Golf cart/ATV ordinance gets first nod

Councilman ask residents to contact them with opinions

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A move to allow golf carts, ATVs and UTVs on Fort Madison streets passed its first hurdle Tuesday night. The Fort Madison City Council passed the first reading of an ordinance to permit the vehicles on most city streets 4-2 with Chad Cangas abstaining because he said the issue needed more discussion.

The ordinance will get more discussion at is requires two more readings before it can be approved. Councilmen Kevin Rink, Rusty Andrews, Matt Mohrfeld and Chris Greenwald all voted for the ordinance, leaving Councilmen Bob Morawitz and Mark Lair voting against the measure.

Cangas encouraged residents who still have an issue with the possible change in law to contact city council members with concerns.

“I would like to say, in this moment, if there are people with other opinions, call me. I’d like to hear some people, if there are constituents in the city for it, I want to know,” Cangas said.

Cangas said he’s heard more from residents on this issue than he has cumulatively on other issues in his time on the council.

“I’ve yet to hear from one of my constituents with a positive argument for why we should do this,” Cangas said.

Mohrfeld introduced the idea of allowing the vehicles on the street in June. The ordinance allows anyone with a valid operator’s license who is at least 18 years of age to operate the vehicles on Fort Madison streets with the exception of 15th and 18th streets, Business 61 and 61 bypass.

See ORDINANCE, page 9

Boulders finalizes change to Cobblestone

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – The Boulders Inn & Suites of Fort Madison has finalized converting to Cobblestone Inn & Suites.

After joining the Cobblestone Hotels brand in January 2019, the brand took it one step further to unite all Boulders locations to the Cobblestone Inn & Suites name.

“This is the last step in our conversion to the Cobblestone brand which began in January. Our new signage goes up today and our name officially is Cobblestone Inn & Suites. It is important to remember that we are still the same company, simply with a new name under a larger brand,” said Kathy Fish, General Manager of the hotel.

The Cobblestone Inn & Suites is located in Fort Madison at 4901 Avenue O, conveniently near The Palms Bar & Grill, in close proximity to the Highway 61 bypass.

The hotel continues to feature the brand’s consistent amenities such as onsite vending, 24-hour Wolfgang Puck coffee service, complimentary high-speed internet access, newspapers, an on-site guest laundry, fitness equipment, and a hot breakfast each morning. Guestrooms incorporate 50” flat-screen TVs, microwaves, refrigerators, hairdryers, iron and ironing boards, and Keurig’s. Additionally, there are several different types of suites available, as well as meeting or event space with seating for approximately 60.

Whether you are traveling for business or for leisure, you will experience the big city quality, and small-town values that each location has to offer. Visit www.CobblestoneHotels.com for reservations or for more information.

Based in Neenah, WI Cobblestone Hotels, LLC is a leading upper-midscale hotel brand with over 165 hotels open, under construction, or in development in 27 states. The Boulders Inn & Suites is part of Cobblestone Hotels, LLC, which also includes Cobblestone Hotel & Suites, Boarders Inn and Suites by Cobblestone Hotels, KeyWest Hotels, and Centerstone Hotels. For more information visit www.CobblestoneRewards.com.

Hwy. 61 rehab start hits another snag

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – It was on. Then it was off. Then it was on again. And then nothing happened… well, something happened.

The Fort Madison City Council scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday night’s regular meeting to discuss the current bid to reconstruct part of Avenue H from 2nd to 6th streets.

But the posted agenda for the council meeting indicated the council wouldn’t be holding the public hearing even though it was still listed as an agenda item.

The city was to move straight to an agenda item where Mayor Brad Randolph was to ask for motion and a second to reject a current bid for the project. That item died because no motion was made to reject the bid.

Jones Contracting of West Point submitted the only bid for the work at $3.33 million, but engineering estimates from the city’s engineering firm Hays Greenwald all voted for the bid at $2.76 million.

Public Works Director Larry Driscoll recommended the bid be rejected and the city rebid the project in the fall.

Driscoll said rebidding the project in the fall would allow the city to work with the engineering firm to possibly reduce the costs of the project, and take advantage of rebids in the future.

See REHAB, page 8

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For the Record

The following is the Record report from Aug. 12-16th during the Pen City Current's summer break. The remainder of the reports from Aug. 17th to Aug. 21st will run in Friday's edition.

Fort Madison Police Report
08/12/19 – 1:08 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1300 block of Avenue G.

