



# CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

#1 GARY K. ANDERSON PLAZA

DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62523-1196

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2023

## **City Council approves new housing for homeless, short-term rental licensing, greater transit access for Richland students**

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the April 17, 2023, Decatur City Council meeting include a new housing option for the homeless population, a new licensing process for short-term rentals such as Airbnb & Vrbo, and an agreement with Richland Community College to provide greater access to public transit for their students.

### **New housing for homeless population**

On Monday night the Decatur City Council approved an agreement with DOVE, Inc. to purchase and renovate a former nursing home into transitional and affordable housing for the homeless population. DOVE will own and operate the facility. In addition to housing individuals, this investment supports case management, program implementation, transportation, and other costs related to serving this population.

The facility is located in the Johns Hill neighborhood, just a few blocks from DOVE's Homeward Bound program. The City's investment of \$1 million for acquisition, renovation, and support services is HOME American Rescue Plan (ARP) monies provided by HUD.

This goes along with another partnership the City has with DOVE to provide rent, mortgage, and utility assistance to eligible residents impacted by COVID-19.

### **Short-term rentals to require annual license, pay hotel/motel tax**

Another item the Council approved was the addition of a licensing process for short-term rentals (STRs) such as Airbnb & Vrbo. The amendment to City Code Chapter 51.5 requires STR owners to apply for an annual license for each property and to pay the same hotel/motel taxes that traditional hotels are required to collect.

Council learned that there has been an increase in the number of complaints to the City regarding STRs. The complaints are often about loud behaviors, parking concerns, and problems related to garbage. A vast majority of STRs are not problematic, but there have been complaints about a small

number of properties, leading to the need for the license. The \$25 annual license fee will not cover the City's costs for administration and inspection, but it will help ensure STRs do not create a nuisance and disturbance to the neighborhood. The City will have the discretion to administer fines/penalties or revoke the license (although revocation will require a due process hearing first).

And, as a matter of tax equity, Council agreed STRs should pay hotel/motel taxes. This helps level the playing field between single-family houses used for overnight stays and traditional hotel/motels.

### **Richland students get greater access to public transit**

Richland Community College students can soon ride City buses for free, anytime, without restrictions as long as they have a valid school ID. The college has agreed to reimburse Decatur Public Transit for their students' rides so they can access transportation whenever it's needed.

Previously, Richland students would pay for each bus ride. This agreement is a similar partnership to what Decatur Public Schools recently added for their high school students.

### **In other business**

In other business...Council approved a study of improvements to the northeast portion of the City where much of the recent and future industrial development is occurring. The Northeast quadrant generally includes the area north of Garfield Ave. and east of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. The study will provide the City with modeling scenarios of increased water usage and delivery to the area. With the announced and future development in that quadrant, City staff needs a master plan on how we can continue to increase our water delivery to industries there.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: [www.decaturlil.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/](http://www.decaturlil.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/)

###