



It's official: Demolition approved for Godfrey's problematic Hiway House

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY - After years of problems and one pivotal court case, Godfrey's iconic and somewhat infamous Hiway House Motel is going to be demolished.

After an Oct. 3, 2017, court hearing with Madison County Judge David Dugan, residents of the Hiway House, beside owners, the Singh Family, were given 10 days to vacate the premises. Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick said that same judge gave the village official permission to start working toward the ultimate demolition of the property after 5 p.m. Friday. Once the process begins, McCormick said Judge Dugan gave the village permission to start physically demolishing the structure as soon as Dec. 1.

"At that time, the Singh Family will have to be out of the facility," McCormick said. "The demolition will probably take longer than that. We will go for bids through the county. Hopefully, by the beginning of next year, it will be started, but I cannot guarantee that. We also need a way to secure it, so people don't break in. The sooner it comes down, the sooner the residents of the village will be happy."

This demolition is not good news to everyone, however. McCormick estimates as many as 20 families currently call the motel home, despite the safety concerns echoed by several witnesses at the court case, including the fire chief, electricians and health

inspectors. McCormick said the electrical wiring and fire prevention measures are ineffective and outdated. He also described the health conditions as "deplorable," formerly telling Riverbender.com the black mold problem was dangerous.

"We received one phone call earlier this week from a resident of that motel with small children," McCormick said. "Because of that call, we went down there today with a list of resources. When kids are involved, we do everything we can to help. Hopefully, they all find a place."

That court-mandated deadline to vacate is fast approaching - it expires on Friday, Oct. 13.

To assist the current residents of the motel, McCormick said village officials delivered a list of contact information for local shelters, including the Alton Salvation Army Corps Booth House and the Public Aid office in East Alton.

"It just wasn't safe for anyone," McCormick said. "The Village of Godfrey had a responsibility to everybody to shut that place down, due to deplorable conditions. It's years and years of neglect that finally came to a head."