



Office of the City Manager

**TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**FROM: Patrick Urich, City Manager** 

**DATE: August 24, 2012**

**SUBJECT: Issues Update**

The following are issues related to the City for the weekly Issues Update. If there are additional items you believe should be included, please let me know.

**NORTHMOOR ROAD STAGE 2: UNIVERSITY TO SHERIDAN.** Bids for the Stage 2 Northmoor Road Improvement (University to Sheridan) were received on the IDOT letting of June 15, 2012. R.A. Cullinan & Son, a Division of United Contractors Midwest, was the apparent low bidder with a bid of \$2,997,498.96. A letter of award was issued by IDOT on July 26, 2012. Subsequently, City Engineering Staff had a preconstruction meeting with IDOT and R.A. Cullinan representatives. At the preconstruction meeting, the contractor submitted their subcontractor plan and currently is awaiting IDOT approval of same before work begins.

If the subcontractor plan is approved in the next week, Cullinan's plan is to start construction Tuesday, September 4, 2012. The first effort will be the tree and shrub removal on the project, after which temporary, construction fencing will go up, and the existing privacy fences on the south side of Northmoor Road will be removed. All of this work will be performed under traffic, with intermittent lane closures. The retaining wall work will begin once the fence on the south side of Northmoor has been removed. The recently-widened lanes along the north side of Northmoor will be placed under traffic, probably in October, which will allow for the lane closures in the spring of 2013. Two-way traffic will remain this fall, on Northmoor Road between University and Sheridan. Weather permitting; Northmoor Road will be closed eastbound and open to local traffic, only, (residents along Northmoor) for westbound traffic in the spring of 2013. It is anticipated that this project will continue until November of 2013.

**BOARD OF LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS – SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM RESOLUTION.** The Board of Local Improvements has served the Mayor and City Council for several decades by administering the Special Assessment Program for citizens. The purpose of the attached Resolution and minutes (**Electronic Copy Only**) is to express to the City Council the importance of the Special Assessment Program and process, and some of the tangible reasons why the Board expressly wants the Program to continue.

**ILLINOIS AMERICAN WATER COMPANY RAIN GARDEN ENVIRONMENT GRANT.** The City of Peoria received an Environmental Grant from Illinois American Water to build a demonstration rain garden. The location chosen for the rain garden is near MacArthur Highway and Richard Allen Drive. The location is adjacent to Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center. (**Electronic Copy Only**)

Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with perennial plants that are located in an area to collect rain water. Rain gardens can reduce flooding, absorb pollutants and sustain wildlife. The Illinois River is on the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) list of polluted waterways. Rain gardens and other native vegetation landscapes act as "mini wetlands" filtering pollutant out of our stream and rivers, recharging groundwater. The City of Peoria's demonstration rain garden will be approximately 500 square feet by 6 inches deep and will be planted with native plants. Native plants have deep root systems that help filter pollutants, break up the soil, and promote infiltration.

The rain garden is being designed by a volunteer group consisting of members from the Spring Grove Home Owners Association, the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, Farnsworth Group, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, the NRCS NRYD Task Force, the Peoria Park District, and the Peoria Public Works Department.

The proposed rain garden location will be on both sides of the sidewalk to create the feeling of walking through the rain garden. The Right of Way (ROW) varies in this area, so the rain garden committee has recommended that we receive permission from the School District to build part of the rain garden on school property, in case our garden encroaches on their property. If the school district says the rain garden cannot encroach on school property, the rain garden will be built entirely on City property.

A letter **(Electronic Copy Only)** was sent to the school board requesting permission to build part of the rain garden on their property. The school board has requested that more information be presented about the project at their school board meeting on Monday August 27, 2012. The City Treasurer and one of the volunteers from our committee, Denise Moore, have offered to speak to the school board.

The school board will be given the location map, a flyer on rain gardens (see attached) and native plant seed packets. The information that will be presented to the school board includes the following talking points:

1. The City of Peoria received an Environmental grant from Illinois American Water Company, through the assistance of City Treasurer Patrick Nichting.
2. The demonstration rain garden is an opportunity for the community to partner to benefit the environment and our neighborhoods (See the attached flyer for more information on rain gardens and how they benefit the environment).
  - The perennial native plant rain garden protects water quality while adding beauty to the community.
  - Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with perennial plants that are located in an area to collect rain water.
  - Rain Gardens can be any size or shape—even small ones make a difference.
  - Rain gardens can reduce flooding, filter pollutants, recharge the groundwater and sustain wildlife.
3. The rain garden will be an educational opportunity to learn about rain gardens and native plants and their benefits. Educational signage will be provided.
4. The rain garden will be planted with native plants. Explain the benefits of native vegetation (see attached flyer for more information).
  - Native plants have deep root systems that break up the soil and allow for more infiltration of the runoff.
  - Native plants filter out pollutants.

- Less maintenance such as watering needed for native plants. Maintenance such as weeding is still needed.
  - Increased biodiversity (habitat for birds, bugs, and other small organisms).
5. The native plant rain garden will be built by volunteers. The rain garden committee members include representatives from these partner groups. The City would like to thank the committee members for their hard work and to thank in advance the volunteers that come out to help build the garden:
- Spring Grove Subdivision Homeowners Association
  - Heart of Illinois Sierra Club
  - Peoria Park District
  - City of Peoria Public Works Department
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service/ Natural Resources Your Development Task force (NRCS/NRYD task force)
  - Farnsworth Group, Inc.
  - Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
6. Request for permission to plant on school property
- Could potentially encroach on the school property on the east side of the sidewalk. The plan is to try to keep the rain garden on City property in the ROW, but the property line is not parallel to the sidewalk, so there could be some potential encroachment.
7. Ask for permission for volunteers to park on school property, if needed, (parking lot) for the Build Day, Saturday, September 8, 2012.
8. Dates, time, invitation to join us. We welcome volunteers to join us for the build and/or the dedication ceremony.
- Build: Saturday September 8, 2012 from 9 AM- ?
  - Dedication: Thursday September 13, 2012 time to be determined
9. Thanks for their consideration and the opportunity to discuss.

The Rain Garden Build Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 8, 2012 from 9 AM until it is finished. A dedication ceremony will be held on Thursday September 13, 2012. The time will be determined.