

City Response to Resident Questions Regarding Prairie Encore Development

02/20/2023

How can the notices of all future projects be modernized to make those of us interested in our city's projects be more accessible. I'm aware we can search the city website as well as search for it in the newspaper. – The FY 2023 budget included the hiring of a new staff member that will be tasked with coordinating our city's outreach efforts. This will include various multimedia, social media, traditional media, and in person outreach. This staff member started last week and will be working me to develop a communications plan that will push information out to interested residents and keep them more informed and engaged in the various projects, events, and issues around the city.

The City has also recently researched several firms and has done a demonstration on updated software that will streamline city services such as permitting/licensing/etc. and put these functions online. This software also has a citizen engagement function to push information and notifications out to residents via emails, webposts, social media, mobile apps, and even texting. The city is currently working on an RFP that would move us toward using applications that would give us those abilities and resources. The timeline for implementation is over the next year. In the mean time, the city has engaged a webservice that will help us publish regular newsletters, web posts, social media posts, and even texting. This will serve as a bridge to help us improve our communications immediately, while we work toward a more streamlined and integrated solution to our city services and citizen engagements.

Please explain how TIF (Tax Increment Financing) works as well as how much in approximate costs the city will pay for streets, sewers if any etc. in the particular development known as Prairie Encore. What are the tax benefits to the city and when will they take effect? – The developer has not asked for a "TIF" to assist in the funding of this project. Due to the type of project and the development proposed, a "TIF" would not likely be a suitable economic development tool for this project anyway. However, for your own information and edification, I have included a document titled "Economic Development Memo – 2018", which is an excellent comprehensive explanation of Economic Development tools in Missouri by the law firm Gilmore and Bell. That should help you have a better understanding of the tools used in Missouri.

Regarding (The Prairie) can you please explain the \$60,000,000 bond ordinance. As I read it. it is legalese and too difficult for me to understand. – If you read the memo from Gilmore and Bell that is attached, it discusses the use of Chapter 100 bonds. That is the economic development tool that was used by the developer on "the Prairie". The City authorized the issuance of its industrial revenue bonds in an amount not to exceed \$60,000,000 to finance the construction of the project. The Principal and Interest debt service for the bonds is entirely the responsibility of the developer. Missouri Law and the Dardenne Prairie Ordinance clearly states "The Bonds and the interest thereon shall not constitute general obligations of the City, the State of Missouri, or any political subdivision thereof, and neither the City nor the State shall be liable thereon". Simply stated, the bonds are to help the developer get the capital to build the project, and just like paying back any other borrowing of money, they must pay back the money to the bond holders. The city (nor the taxpayers) are on the hook for any of the money or liability whatsoever.

This is simply a funding mechanism that is more financially advantageous to a developer than a conventional bank loan. It does not, however, put any financial burden on the city.

Is it possible to publish future ordinances in addition to the legalese in a more generic easy to understand way? Perhaps a simple plain English paragraph at the beginning or end? i.e. the following ordinance authorizes the city to spend 60,000,000 for probably the majority of us do not understand the legalese and ask for a simple summation. – The city usually discusses matters of this magnitude during our work session. That is the best time to hear the discussion about what a bill or proposal means. Unfortunately asking someone like an attorney to put it in simple terms, isn't always simple. I will work to have a short synopsis of the issues available on these more complicated questions before the council. I also hope that through improved communications and as we get information out to residents in a more timely manner, we can take in questions and get answers to residents ahead of any votes.

It is my understanding the developer paid for the traffic study. I would feel more at ease if the traffic study were done by an independent party not affiliated with the city or the developer. If that's not possible can the developer escrow with the city the current estimated costs to widen Feise for 5 years? The traffic study in question was done and then updated several times over the past several years. The original study was done by HR Green in 2015 and paid for by the Bopp Family Partnership that owned all the land which is now Inverness and the current Prairie Encore Proposed site. An updated traffic study was performed on 09/12/2017 by CBB Engineering at the direction of the Bopp Family Partnership, and later updated by CBB on 03/31/2021 and 09/22/2021 for McKelvey Homes and the Inverness Development. The most recent review of the study was again done by CBB at the direction of Mia Rose (the current proposed developer), and that was completed on 07/07/2022.