08/12/19 – 1:47 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1000 block of Avenue H.

08/12/19 – 5:53 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a trespass in the 3000 block of Avenue O.

08/12/19 – 8:51 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 3000 block of Avenue I.

08/12/19 – 8:04 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a theft in the 1300 block of Avenue G.

08/13/19 – 2:37 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jason Ray Gilman, 51, of Fort Madison, in the 1700 block of Avenue O.

08/13/19 – 4:15 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a gas drive off in the 1200 block of Avenue H.

08/13/19 – 2:40 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 3000 block of Avenue O.

08/13/19 – 7:33 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1500 block of Avenue G.

08/13/19 – 8:31 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 2500 block of Avenue G.

08/13/19 – 10:27 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 5000 block of Avenue O.

08/13/19 – 1:08 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Steven Lee Savage, 34, of Burlington, in the Newton Prison in Newton, on a warrant for a court-ordered hold.

Lee County Sheriff's Report
08/12/19 – 8:51 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jason Ray Bostic, 42, of Augusta, Ill., at the sheriff's office on a contempt of court warrant. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Ashley Kay Philip, 36, of Montrose, at the Hoy-Vee in Keokuk on charges of violation of a no-contact order. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Kevin Lee Sandman, 33, of Burlington, at the Des Moines County Jail on warrants for driving under suspension and operating a vehicle with suspect registration. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Shane Michael Phillips, 19, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on warrants for theft in the 2nd degree and violation of probation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested David James Easin, 72, of Fort Madison, at the intersection of Hw. 2 and West Point Rd., on charges of OWI-1st offense, carrying a weapon while intoxicated and failure to maintain control. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Douglas Alan McPherson, 38, of Fort Madison in the 1700 block of Avenue H.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Joshua Steven Wegat, 30, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff's office on a charge of violation of probation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Kevin Lee Sandman, 33, of Burlington, at the Des Moines County Jail on warrants for driving under suspension and operating a vehicle with suspect registration. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

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OBITUARIES

STEPHEN L. SEYB

Stephen L. Seyb, 71, of Keokuk, IA, formerly of Donnellson, IA, died Saturday, August 17, 2019 at Mississippi Valley Healthcare in Keokuk.

He was born on March 12, 1948 the son of Leo L. and Ruth Viola Knowles Seyb. He graduated from Donnellson High School with the Class of 1966.

Stephen was a veteran of the United States Navy and served as a medic aboard the USS Sanctuary hospital ship during the Vietnam War from 1966 – 1971. Stephen was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in action. Following his service in the Navy he was active in the Boy Scouts and volunteered at Camp Eastman.

He moved to Minnesota where he lived for 40 years and was employed as a Chef in a local restaurant. In his younger years he attended the First Baptist Church in Keokuk and enjoyed singing in the church choir.

Stephen was very artistic and enjoyed painting scenery and flowers. He also enjoyed cooking. He had a great sense of humor and a very contagious laugh.

He is survived by four sisters, Barbara Smith of Centerville, IA, “Ginger” Virginia Jenkins-Curfman of Keokuk, Nancy (Robert) Harker of Arizona, and Delphine (David) Stratemeyer of Hubbard, IA, several nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents.

A graveside service with military rites will be held at 10 a.m., Friday at the Keokuk National Cemetery with Pastor Tim Ayers officiating. There will be no visitation.

The family requests no flowers. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project. The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk is assisting the family with arrangements. On-line condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

SUZANNE MARIE WOOD

Suzanne Marie Wood, 57, of Phoenix, Arizona, formerly of Macomb and Nauvoo, Illinois passed away August 5, 2019 at her home.

She was born on December 23, 1961 at St. Joseph Hospital in Keokuk, Iowa the daughter of Tom and Mary McKoon Wood.

Suzanne loved shooting hoops and playing horse with anyone she could talk into it. She also shared a love of Elvis, Bread, Anne Murray and The Carpenters with various other family members.

Survivors include her long time friend, Terry Chote of Phoenix, AZ; one sister, Dianne Adkisson of Nauvoo; brothers, Mike Wood of Nioita, IL, Tony Wood of Old Hickory, TN, Dan Wood of New London, IA, Jack Wood of Bloomington, IL, Alan Wood of Satsuma, FL, Pat Wood of Huston, TX and Chris Wood of Boulder, CO; many nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; maternal grandparents, Cale and Mary McKoon; paternal grandparents, Tog and Pauline Wood and one brother-in-law, Art Adkisson.

