



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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Council approves lift assist fee for senior care facilities, discusses Eldorado Street corridor improvements

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the February 20, 2024 Decatur City Council meeting include approval of a lift assist fee for commercial assisted-living facilities, and discussion about extending downtown streetscape improvements east on Eldorado Street.

Lift Assist fee

On Tuesday night the Decatur City Council took action to help decrease the number of non-emergency calls to the Decatur Fire Department. They approved an amendment to City Code Chapter 44, the Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Control ordinance, adding a fee for lift assists (lifting or helping someone up who does not need to go to hospital) for commercial assisted-living facilities.

Calls to the Fire Department have increased over the past several years, including calls for lift assists. In 2014, there were 430 lift assist calls compared to 1029 calls in 2023. A number of these are from commercial facilities where the City believes that patients are paying for care that should include lift assists by the care facilities' personnel. Moving forward, the City will assess a \$500 minimum fee to defined commercial facilities for lift assists performed by the fire department or other City public safety departments. The fee was figured as the approximate cost of having public safety personnel respond.

This ordinance does not affect individual homes or apartments. It applies to commercial facilities, independent-living facilities, nursing homes, or other similar congregate care facilities. Council members stressed this is not to raise revenue, but rather to discourage the use of fire department and public safety resources for non-emergency-related calls, and to reduce the liability on first responders. A sunset clause was added so Council will revisit this ordinance in one year.

Eldorado Street corridor improvements

Also discussed Tuesday night were options to improve the streetscape of Eldorado Street east of

downtown to about 19th street. This was a discussion only item and no action was taken on this topic. Council focused on ways to extend many of the design elements of the downtown streetscape east on Eldorado.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has informed the City they plan to repave Eldorado Street from Church Street to around 19th Street within the next five years. In conjunction with these improvements, City staff had architects from Massie Massie & Associates (who was also the designer of the 2009 downtown improvement project) present a proposed concept, which Council members seemed interested in moving forward with.

Not all of the downtown improvements will be carried over. Suggestions include the same curb & gutter design, the same colored bricks behind the curbs, the same street lighting, the addition of suitable trees, some decorative fencing where appropriate, and wider sidewalks. A few council members also asked that more consideration be given to adding a hike/bike path on one side of the street.

IDOT would pick up some of the cost of improvements if approved, and the City intends to apply for grants for the portions the State will not fund.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council meeting packet, downloadable/viewable here: www.decaluril.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/

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