

Beds

► FROM PAGE 1U

“It really doesn’t even feel real, it feels like we’ve imagined this day for so long,” said PLANT Board Member Kerrie Willis. “It’s overwhelming ... it’s going to actually look like a community garden after today!”

Several elements of the project are still coming together. Willis hopes to have a reservation system and pricing figured out by mid-April, and said plans were still in motion for an anticipated pollinator garden along the edge of the property.

Washington High School shop class students prepared the lumber over the course of a few days, according to Industrial Tech Teacher Drew Ayrit, who coordinated the class’ efforts to assemble the beds at the garden last week.

And with a donation from the Brinton Trust to buy all needed materials, the group got to work preparing the wood ahead of its installation.

“It sounds quite simple, and it really is,” he said. “These were a really basic set of plans that the PLANT Board gave to me. The main thing, really, is what time of wood to use. We chose cedar wood, because it’s naturally kind



Students help load lumber onto a trailer at Washington High School, shortly before using it to build garden beds at Washington’s new community garden. (Kalen McCain/The Union)

of weather-resistant, and we didn’t have to put any chemicals on it.”

While the work was fairly straightforward, Ayrit added that it was a good experience for the classmates involved.

“We’re always looking for those types of things, things our students can do that will have some sort of a lasting impact,” he said. “It seemed like a good opportunity.”

Students and PLANT Board Members weren’t

the only ones with a hand on the ball.

March 11 saw a smattering of volunteers at the garden not affiliated with the school or PLANT, who showed up to help. The project’s required funding from nonprofits and coordination with the city as well, which owns the lot that was once a trash dumping site.

Beyond that, Willis said PLANT relied on expertise from various

locals, including the Seale family, who donated a handful of apple trees, and helped properly prune the fledgling orchard. Organizers also plan to involve food security groups to the project, in an effort to send some of the harvest to HACAP and possibly other food pantries.

The wide variety of input is no coincidence: it’s an intentional element of the community garden project, according to Wil-



Using scrap wood to level his work, Washington High School Student Bryce Sebelius puts together a garden bed for PLANT. (Kalen McCain/The Union)



Washington students move a constructed garden bed into place, one of many built on-site at the PLANT Community Garden last week. (Kalen McCain/The Union)

lis. “We were considering, ‘How can we involve the most people possible,

who could bring value to this project?’” she said.

Comments: Kalen.McCain@southeastiowaunion.com

Mt. Pleasant City Council reviews traffic safety, contracts, and budget updates

City Council expresses optimism for new animal control contract, prison contract work, and upcoming tax levy

By AnnaMarie Kruse, Southeast Iowa Union

MT. PLEASANT — The Mt. Pleasant City Council convened the evening of Wednesday, March 12 evening to discuss a range of issues, including traffic safety updates, a contract for animal control services, and preliminary budget considerations for the upcoming fiscal year.

The council approved the second reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 12, Section 12-6 of the city code, replacing yield signs with stop signs at various intersections. The measure aims to improve safety at locations identified by the police department.

“So, the police department wanted them safer, and stop signs are safer than yield signs,” Mt. Pleasant Mayor Steve Brimhall commented.

Intersections at East Cherry Place and South Cherry Street along with East Shaeffer Drive and South Wilson

Street will see these changes.

Additionally, the council approved a three-year collective bargaining agreement with the Public Professional and Maintenance Employees Local 2003 of the Police Union Proposal. The agreement includes a 3% wage increase per year for the next three years.

A contract with All God’s Creatures for stray and nuisance animal control services was authorized, pending the provider’s signature.

“We were worried about what to do with animals after our previous provider ceased operations,” Brimhall

said. “Fortunately, we have someone stepping in to help the community.”

The council also approved a contract with Iowa Prison Industries for mowing services in four zones within the city at a cost of \$49,500. The contract extends from April 1 through October 31 and was praised for maintaining service quality with minimal complaints.

“It has been a good, good reciprocal arrangement,” City Administrator Brent Schleisman said. “It’s been wonderful. I highly recommend you approve.”

“We’ve had the fewest complaints with

these guys doing the job than we’ve ever had,” Brimhall added. “They’ve done a great job.”

During the public forum, a resident commented the city’s street maintenance division for its prompt pothole repairs and asked questions concerning backyard burning within city limits.

Police Chief Lyle Murray answered her questions stating that there are restrictions on size and materials burned.

“It has to be campfire size,” he said. “It’s go-

ing to be small brush material. It can’t be burning car tires and stuff like that. You have to have a charged water hose. You need to be standing by and watching it.”

Additionally, smoke from these types of fires needs to raise straight up. If it is blowing, it is likely too windy for fires in backyard within city limits. The council and Murray advised the resident to give the police department a call in the future if she had any concerns about someone burning against regulations.

Before the city council meeting came to an end, Brimhall gave a brief overview of the anticipated Tax Levy to be proposed prior to the city council meeting March 26.

“Our levy will remain the same,” Brimhall said.

A \$1 monthly increase in garbage collection fees will be offset by a corresponding \$1 reduction in wastewater treatment charges.

Comments: AnnaMarie.Kruse@southeastiowaunion.com

Happy birthday!

MARCH 16

Marvin McClure, Pat McClure

MARCH 19

Debra Schmidt (Mt. Pleasant)

To list a birthday or anniversary, call 712-358-2582 or email it to lifestyles@southeastiowaunion.com. Though not required, you may also include the city and age of the birthday reveler!

Struggling with a Sports Betting Problem?

If your gambling has gone from fun to out of control, 1-800 BETS OFF can help.

There is no judgement. Just help.

1-800-BETS OFF

Your Life Iowa | Iowa HHS

Spring Into Warmth

at River Valley Place of Ottumwa

Compassionate, High-Quality, Personalized Care

We have current availability for Respite & Long-Term stays.

SAVE up to \$3,000 on April Rent when you move in by March 31!

Schedule a tour of our beautiful community today!

641-684-1871 • 173 E. Rochester Rd, Ottumwa • RiverValleyPlaceOttumwa.com

Southeast Iowa Union

319.653.2191 to subscribe

111 N Marion Ave, Washington, IA 52353

SOUTHEAST IOWA UNION:

\$36.00 three months in county
\$110.00 per year in county

\$48.00 three months out of county
\$150.00 per year out of county

Out of state and specialty rates, please call.

SE IOWA UNION NEWS:

Andy.Hallman@southeastiowaunion.com
Kalen.McCain@southeastiowaunion.com
AnnaMarie.Kruse@southeastiowaunion.com

SE IOWA UNION SPORTS:

Andy.Krutsinger@southeastiowaunion.com
Hunter.Moeller@southeastiowaunion.com

ADVERTISING:

Julie.Scott@southeastiowaunion.com
Leann.Noite@southeastiowaunion.com
Ray.Vens@southeastiowaunion.com

SUBSCRIPTION | DISTRIBUTION:

Kim.Stout@southeastiowaunion.com
Krystal.Estrada@southeastiowaunion.com

Fairfield

The Washington

Ledger Journal

Mt Pleasant

News Shopper

Clarion-Plainsman

Bercon News

Newspaper Journal

The Gazette

Folience