All of these studies have been reviewed by our previous City Engineer, our current City Engineer, and the City Engineers for O'Fallon. None of the reviewing professionals have expressed any concerns with the methodologies used for the studies, and they do conform with the generally accepted methodologies and assumptions for traffic studies. Their work has been reviewed by several engineering professionals and without any reasoning beyond who paid for their engineering work, I don't think it would be prudent for the city to expend tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars to rehash what a professionally licensed and bonded engineering firm has already concluded. I can assure you from our conversations with the developer, that the conclusions of the traffic study are not "favorable" to the developer. Meaning the traffic studies require them to expend considerable monies for improvements based on the traffic generation for this and the surrounding developments. The developer has objected to many of the conclusions of these studies and updates, because of the added expenses and required improvements.

As for escrowing money for the widening of Feise, this development is not causing and requirement to make improvements to Feise. In fact, it is the Inverness development which will require us to make improvements to Feise if this development or the city does not complete the connection from Inverness Phase III out onto Bryan Rd. Without that future connection, the Traffic Study concludes that a light will likely be required at Feise and Grand Inverness Parkway, and at considerable expense to the city.

Can you please tell me how many apartments we currently have in the city both under construction and completed? (Not buildings but actual living spaces) and the amount of if any vacancies.

-Town Square Apartments has 48 units @94% occupancy (24 – 2 bed/2bath @ \$419-496/mo) & (24 – 3 bed/2bath) - \$486-\$576

-Georgetown Apartments has 72 units @89% occupancy (59 – 2 bed/2bath @ \$1125/mo) & (7 – 3 bed/2bath) - \$1650.00 (and 6 more owner occupied as condos)

-Pinecrest Apartments has 32 units @100% occupancy (32 – 2 bed/2bath @ \$1200/mo)

-St. Williams Apartments (Senior Apts) has 78 units @100% occupancy (78 – 1 bed/1bath @ \$748-827/mo)

- The Prairie has 180 units @52.78% occupancy (60 – 1 bed/1bath @ \$1630/mo) & (120 – 1 bed/1bath @ \$1250/mo)

It is my understanding that under current city ordinance a developer after being declined a change in a properties current zoning by the city after several changes can resubmit a new plan the next day , while several other cities require a one year wait to resubmit by the same developer or can this ordinance be changed and what is entailed by the public to accomplish this? I have surveyed the area cities regarding this issue. It is somewhat a mixed bag on this issue. Some cities allow immediate resubmittal, others require the one year delay before resubmittal. However, every city that requires one year before resubmittal also has a provision allowing it to be resubmitted immediately, so long as changes are made to the proposal. So the delay is really only when you are talking about the exact same development. Any changes to the proposed development's area plan, such as placement of streets, buildings, building uses, etc. can be determined as a reason to reconsider the plan before the year is up.

Dardenne Prairie does not currently have any language in its codes or ordinances that address this. Right now any developer can resubmit immediately after it fails. We would have to change our city codes to avoid that. That being said, every city allows developers to make changes to their proposal and come back within the year. I don't see Dardenne Prairie doing anything more stringent.

Assuming the zoning is changed to where the residents and board approve it, wouldn't it be prudent to televise future meetings through Facebook live or some other way? Using a small portion of the tax dollars generated to the city by this new development? – The city currently does record our meetings as we are in the process of working to establish a YouTube Page for the city that would allow all our meetings to be posted and archived for the public to see. We would be able to do this by the following day. We are currently working on that with staff now.

Has the city done any studies as to a need for more apartments, gas stations etc? The city has not done any studies on the need for multifamily housing, however according to the St. Charles EDC, Multifamily has led the growth in St. Charles County for the past year. As for Gas Stations, the city does have a contract with a commercial development advisory firm (NextSite) which assists in data collection, analysis, and subsequent recruitment of commercial development for the city. Our Retail GAP information regarding Gas Stations/Convenience Stores shows there is a significant gap in supply vs demand and there is room for growth in that sector. So there is high confidence that this will be very successful.