighborhood.

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