

City Council of the City of Carbondale, Illinois
Public Hearing on the Proposed Expansion and Extension of the
Downtown Special Service Area Number One
July 18, 2006

The City Council of the City of Carbondale, Illinois, held a Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 18, 2006, for the purpose of soliciting public comments on the proposed expansion and extension of the Downtown Special Service Area Number One. Mayor Brad Cole called the public hearing to order at 7:09 p.m. with the following-named members of the City Council present/absent:

Present: Councilman Joel Fritzler, Councilman Chris Wissmann, Councilman Steven Haynes, Councilman Lance Jack, Councilwoman Sheila Simon, Councilwoman Corene McDaniel and Mayor Brad Cole

Absent: None

Also present were City Manager Jeffrey W. Doherty, City Clerk Janet M. Vaught and various members of the City's administrative staff.

Development Services Director Beth Ponce stated that Carbondale Main Street has requested that the City Council of the City of Carbondale hold a public hearing to consider several amendments to the Downtown Special Service Area (SSA) Number One. Carbondale Main Street is requesting that the Downtown Special Service Area Number One be extended for another five years, that its boundaries be expanded by adding properties on East Main Street and that the maximum tax levy rate be reduced from \$.54 per \$100 to \$.48 per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation; the proposed levy would remain at \$40,000 annually.

Ms. Ponce noted that the Downtown SSA was originally approved by the City Council on March 19, 1996, with the adoption of Ordinance No. 96-25. The ordinance set forth the purpose of the SSA which included "the hiring of a downtown manager, coordination of promotional activities, targeting marketing and advertising campaigns, economic restructuring (business recruitment and retention), design and beautification coordination, fund raising, coordination of volunteers, and administration and management of a Main Street organization". The ordinance also delineated the boundaries of the SSA district, set a tax levy at a maximum rate of \$.56 per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation and established a sunset provision that would cease the levy after five years. The Downtown SSA was expanded and extended for an additional five years with the adoption of Ordinance No. 2001-42 on October 2, 2001. The ordinance reduced the maximum tax levy to \$.54 per \$100 of equalized assessed value with a sunset date on December 31, 2007, unless extended by the City Council.

Ms. Ponce said that the approximate boundaries for the proposed SSA are Grand Avenue on the south; the east right-of-way line of the Illinois Central Railroad, Washington Street, Marion Street and Logan Avenue on the east; properties located approximately 700 feet north of Oak Street on Illinois Avenue on the north; and University Avenue and additional properties west of University Avenue on the west.

Ms. Ponce noted that State Statutes which regulate special service areas and Ordinance No. 2001-42 allow for the proposed amendments to the SSA provided that notice is given and a new public hearing is held. The required public hearing notice was published in the Southern Illinoisan newspaper on July 2, 2006. In addition, a total of 138 property owners were notified of the public hearing by mail, as required by State Statutes. Carbondale Main Street has submitted a number of letters from both business and property owners located within the SSA in support of the proposal. As of the writing of the Request for Council action sheet, no correspondence had been received in opposition to the extension of the SSA.

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Ms. Ponce stated that any interested person may file written objections or present their objections orally at the public hearing. The Council can delete areas from the proposed SSA at the hearing or at the first regular meeting of the Council following the public hearing, however, the SSA must be a contiguous area. The State Statutes provide that a special service area cannot become effective if, within 60 days of the final adjournment of the public hearing, objectors file a petition opposing the extension and/or enlargement of the SSA. The petition must have the signatures of at least 51% of the electors (registered voters) residing within the special service area and at least 51% of the property owners in the SSA.

Ms. Ponce noted that the City Council had received a map illustrating the existing and proposed SSA boundaries, a copy of the public hearing notice, a typical notification letter sent to the affected property owners and copies of letters from business and property owners in support of the SSA. She said that it is recommended that the City Council conduct the public hearing on the proposed expansion and continuation of the Downtown Special Service Area Number One, adding that as directed by State Statute, at the public hearing the City Council shall hear and determine all protests and objections. At the public hearing, the City Council may delete properties from the proposed SSA or it may delay such decision, if one is desired, until the next regular City Council meeting following the public hearing. She concluded by noting that any additional action should be reserved for later on the agenda when an item to consider an Ordinance on this matter will be presented.

Mayor Cole thanked Ms. Ponce for her remarks and invited comments from the public during this Public Hearing on the Proposed Expansion and Extension of the Downtown Special Service Area Number One.

