

## **PC Board weighs recruiters**

Before they ever choose a new city administrator, the Platte City Board of Aldermen has another decision to make — whether to hire a recruiting firm to assist them in hiring the new city official.

They most likely will make that decision at their regular Board meeting next week, but discussions started early this week after a special meeting Tuesday including a presentation on the services of Platte City human resources firm People Wise by Kevin Robinson.

While Robinson said his firm had not recruited a city administrator before, he felt as an overall human resources firm People Wise could handle the job.

“The systematic approach to filling a position doesn’t change from industry to industry,” he said, but that he did more than simply recruit. The firm performs follow-up services evaluating how well the new recruit fits the job during the first 90 days on the job.

Robinson said he could help the City assess the applications it had already received, and offered a discounted hourly rate for his services.

Board President Aaron Jung asked if he could help set up the citizens’ panel suggested last month by the Board to get citizen input on the hiring process. Robinson said not only could he assist, he would like to contribute to the panel as a concerned citizen himself.

Last week, the Board heard a presentation from Robert Saunders of Liberty-based Organization Consultants. Saunders assisted the City select two of its previous city administrators, including current administrator Keith Moody, and served as a public administrator himself in the 1970s.

He outlined a process including creating a profile of what the City needs, advertising in industry publications — which the Board has already done — and screening candidates.

City Clerk Amy Hubbard asked the Board if they wanted a potential action item drafted for the March 11 meeting to consider retaining a recruiter. Alderman Andy Stanton said he wanted to hear the opinions of all Board members on the idea of hiring a recruiter.

Alderman Todd Sloan said he believed Saunders could provide important insight into the process, as he had more experience and served as a city administrator himself. Stanton argued that Saunders services were expensive — more expensive than Robinson’s.

“This is the most important decision the City will make in the next decade,” Sloan said. “I don’t think this is the place to try to save a thousand dollars. The people of Platte City deserve better.”

Aldermen Marsha Clark and Ron Stone agreed with Sloan. Stone said he had spoken to constituents who wanted to ensure the City chose the right candidate.

“I think we can cut corners the rest of the year,” Sloan said, agreeing with Stanton’s desire for fiscal responsibility. “But I don’t think this is the place to do it.”

Jung said while Saunders certainly had the most experience choosing city administrators, he tended to work within a regular pool of candidates and Jung wondered if he would renegotiate his proposal to consider the leg work already done and candidates already pooled by the City.

Hubbard will contact Saunders this week to see if he would entertain an alternate arrangement with the Board for his services before the Board makes a decision.

## **Parkville paves way for new Fairways**

The Parkville Board of Aldermen briskly approved a large number of action items during its meeting March 4, taking care of what Mayor Kathy Dusenbery called a “lot of housekeeping.”

Most prominent on the agenda was the approval of a group of ordinances for the Fairways development, which will bring two single-storey office buildings to a 2.72-acre plot on the west side of Crooked Road approximately one-eighth mile north of 45 Highway. Among the ordinances was one approving the voluntary annexation of the property into the City of Parkville, while the others approved rezoning from a single family large lot district to a B-4 planned business district and development plans for the project.

A brief public hearing was held on the matter, during which the only person who spoke was Garland Slavens, the owner of JJ Properties, Company, LLC, which is developing the project. He said he believed the project would be “great for Parkville,” and after Parkville Community Development Director Sean Ackerson said staff had concluded that services could adequately be provided to the property, and that improvements would be made to Crooked Road, approval soon followed.

The Board also approved a rezoning of a 1.10-acre property from Parkland and Conservation District land to R-4 multiple-family residential district land – specifically the former city hall property, which will be used by the Platte County Health Department. The zoning will now allow for the modification of the building to accommodate offices, classrooms and clinic facilities which the previous zoning did not permit.

“Having the Platte County Health Department come to Parkville means a lot to the City and it is a joyous day for us,” Dusenbery said.

