

CITY OKS CID

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Editor

By a 4-2 vote Platte City's Board of Aldermen approved the Platte City Market Center Improvement District (CID) Tuesday night at City Hall.

Passage of the ordinance provides for a five-eighths cent sales tax to be imposed on a piece of property in Platte Valley Plaza targeted for a 50,000 square-foot Price Chopper and 11,000 square feet of additional retail space.

"I'm pleased with the vote," developer Scott Wilmoski, of Supermarket Developers Inc, said. "In the end, the residents of Platte City won."

Cash Saver co-owner Mike Rowland, who has been opposed to the CID from the outset, said he was disappointed with the City's actions.

"I thin this sets a precedent and is going to lead to the demise of small business in Platte City," he said.

"Platte City is not Platte City anymore; it might as well be Blue Springs or Liberty."

Voting for the measure were aldermen Ken Brown, Bill Knighton, Todd Sloan and Ron Stone. Aldermen Aaron Jung and Andy Stanton were opposed.

Prior to the vote, several parties spoke in opposition of the CID, including Rowland and his partner, Alan Wiest, and local resident Jim Wahl.

Each alderman also had a comment about the CID.

Jung and Stanton both said that they had talked to many of their constituents who were against the CID tax.

"Most people are in favor of the store, but not the CID," Jung said. "My vote will reflect that."

The four aldermen who voted in favor of the proposal stated similar reasons for supporting it. Namely, that the development will bring additional tax revenues into the City. Also, Brown and Stone reiterated what Mayor Dave Brooks said at the outset of the discussion: that residents who were opposed to the additional CID tax did not have to shop at the store.

Wilmoski also spoke prior to the vote and outlined reasons the aldermen should support the measure, including the quality of the development, the economic impact it will have on the City and the dedication of some of the CID tax funds towards widening and extending Kentucky avenue west to N Highway.

"This store will bring in an additional \$150,000 in real estate taxes each year and approximately \$1.25 million in sales tax revenues," he said.

Overall, the CID tax is expected to generate more than \$1.6 million over its lifespan, which could stretch to 18 years. \$920,000 of those revenues will go to the developer for infrastructure, sewer and parking lot improvements at the site. \$750,000 is targeted for the City to widen and extend Kentucky Avenue.

At a meeting last week, Wilmoski said that much of the \$920,000 will go toward meeting some area residents' concerns about aesthetic issues, such as screening the back loading dock from view with a 400-foot long irrigated grass berm and several hundred trees. He also said plans call for a new stormwater sewer line to carry water away from the area.

Next in the process will be the City's review in the coming weeks of the site plans for the project. Pending the length of that process, Wilmoski said ground could be broken this summer on the \$10 million development. He said the Price Chopper store, which will be operated by Associated Wholesale Growers (AWG) could be completed as early as late spring of 2008 and was confident the store would be open no later than the fall of 2008.

Rowland said after the meeting that he and his partner were going to conduct business at Cash Saver as usual.

"It won't be a picnic, but we're not going anywhere," he said.

Also at the meeting:

- The Board voted to allow Platte City Public Works to allow public access to its composting drop-off during regular park hours — from about 8 a.m. to dusk during warm weather. The City will add signage stipulating allowable items, and re-iterating the compost area is only for Platte City residents non-commercial use.
- With a five-to-one vote, the Board renewed the city's agreement with the Platte city Area Economic Development Council/Chamber of Commerce and approved the traditional full funding amount of \$10,000. Knighton voted to not renew the yearly agreement.

- The City unanimously approved its yearly agreement with the Platte County Economic Development Council

Shot fired in church lot crime

Citizen Staff Report

No one was injured, but a shot was fired and a church-goer was shaken up when she attempted to stop a car break-in at the Platte City Church of Latter Day Saints April 22.

Sunday morning, the victim, her husband and her son pulled into the church parking lot, located at 2700 Ensign, and noticed a 16-18-year-old white male taking a stereo from another vehicle, according to the report from the Platte City Police Department. When she and her husband approached and asked the youth what he was doing he told them to shut up. The victim grabbed the back of his shirt and the suspect threatened to shoot her. Noticing a gun in his hand she released him.

A man in a nearby white pickup truck then leaned out the vehicle window and asked her if “she wanted to die today,” raising a gun and firing a round into the air. The suspect in the truck was described as a white male approximately 20-25 years old with long blond hair and wearing a red shirt. The younger suspect, who was described with brown hair and wearing a white shirt, jumped into the truck and the men sped off. The truck, which was reported stolen from Independence, was later discovered abandoned in Kansas City, Kan.

Two vehicles in the church lot were damaged in the incident. One SUV had a smashed front door window and the stereo and a flat-panel television had been stolen. A pickup was also damaged, with the steering column broken and stereo missing. Both vehicles belonged to the same owner.

Another witness told police he may have recognized the driver of the stolen truck, and would cooperate with police to identify him.

Chief of Police Richard Sayles said blood evidence and fingerprints had been lifted from the truck and an investigation was under way.

54 stab wounds leads to murder conviction

Citizen Staff Report

A Platte County jury convicted a man of murder April 20 for stabbing another man 54 times with a knife at a park near North Congress and 70th Streets. The jury recommended Ali M. Mahamud, 21, of Kansas City, serve 23 years in prison for second degree murder and five years in prison for armed criminal action in the stabbing death of Suleyman M. Suleiman, 25.

“The defendant stabbed and sliced his victim to death with 54 separate knife wounds,” Platte County Prosecutor Eric Zahnd said. “He then told police his victim ‘got what he deserved.’ Today, this jury made certain this defendant got what he deserved.”

Zahnd argued at trial that Mahamud killed Suleiman on June 7, 2005 because Suleiman had insulted him earlier in the morning. Suleiman and Mahamud lived in the same house and referred to each other as cousins.

Mahamud stabbed Suleiman to death in a van parked at the North Congress Playground Park. Mahamud then dragged Suleiman’s body through the park and dumped the body in a shallow creek.

Mahamud was arrested the same day after Kansas City, Missouri police officers went to the Manchester Bridge overpass near I-70 in response to a report of a disturbance and possible suicide attempt. Mahamud allegedly had tried to jump off the bridge. He was pulled off the bridge and held by a family member and another passerby until police arrived.

Police searched the van Mahamud had driven to the bridge and found large quantities of blood inside.

Mahamud later gave a statement to police in which he said Suleiman “got what he deserved.” Mahamud also told police that Suleiman had made an insulting comment to him prior to the stabbing.

Jackson County Medical Examiner Mary Dudley testified that Suleiman suffered 54 stab and slice wounds to his chest, abdomen and face. Some of the wounds penetrated Suleiman’s lungs, heart and liver.

Mahamud's attorney argued Mahamud was not guilty of murder because Suleiman had tried to choke Mahamud. He said Mahamud was defending himself from Suleiman after Suleiman started to fight Mahamud by hand.

He also offered evidence that Mahamud suffered posttraumatic stress disorder as a result of traumatic experiences suffered in his native country of Somalia during his childhood.

The jury's recommended sentence sets the maximum sentence for Mahamud. He is scheduled to appear before Platte County Circuit Court Judge Abe Shafer on April 26.