

OPINION: Report to the People #21

by Philip W. Chapman, County Board District Three
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I provide this “Twenty First (21) Report to the People” to assist with government transparency.

New Douglas Intergovernmental Code Enforcement Agreement: On June 1 I introduced a Resolution in the Planning and Development Committee to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between Planning and Development and the Village of New Douglas for Code Enforcement Services. At my request Mr. Matt Brandemeyer met with New Douglas Village Officials. Together they decided on a plan which will help New Douglas to enforce ordinances which will effect safety and sanitation. Many thanks to Lisa Michnmeier and Barbie Bassett of New Douglas whose efforts helped

make this possible. The resolution passed unanimously and will appear before the full County Board this month.

Fairmount Park Race Track: I introduced a motion into the Planning and Development Committee support A Resolution in favor of SB 7 to allow electronic gambling at Fairmount Park and other Illinois Racetracks. Fairmount Park employs 1500 people. Many families are fed due to its operation. Fairmount Park, with its rich heritage remains a lynchpin of the Collinsville's and Madison County's economy. In addition to \$250,000 in property taxes Madison County receives over \$80,000 in other revenues from the track. Collinsville receives over \$25,000 in taxes and fees. The State of Illinois receives over \$600,000 in taxes and fees. Electronic gaming at the track will allow it to stay open and increase the amount of racing dates and promotions thus generating additional tax and revenues to government entities. It makes no sense to allow restaurants bars, and filling stations to have electronic gaming but not the Fairmount Park Racetrack that is dedicated to gaming to have them. My resolution will move to the Finance Committee and hopefully after Finance approval to the full board.

Prairietown Variance: At the 1 June Planning and Development Meeting I moved the approval of Z17-0020. All neighbors surrounding the parcel voiced approval for the variance. The applicants worked with Mr. Doucleff of Planning and Development on a state of the art sewer system which went beyond code. Some neighbors were concerned that an additional storage building might interfere with drainage in the area. Research showed the area of roofing on shed and the house compared to the parcel remained within the 30% allowed by ordinance. A tour of the area showed that old culverts and drainage ditches have silted in preventing the necessary flow of water during some rains. I conferred with Mr. Mark Gvillo, Director of Madison County Transportation. Neighbors concerns with drainage, might best be solved by digging out the culverts and ditches in the neighborhood to the original gradient rather than preventing the applicants from having an additional building like other neighbors enjoy. Variance Z17-0020 passed unanimously.

Judiciary Committee: On June 2, I raised the issue of whether the litigious nature of the Madison County Courts and our Appellation as the "Fifth Worst Judicial Hell Hole by ATRA" hurts the Madison County economy. Recent figures showed Madison County's unemployment rate is 1% higher than Illinois (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). Illinois is last in the Mid - West. Businessmen rank the Illinois economic climate among the worst in the US. The litigation business thrives but I hope we can find ways for the Judiciary Committee working with the legal community to improve our image and enhance the overall business climate thus bringing manufacturing and other industries to Madison County.

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