In other business, the Board:

- Approved a construction contract with Miles Excavating, Inc. of Basehor, Kan. for street, storm and waterline improvements for the low bid of \$2,138,284 in the newly annexed area of Brink Myers Road. The Board also approved a bid for an inspection contract for the same area with Peridian Group, Inc. for 1,200 hours at a cost of \$52 per hour, not to exceed a total cost of \$62,400.
  - Approved an ordinance for a street lighting policy which states that if a developer chooses to install decorative lights the City will pay only the cost of metered electrical power for the lights, but if a developer chooses Cobra-head lights, the City will pay the yearly lease payment for the lights to Kansas City Power and Light.
- Approved an agreement with the North Kansas City Baseball League to allow baseball games to be played on the City’s three ballfields at English Landing Park.
- Approved the expenditure of funds for repair of the White Alloe Creek bank which was damaged by floods in 2007. The City is receiving funds from the Federal Emergency Management Administration to pay for the repairs, which will be undertaken as soon as the weather permits and with consideration to what potential flooding may occur in the upcoming weeks.
  - Approved an ordinance moving the March 18 Board of Aldermen meeting to March 25 due to the Spring Fling event held by the Park Hill School District.

## **Foes rise against 680-home development**

With the proposed Lake at Tomahawke Ridge now on the April agenda for the Platte County Planning and Zoning Commission, residents opposed to the subdivision are kicking their campaign into high gear.

Approximately 50 people attended a meeting of people concerned about the project held two weeks ago at Hoover Christian Church and another meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. March 6 at the church. A Web site, located at [noto500homes.com](http://noto500homes.com), was recently launched and yard signs decrying the plan are now available as well.

“Personally, I have no problem with the subdivision if it is done properly,” said local resident Kirby Holder, who maintains the Web site.

Holder’s property backs up to the proposed subdivision, and his family was involved in a car crash on Highway 92 that makes him very aware of how dangerous that highway can be even under current conditions. He said other area roads such as Winan and Interurban roads are also unprepared for the increase in traffic 680 homes would bring.

Using the area of Interstate 35 and Highway 152 near Liberty as an example, he said development of this type needed to come slowly as an area was prepared for such development. Interested developers needed to be able to fund needed road improvements in any area they sought to build up.

He questions the findings of a traffic study done in the area by Olsson Associates, which stated in part that the roads were sufficient with some improvements such as turning lanes. One of the proposed entrances to the subdivision is not far from the intersection of Highway 92 and Interurban, where trucks from a local quarry already slow traffic.

“It’s the wrong time to put something like this out there,” he said. “Once things are built and then they realize the road is too narrow, it’s too late.”

Sharon Aring is one of the local residents spearheading the group.

“Everybody who travels on 92 would be impacted by this,” she said. “Not just the people who live out here.”

She stressed she is not opposed to development, but wants to see development that fits within the County Land Use Plan, which designates the area as rural.

“My husband and I are farmers and we would like to see the area stay agricultural,” Aring said. “Another thing people haven’t considered is if this is hooked to the Kansas City sewer system, the next step could be for Kansas City to annex the area. It’s like opening a Pandora’s box.”

A plan and rezoning request for Lake at Tomahawke Ridge has been submitted to County Planning and Zoning and calls for 680 homes off Highway 92 at Winan Road. Developer Tim Dougherty said he believes subdivision would fill a needed niche in the area market for lower-cost housing. The 335-acre development plan features a 10-acre lake, a pool, walking trails, a playground and more. Homes would begin at approximately \$160,000, with the most costly homes in the edition topping \$350-400,000.

The area is currently zoned for residential multiple dwellings, and has been zoned that way for many years, according to Director of Planning and Zoning Daniel Erickson. Dougherty’s request is to slightly alter the zoning to a planned unit development. While the zoning allows for a subdivision of this type, it does conflict with the guidelines suggested by the Land Use Plan, which classifies the area as rural, with homes placed on 10-acre lots.

The regular Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for April 8, but will most likely be changed due to the conflict with election day, Erickson said. The meeting may be rescheduled to 7 p.m. April 15.