Graveside services will be held at 11:00 AM Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Cemetery in Nauvoo with Fr. Szydlik officiating. Schmitz-Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Nauvoo is assisting with arrangements. Please visit Suzanne’s obituary at sbbfuneralhome.com to leave a condolence.

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Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.
DONNELLSON – After taking a scheduled week off, the Pepsi Lee County Speedway in Donnellson, Iowa, returned to action on Friday, August 16th. The Sprint Invaders would make their final visit of the 2019 racing season to the track, with Roberts Tire Center and Big Country 103.1 helping to bring the action. When the final checkered flag flew three driver’s picked up their first wins of the season at the track, with one of those being the driver’s first career. While another driver won again at the track this season.

The 18 lap Roberts Tire Center IMCA SportMod feature took to the track first, with Jim Powell and Jim Walker leading the field to green. But it was third place starter Brandon Dale who jumped out into the lead on lap 1 over Daniel Fellows, who started 5th, and Powell. The action was slowed for the first time of the event on lap 2, as Robert Hooper spun in turn 1 to bring out the yellow. On the restart Dale jumped back out front, with Daniels and Austen Becerra close behind. One more lap completed produced another caution, as Powell spun in turn 2 to bring out the yellow. Dale once again grabbed the lead on the restart, with Becerra and Sean Wyett, who started 7th, following. The third caution of the race appeared on lap 7, as Hooper spun in turn 2 to end his night. On the restart Dale moved back out front, with Becerra and Wyett close behind. While Dale worked to hold back Becerra for the top spot, Wyett, Daniels and Blaine Webster battled for the third spot. Just when it looked like the last half of the race would go caution free, Bob Cowman spun in turn 4 to bring out the final yellow of the race. Dale would jump back out front on the restart, with Wyett and Becerra battling for the runner up spot. With Wyett and Becerra racing for second, Dale would hold on to pick up his first win of the season at the Pepsi Lee County Speedway.

Up next was the 15 lap Discount Tire & Service IMCA Sport Compact feature, with Ricky Miller Jr. and David Prim making up the front row. But it was third place starter Cody Bowman who shot out into the lead on lap 1 over Miller Jr. and Trent Orwig, who started 6th. Orwig then slipped past him on lap 2 to take over the top spot. Orwig then started to pull away from the battles behind him, when the first caution appeared on lap 7. Debris in turn 1 would bring out the yellow, and it also

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See RACING, page 9
HELP WANTED

NOTICE OF JOB OPENING
Collections Clerk
Lee County Attorney’s Office
Keokuk, Iowa

Lee County Attorney’s Office has an immediate opening for a part-time collections clerk position (20 hours per week).

The position’s successful applicant is preferred (but not required) to have the following:

1. Completion of some college level administrative support courses or any equivalent combination of training and experience.
2. Knowledge of legal terminology, legal format, and legal form.
3. Knowledge of modern office practices, procedures, and equipment.
5. Knowledge of Iowa Courts Online.
6. Knowledge of Iowa Department of Transportation transcripts.
7. Ability to prepare accurate and timely documents, correspondence, and reports.
8. Ability to learn and/or operate the county Attorney’s Office computer programs.
9. Ability to understand and follow written and oral instructions.
10. Ability to use Microsoft Outlook, Word, and Excel.
11. Ability to work in a fast-paced environment
12. Ability to multi-task.
13. Ability to communicate with others using tact and diplomacy.
14. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with supervisors, attorneys, co-workers, and the public, as well as law enforcement personnel, Clerk of Court, Treasurer and Iowa Department of Transportation.
15. Ability to maintain a large filing system of current and closed files.

The starting wage is $14.96 per hour.

The deadline for submitting a resume is September 6, at 4:30 p.m.

Please send resume to Ross Braden, Lee County Attorney at P. O. Box 824, Keokuk, IA 52632 or e-mail to rbraden@leecounty.org

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City keeping tabs on engineering firm’s work

REHAB - Continued from Page 1

tage of more favorable bidding schedules.
However with the agenda item to reject the bid dying for lack of a motion, City Clerk Melinda Blind said the public hearing will likely be put back on the agenda for the next meeting to review the contract for the work.

During the meeting, Mayor Brad Randolph called a point of order to discuss the issue with the city’s attorney Robert Johnson. Randolph said he was uncomfortable with moving to the vote to reject the bid without the hearing first.

