



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2023

Council invests in violence intervention programs, approves EV readiness plan

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the August 7, 2023, Decatur City Council meeting include agreements with local mentorship programs for violence intervention, and the approval of an electric vehicle readiness plan for Decatur.

Violence Intervention Programs

On Monday night the Decatur City Council authorized partnerships with two local mentorship programs to help youth avoid violence. The City will invest in Old King's Orchard (OKO) Community Center's OKO Peace program and will continue partnering with the Shemilah Outreach Center's Clean-Up Green-Up initiative.

OKO Peace is a proactive violence prevention program that aims to intervene and transform the lives of youth before they resort to violence and other destructive behaviors. City Council hopes this program can expose youth offenders to the right kind of interventions, coaching, connection to alternative activities, and personal mentoring that will put them on the right path in life. This is meant to be a one-time investment by the City as OKO plans to find a funding source to continue this program, if it is successful.

The City has partnered with Shemilah Outreach Center to empower youth and residents to help clean up their neighborhood since 2021. Youth are offered employment to assist residents with removing litter, debris, overgrowth, and grass cutting. The Center has completed 62 projects within the Johns Hill area so far. Action from Council Monday night has extended the partnership through the end of 2024.

Funding for the OKO program comes from a Community Development & Violence Prevention state grant, while Clean-Up Green-Up is supported by a local foundation.

Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan

Council also approved an agreement with a firm to develop an electric vehicle readiness plan (EVRP)

for Decatur. CDM Smith will assist with the EVRP, putting Decatur in a better position to obtain future EV charging equipment and other EV infrastructure grants. The plan will provide analysis on current and anticipated future EV conditions; anticipated gaps in EV charging and other barriers to electrification; best practices for local government in planning, zoning, permitting, and site design; and implementation strategies.

The City received a state grant that covers the majority of the planning project.

In other business

In other business...Council authorized a contribution to the Decatur-Macon County Area Crimestoppers. \$25,000 from the Community Development & Violence Prevention state grant will help pay for tips that lead to arrests in felony crimes. Crimestoppers has helped solve over 2,000 cases and has paid out close to \$400,000 in reward money.

The City is taking steps towards creating a new tax increment financing (TIF) district. Council approved an agreement with PGAV Planners, LLC to prepare TIF development plans. TIF is one of the most effective economic development tools available to Illinois local governments. It allows incremental property taxes to be diverted to development, redevelopment, and site improvement within the TIF district, rather than be collected by the local government. It does NOT raise property taxes. Examples of projects from other TIF districts include the current police station and the Wabash Crossing affordable housing project.

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/

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