“I want the neighborhood safe”

The trailers and buildings next to the former Town & Country Mobile Home Park are falling into ruin and are barely visible from the street. A property owner in the area and her family are hoping the city can do something to help with the problem.

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The daughter of a property owner in the 900 block of 15th Street is asking for the help of city officials to take a look at the property and see what can be done. 

At the meeting, Overberg said, at present, there are only a few homes on the block that are fit to still be standing. Her mother, Dixie Riley, lives on the block as well and Overberg said she fears for her mother’s safety while holding back emotions as she spoke to the council. “The main point is this long-time property taxpayer in Fort Madison, in her retirement years, should not have to endure this atrocity in her city,” Overberg said to the council.

Overberg said the trailer park behind the property is in shambles with all utilities disconnected. She said the sheet metal shop has windows broken out and has people going in and out of the property. Her parents spent $5,000 on a privacy fence, but additional fencing was not allowed by city code.

Mayor Brad Randolph told her that he’d like her to sit with City Building Director Doug Krogmeier after the meeting. Councilman Bob Morawitz, who represents the city’s second ward that includes the neighborhood, as well as City Councilman Chris Greenwald offered to sit in on the meeting. Greenwald asked City Manager David Varley and Police Chief Tim Sittig to sit in on the meeting as well.

Overberg said she was disappointed in what she heard from the meeting and was told by Varley that the city had only about $30,000 per year to deal with dilapidated buildings and properties. She said no one from the city has been out to observe the property.

DM Register names FMCH a Top 100 Workplace in state

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison Community Hospital (FMCH) has been awarded a 2018 Top Workplaces honor by the Des Moines Register. This is the sixth time since the program began FMCH has made the list. The Top Workplaces lists are based solely on the results of employee feedback gathered through a third party survey administered by research partner, Energage, LLC (formerly Workplace Dynamics), a leading provider of technology-based employee engagement tools. The anonymous survey measures several aspects of workplace culture, including alignment, execution, and connection, just to name a few.

“Top Workplaces is more than just a title,” said Doug Claffey, CEO of Energage. “It’s a big deal. Becoming a Top Workplace isn’t something organizations can buy,” Claffey said. “It’s an achievement organizations have worked for and a distinction that gives them a competitive advantage. It’s a big deal.”

Community Hospital employs 486 employees, which includes 24 physicians and 13 Advanced Practice Professionals.

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SPORTS:
HTC’s Hellige earns first place at the Mt. Pleasant cross country meet Tuesday night.

See page 2
HTC’s Hellige takes 1st at MP cross-country

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MT. PLEASANT - Holy Trinity Catholic junior runner Matt Hellige took first place in the small class 5K at Mt. Pleasant Tuesday evening.

Hellige’s 18:05.62 was the best time of the day for the smaller schools besting Zach Hein of Wilton by 6.4 seconds and Brody Barton of Winfield-Mt. Union by 7.8 seconds.

He said the rains in the earlier afternoon Tuesday made for a wet course.

“Obviously, the course was really muddy. Especially in one area it was like a big mud puddle and after the race, I was covered in mud up to my knees, so that affected me a little bit,” he said.

Hellige said this is the fifth meet of the year and he’s been running 17 and 18 minute times so the soggy conditions didn’t hurt too bad.

Hellige ran in the state cross country tournament last year and said with qualifying starting in about a month, his times are competitive.

“My coaches and teammates have been pushing me really hard this season. Practices have been going really well and I have had some good workouts, but it’s been going pretty fast.”

Hellige’s time led Holy Trinity Catholic’s team to a second-place finish with 79 points, 31 behind Danville’s 48. Phillip Goldie took 6th place for the Crusaders with a time of 19:05.64. Jacob Mohrfield was 16th overall and third for HTC with a time of 20:00.56.

“The team ran well at Mt Pleasant. We had a wet and muddy course which could have made for slow running, but our athletes endured nicely,” said HTC coach Matt Mohrfield.

“Matthew Hellige looked great with his first-place finish and Goldie is maturing into a front of the pack runner with a 6th-place finish. Mohrfield and Pothitakis delivered a very solid mid-pack run with 16th and 26th place finishes. Holtkamp, Run, and Hellman rounded out our night with strong runs. A good night for HTC and I was very proud of their performance."