Johnson told Randolph he didn’t need the hearing if the bid rejected, but Randolph said they wouldn’t know if that happened until the council voted on it.

“I’m not sure I like that. I just want to make sure if the bid is not openly rejected for whatever reason – shouldn’t we have had the public hearing?” Randolph asked Johnson.

Bob Morawitz made a motion to reinstate the public hearing and Randolph said he was still going to hold the public hearing, despite the posted agenda indicating the public hearing would not be held.

During that hearing, Pat Jones of Jones Contracting said he had questions as to where the city was going to find the savings.

“My question is what’s going to change when you rebid it, what do you gotta do to get the price tag down, and how much faith do we have in the engineer’s estimate?” Jones asked the council.

“You’ve got a local contractor, I use a lot of local (subcontractors), I know the local market. I guess where does his estimate come into play against mine.”

Councilman Matt Mohrfeld said the questions were legitimate concerns.

Randolph asked HR Green rep Tim Cutsforth to explain the bidding process and where the difference in cost is at.

Cutsforth said that bid and the estimate compared favorably with the exception of two items which were mobilization of equipment and the cost of the 8 inch pavement.

“Those two items accounted for 97% of the overrun. I don’t want to speak for Pat, but different things that can contribute to overrun. Maybe the amount of handwork they see having to do. If they have to do a lot of handwork that’s going to raise the cost,” Cutsforth said.

“Mobilization, that sometimes can be a catch-all. If they don’t think, for instance, they can make the schedule sometimes the contractor will put liquidated damages in that item.”

He said there was also some issues with working close to the railroad, that could have added costs.

Cutsforth said he didn’t think it was realistic to now get down to the estimated cost considering the amount of time that has passed. He said he could consider some design changes that could cut the different in half.

“I think you’re looking more at $3 million project now vs what you originally had. That’s without making major compromises to the aesthetics. It would still maintain the intent of the project.”

Councilman Matt Mohrfeld questioned HR Green’s accuracy in bidding projects lately.

“You’re well aware of your history of engineering estimates on Fort Madison jobs, aren’t you?” he asked Cutsforth.

HR Green was the firm that drew ire from elected officials when an estimate for the proposed reclamation of sidewalks on Avenue G downtown was $1.9 million under a $3.4 million bid. Again, the city got just one bidder to do the project.

At the council’s last meeting, the City Council took another HR engineer to task for delays and some language issues that have the Avenue bridge project held up.

Cutsforth defended his estimating projects with the city.

“This is the first one that I’ve had that went over,” Cutsforth said. “All the other ones were under - one was 7% under estimate. I had one that was as high as 17% under estimate and the current one Avenue L project came in 16% under project. So I guess my history in this town as far as bidding projects is pretty good.”

Randolph said the council was talking about the firm’s history in general, despite Cutsforth’s performance.

“You’ve track record may be different, but we’ve had some disparity with some of the other ones, which is creating a dilemma when we’re counting on a certain number and it comes in 20% over the estimate,” Randolph said.

“We have a fiduciary responsibility to make sure we’re understanding why you’re estimate’s too low or the other end’s too high… At some point there’s a prohibitive cost value in there. If we’re $600,000 over, we’re not going to get many blocks done.”

The project is being funded through a $14 million payment to the city from the Iowa Department of Transportation, and federal Surface Transportation Block Grants.

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For Youth Development For Healthy Living For Social Responsibility

GRRWA Great River Regional Waste Authority

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For a complete listing of what we do recycle, contact your local City Hall, or one of our facilities for a service guide. Check with your local retail stores such as Hy-Vee or Walmart for their recycling capabilities. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation concerning this issue!!

From the Front

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From the Front
Safety issues at front of golf cart debate

ORDINANCE - Continued from Page 1

Morawitz on the safety issues facing motorists. “If you took this to an election it would fail,” Morawitz said.

Lair said he agreed with Morawitz and Cangas that most people he’s spoken with are against it and maybe one or two for it.

“And for the safety reason, I was involved in a minor accident at 25 mph a week ago. Car ran a stop sign and hit me broadside. Had there been a golf cart somebody would have been hurt very bad,” Lair said.

“I’m just saying it, it happens.” Morawitz said ATVs have a sticker on them that says they aren’t supposed to be driven on a paved road because they aren’t set up for that.

