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## Winchester Seeks Courthouse Square Revitalization Grant

By Shanna Relford Staff Writer

Winchester City Council met last week to handle several matters of city business. Margaret Lynch Chairman of the Downtown Professionals and Merchants Association addressed the council with a new hope for downtown improvements. Mrs. Lynch asked the council to approve Resolution #765 to allow Winchester to participate in the Tennessee Courthouse Square Revitalization Pilot Program.

This new grant program will be given out for the first time this year to one county seat in each of Tennessee's major divisions, East, Middle and West Tennessee.

If Winchester is able to receive the grant, all of the state's portion of sales and use tax generated by businesses on the Winchester Square and one block off in each direction will come back to the City of Winchester. The funds would be put into a special line item to be used only for improvements to that downtown area, such as lighting, sidewalks, etc.

The board approved the resolution, and the Downtown Committee will be working to perfect Winchester's application for the grant to be turned in by June 1, 2006.

The council unanimously approved a request from Police Chief Dennis Young, made on behalf of Franklin County churches, to hold a day of prayer and a march up Dinah Shore Boulevard on Monday, Feb. 20.

Mayor Richard Stewart proclaimed February to be Black History Month, citing the "significant role that African Americans have played in history from the early days of the pioneers to the present day." He also proclaimed Feb. 18-26 as National FFA Week in Winchester.

City Administrator Beth Rhoton gave an update on traffic signals in Winchester. The City is getting an engineer's recommendations and estimates for traffic lights at Swann Dr. and Dinah Shore Boulevard, Dinah Shore and Porter St., and Georgia Crossing and the 41-A Bypass.

Resident Terrill Farmer addressed the board with concerns about some of the traffic lights, mentioning specifically the light at Georgia Crossing and the Bypass not making proper use of the sensors installed there.

Also in old business, the council set the minimum bid for the surplus property at 806 N. Jefferson St. by the impound lot at the appraised value, and determined to sell the property at auction this spring.

Mrs. Rhoton also explained an amendment to Resolution #764 to apply for a recreation grant. The amendment simply nails down the dollar amount they actually need to apply for, since they overestimated in the original passing of the resolution to allow them to get started with the application. The city is applying for the 50/50 grant for the project total of \$212,440, with half of the monies to come from the city in in-kind services and labor.

After much discussion on the issue, unanimous approval was given to Councilman Bobby Scharber's motion to grant a 50 ft. easement to Creasman Dr. in the Crownover Industrial Park from property recently sold by Diversatech to Century Properties. A representative of Diversatech explained that after the sale was made and the new owner attempted to purchase title insurance, the title search discovered that the parcel was landlocked. Scharber's motion also stated that if the new owners would like to purchase the entire road frontage from the City, they could do so for \$5,000 an acre.

City Attorney Greg O'Neal and City Administrator Beth Rhoton discussed the status of Hundred Oaks Street. Rhoton said that in her dealings with the matter and discussion with neighbor P.K. Bramlett, she had come to believe that the street, once thought to be a city street, is indeed a private road belonging to the Bramletts. However, since nearby business owners Vernon Miller and the Adult Activity Center would like to see the road paved, Mrs. Rhoton has been working diligently with Mr. Bramlett, who is a lawyer based out of Nashville, to come to a conclusion that would be

acceptable to all parties involved.

The Bramletts and Mr. Miller were both present for the meeting last week and the two parties joined Mrs. Rhoton and Mr. O'Neal to discuss the matter privately, at the mayor's request, in his office during the meeting. Near the end of the meeting, Mrs. Rhoton returned and reported that while they still had not reached a conclusion, they were closer and that she would make a decision in the next two weeks as to whether the item should be added to the next meeting's agenda.

Councilman Terry Harrell presented a recommendation from the Winchester Planning Commission to improve Duncan Lane from a one lane to a two-lane street where it is adjacent to Cypress Estates Subdivision. Harrell stated that while they did not have a cost estimate yet for the expenditure, that it would come out of the budget for the next fiscal year. The council approved the measure, stipulating that it would be done provided Duncan Lane is a city street.

The council approved unanimously to re-open the gate to Dry Creek Beach so that area fishermen can once again have access to the boat dock there. The city had received complaints from several area sportsmen about the gates always being locked. Councilman Gene Snead commented that the gate was put up and locked in anticipation of infrastructure work to begin on the peninsula for Dry Creek Project, but since things were moving along more slowly than planned, that perhaps the gate was put up too soon.

Finally, a certificate of compliance for Ten-I-See Liquor was given annual approval by the council.

And Wayne Nuckolls was given approval to purchase a three-wheel infield pro for field maintenance at the City Park.

Winchester City Council approved Ordinance #856 for the third and final time.

Ordinance #856 amends Ordinance #506 to rezone the James Curtis property on Georgia Crossing Rd. and Veterans Memorial Drive from C-2, Highway Service Commercial District, to R-1, Low Density Residential District.