Randy Johnson, representing 710 Book Store at 710 South Illinois Avenue, said he would like to speak on behalf of the action before the Council. As a representative of one of the property owners downtown and one of the business representatives, they thoroughly endorse what Carbondale Main Street does. He said this addition is going to help that in several ways. He said the thing he likes about Main Street and the reason that they are still involved in it is because Main Street is one of the organizations that he can see actual practical things come out of what they do. He said they have always considered it a good investment for them to participate, both as a member and as a property owner, and they continue to see ways that Main Street continues to connect them with things going on. He said one of the big things that Main Street has been able to do lately from a business standpoint is, for them, it is important to have a connection to SIU. He noted this has not always been the case since he has been in Carbondale, adding that one of the things that has helped in the last few years is that Main Street has become very active in that participation back-and-forth between the University, giving them access to things on campus that normally would be more difficult for them to get. Mr. Johnson said he strongly urges the Council to consider this and make it a positive thing. Mayor Cole asked Mr. Johnson if he was representing 710 Bookstore or the Main Street Board of Directors. Mr. Johnson responded that tonight he is representing 710 Bookstore adding, however, that he is the Vice President of the Main Street Board.

Cordeus Love, 512 W. Owens, said that he works for New Student Programming at Southern Illinois University and is also on the Board for Carbondale Main Street. He said he wished to highlight a few things that Main Street has done for new students entering SIUC. For the past two years, Carbondale Main Street has been involved in the Saluki Information Fair with nine orientation programs throughout the year starting in August and going through July. They see over 2,200 students and over 3,000 family members who have attended the orientation programs. Carbondale Main Street has had visibility at the orientations which allows new students to learn about Carbondale. In addition, there is a Welcome Fest that is held for new students on the day of move-in. This year's Welcome Fest is August 18th at 7pm at the SIU Arena, and in 2005 there were over 1,700 attendees at the Welcome Fest. There were over 27 Chamber businesses and organizations and 14 Main Street businesses and organizations participating the 2005 Welcome Fest. Mr. Love said that Carbondale Main Street also works with the "Meet Me on Main" that is done for new students on the

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Saturday following move-in day. During that activity, students are given the opportunity to learn about Carbondale Main Street and the downtown area and they also provide live music, scavenger hunts and this year will have a pizza-tasting contest. This year, there will also be free transportation for new students to come to the Town Square. He said in the past Main Street has done welcome bags for all new students at SIU. In 2005, 33 Carbondale businesses provided welcome flyers to over 3,500 new students and as of right now over 14 businesses are providing flyers to over 3,500 new students at SIUC. Mr. Love said Carbondale Main Street also helps with move-in day with honorary Student Life Advisors and in the past there have been well over 100 employees of Main Street businesses helping with move-in. Mr. Love said he is a strong supporter of Carbondale Main Street and what it does for new students. He also noted that as a student from Chicago, coming down to Southern Illinois is a difficult change and for a lot of Chicago students it is important to learn what Carbondale has to offer. He believes that Carbondale Main Street tells students a lot about what is offered by this City.

Scott Thorne, owner of Castle Perilous Games and Books at 715 South University, said they have been at that location for 16 years but their lease expired last year. He was actively looking for a different location because they were on the second floor of that building for those 16 years and as anyone in retail knows, location is everything, adding that it is difficult for customers to see them on the second floor of the building. Mr. Thorne said that he decided to stay where he was instead of moving to one of the locations developing on the outskirts of town. He noted that he is a member of the Main Street Board of Directors and he likes the activity that Main Street does, and can see what they do for the town. He said that he has students that walk in and up the stairs to his business as a result of activities like Meet Me on Main and the Main Street Pig Out. He said those activities drive customers into his store. He also noted that it is difficult to find a new location downtown because of the number of buildings, adding that there is no empty space downtown which he believes can be attributed to the activities of Carbondale Main Street.

John Greenstreet said he was representing the Bike Surgeon on South Illinois Avenue and the Arthur Agency which just relocated from one location in the Main Street district to another location in the Main Street district. Mr. Greenstreet said they see the benefit of being involved in the downtown area, adding that they have 25 employees in the Arthur Agency and like having close walking distance to the restaurants and other activities like the Brown Bag lunches. He said that many activities that the Board and Main Street have brought to the table have encouraged relationships with the students and have brought people back into the downtown area to revitalize it, which is a significant change from when he came to Carbondale ten years ago. Mr. Greenstreet said that the downtown has grown a lot and he would like to see that continue. He said he has participated on the Main Street Board for the last year and will continue to do so, adding that he hoped that the Council sees this as something beneficial to the area and will continue to fund it.

Mayor Cole called a seventh time for public comments. There being no one else who indicated a desire to speak during this public hearing and there being further business to come before the Council at this public hearing, Mayor Cole declared the public hearing adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Janet M. Vaught, City Clerk

Approved by the Council on:
