March 19, 2019

The Clinton Courier





Vote for Hillman Commons TIF hearing fails second time

By Katherine R. Dougan

For the second time in a month, the Board of Aldermen voted against a public hearing to discuss the Hillman Commons development and proposed Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, for the project.

The vote for an open meeting was raised again at the March 5 meeting because, according to Mayor Phil Fisher's remarks at the meeting, the terms of the project changed with the addition of the new Lions Club Park incorporated into the discussion about the TIF. Alderwoman-at-Large Rikki Garrett voted against the motion.

Last week, Clarence Chapman, the owner of Chartre Consulting, LLC, the developer of Hillman Commons, issued this statement: "Hillman Commons will be constructed with the brick exterior agreed to. Voting down the TIF cost the City of Clinton the option to immediately complete the decorative lighting of Olde Towne, as Hillman Commons, LLC, had agreed to increase the TIF by \$268,000 to complete the lighting."

In other discussion, the Board ap-



Proposed Hillman Commons

Fisher opened the meeting to allow "a vote for an open meeting and public hearing to allow discussion on the Hillman Commons as per Miss. Code. Ann. Sec. 21-45-1."

"The reason this is back on the budget is because, after talks this week, we have \$232,000 roughly raised. We have an additional \$250,000 that may be coming to us. And, in doing so, we can expand the boundary of the TIF to include the new Lions Club Park," Fisher explained, "in order to use some of that money there if we choose to. So I wanted to reopen this. This as a vote only on a public hearing for a month from now, and nothing else."

The motion was made and seconded, no members had anything to discuss, and the Board voted 4-3 to defeat the motion, with the votes remaining the same as they were the previous time. Ward 3 Aldermen Bill Barnett, Ward 4 Alderman Mike Cashion and Ward 6 Alderman Keith Perritt voted for the hearing, and Ward 1 Alderman Dave Ellis, Ward 2 Alderman Jim Martin, Ward 5 Alderwoman Jan Cossitt and proved Rob Neblett's conditional use of property at 819 E. Northside Drive for a fast food location near the Dollar General Store on Northside Drive. Neblett will use shipping containers for construction of this restaurant, which, according to Alderman Mike Cashion, is a fast-growing trend in the

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restaurant industry. Among other business, Aldermen also approved a dimensional variance for Premier Foot Clinton, 705 Highway 80, to build an addition to the existing building. Because of the odd lot size, the variances were required. AT&T received approval for a conditional use for a small cell site tower to improve signal strength and service at 322 Highway 80, and the Clinton Public School District submitted site plans for Clinton High School, 401 Arrow Drive, and Clinton Junior High School, 711 Lake View Drive, which were approved.

The next regular board meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, in the Clinton Municipal Courtroom at 305 Monroe Street.