Fort Madison, which ran in the large school class, also garnered a team 2nd-place finish behind the 3rd-place finish by senior Dayne Cordray. Cordray’s 17:53.68 was just six seconds behind Evan Horak of Washington.

Hounds’ sophomore Anthony Barnes finished in 10th place with a time of 19:06.21. Freshman Hayden Wolfe at 19:12.96 and sophomore Owen Kruse at 19:43.43 finished in 12th and 13th place, respectively. Freshman Will Gager rounded out the top 15 with a 19:24.12 run.

The Bloodhounds finished with 53 points behind Fairfield’s 39, but five points ahead of Mt. Pleasant.

Other top HTC runners included Mitchel Pothitakis 21:10.31 (26th), Brant Holtkamp 21:26.46 (31st), Chandler Run 21:26.93 (32nd), and Wyatt Helfman 23:05.96 (51st).

For the Bloodhounds, freshman Austin Miller finished at 20:02.37 (19th) and senior Miguel Trejo at 20:18.75 (24th).

The Bloodhounds travel to Anamosa for another invitational on Saturday morning. Holy Trinity runs at Pekin on Saturday.
Local News

Counties holds tax certificates on both properties

“it’s on our list, but the city just doesn’t have the money in the budget to do anything,” Krogmeier said. “We’ll go over and board it up but that’s about all we can do right now.”

Currently, Lee County holds a certificate on the mobile home park and the former sheet metal building. According to the Lee County Treasurer’s office, taxes haven’t been paid on the property in four years and it could go to a tax sale when the Lee County Attorney’s office gets it on the schedule.

Krogmeier said sometimes that can take years or the county can hold a certificate indefinitely.

The property, according to Beacon Schneider’s Lee County website, is owned by Jed Aaron Hill, previously of Keokuk. Hill entered into a contract with Robert and Zella Kramer of Fort Madison to sell the property for $105,000 in 2008. Hill purchased the deeds to the properties for $96,400 in 2007. Phone calls to the Kramer went unreturned Wednesday and attempts to locate Hill were unsuccessful.

Sitting said requests for police reports in the area without specific names, dates, and addresses would be difficult and time consuming.

Overberg said she’s looking to have the neighborhood cleaned up so it’s safer for her mother.

“A good resolution is I want the neighborhood safe,” she said. “I want the sheet metal building taken down or boared up so no one can get in and out of there, taken down is the only solution that would be permanent. And I want the squatters out of the trailer park and these homes.”

Overberg said her mother is probably safe in her home, but the garage is probably not. “She’s probably safe in her house,” she said. “I want the neighbors out of there. As terrible as it sounds, there’s a sofa in there with used condoms on it...in a building like that, they have to be under the influence of something.”

NEIGHBORHOOD

and neighborhood since she spoke at the council meeting.

She said her father, Tom, who is deceased now, had approached Greenwald about seven years ago about the deteriorating condition of the neighborhood and nothing was done.

Several of the homes in the area are uninhabited and also in disrepair along the 1400 block of Avenue I. Dixie Riley, Overberg’s mother, said some of the homeowners on the block are doing some repairs, but most are uninhabitable.

The former mobile home park has several trailers on the lot that are crumbling and overgrown with grass and brush. One mobile home has the lawn mowed and seems to be in decent care, but Overberg said utilities are not active in the park.

Krogmeier said the city doesn’t have the resources to handle the issue at this point.

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Toxic Clean-Up Event in Mt. Pleasant

Great River Regional Waste Authority (GRRWA) is bringing their Toxic Clean-Up Mobile Event to the city of Mt. Pleasant and rural areas. Residential household hazardous waste disposal will be available this Friday, Sept. 21 from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm by appointment only.

The collection site will be located at the Public Works Building at 1201 North Broadway Street in Mt. Pleasant. Enter on West Winfield Street – exit out on West Harlan Street.

To make an appointment, call toll-free: 1-877-429-2436 or 319-753-8758.

GRRWA has several guidelines in place for those planning to take part in this event:
- Please no latex paint (only oil and lead-based paints)
- Please no motor oil or antifreeze
- No containers over 5 gallons
- No batteries

Although these items will not be accepted during this mobile event, they are accepted on a regular basis at GRRWA facilities or the HazChem Center.

For more information call City Hall at (319) 372-7700 Ext. 201.
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