Morfeld said everyone shoulders personal responsibility on any vehicle for safety. He said acid testing everything on personal safety would pose the question should the city go after tobacco and alcohol related activities. “Realistically, the number one killer out there is tobacco and alcohol related incidents. Are we going to start leading against them for public safety?” Morfeld said.

Morawitz said those vehicles pose different safety considerations.

“With the golf cart you’re talking only the person hurt is the person in the golf cart, but the person who hit’s them also gets hurt,” Morawitz said.

“That would be true of any vehicle,” Morfeld replied.

Morawitz said it’s an additional safety hazard with the small vehicles that aren’t easily seen, and cars have national safety standards. He said the other vehicles aren’t allowed on streets because they don’t meet those standards. Morfeld said then that test would require looking at mopeds, motorcycles, and bicycles, but Morawitz said those vehicles have been approved for street riding. The other vehicles have not.

Cangas said ethically he has to consider the additional safety risks before he says yes or no on the ordinance.

Former councilman Brian Wright addressed the council and said the move was voted down by previous councils unanimously for safety issues and those have not changed since then.

“I’m with Chad, I think there’s safety issues and questions that need to be answered,” Wright said.

“This opens up a lot more, like Mark said, with accidents.”

The city will have the ordinance up for a second reading at its next council meeting on Sept. 3.

Gharst gets first win at Speedway

In the preview article, the Pen City Current listed the county’s current legal age for operating the vehicles on secondary roads as 16, but that is in error and the county ordinance also requires a driver to be at least 18.

“I think this is the greatest idea and you all know why I think that,” Mohfeld. “There is a trend in the state and more than 50% of the counties now have an ordinance that allows ATVs, UTVs on the roadway and they are having fairly good success.

He said other states are using it as a function of a tourism and a tool for agriculture sector. He said people could get off American Cruise Line ships and onto a six-seater to be guided through towns.

Mohfeld sparred with Morawitz on the safety issues facing motorists.

Morawitz on the safety issues facing motorists. “If you took this to an election it would fail,” Morawitz said.

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“And for the safety reason, I was involved in a minor accident at 25 mph a week ago. Car ran a stop sign and hit me broadside. Had there been a golf cart somebody would have been hurt very bad,” Lair said.

“I’m just saying it, it happens.” Morawitz said ATVs have a sticker on them that says they aren’t supposed to be driven on a paved road because they aren’t set up for that.

Morfeld said everyone shoulders personal responsibility on any vehicle for safety. He said acid testing everything on personal safety would pose the question should the city go after tobacco and alcohol related activities. “Realistically, the number one killer out there is tobacco and alcohol related incidents. Are we going to start leading against them for public safety?” Morfeld said.

Morawitz said those vehicles pose different safety considerations.

“With the golf cart you’re talking only the person hurt is the person in the golf cart, but the person who hit’s them also gets hurt,” Morawitz said.

“That would be true of any vehicle,” Morfeld replied.

Morawitz said it’s an additional safety hazard with the small vehicles that aren’t easily seen, and cars have national safety standards. He said the other vehicles aren’t allowed on streets because they don’t meet those standards. Morfeld said then that test would require looking at mopeds, motorcycles, and bicycles, but Morawitz said those vehicles have been approved for street riding. The other vehicles have not.

Cangas said ethically he has to consider the additional safety risks before he says yes or no on the ordinance.

Former councilman Brian Wright addressed the council and said the move was voted down by previous councils unanimously for safety issues and those have not changed since then.

“I’m with Chad, I think there’s safety issues and questions that need to be answered,” Wright said.

“This opens up a lot more, like Mark said, with accidents.”

The city will have the ordinance up for a second reading at its next council meeting on Sept. 3.

Gharst gets first win at Speedway

Brought the field back to Orwig’s back bumper for the restart. On the restart Orwig dropped back out front, with Jason Ash, who started 7th, and Brandon Reu, who started 8th, close behind. The action was slowed for the third time of the race on lap 10, as Kimberly Abbott slowed in turn 4 to bring out the caution. Orwig would move back out front on the restart, with Reu and Ash following.

The final caution of the race came out on lap 14, as Brandon Allison got into the field in turn 2 to set up a green-whitechecker over time finish. On the restart Orwig jumped back out front, with Chuck Fullenkamp, who started 9th, taking Reu for the run for the lead spot. Orwig then held off Fullenkamp over the final lap to claim his third win of the season at the Pepsi Lee County Speedway.

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