



Alton City Council Passes Cannabis Tax Amendment, Other Items

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
February 22 2023 8:00 PM

ALTON - The Alton City Council passed several items at their Wednesday, Feb. 22 meeting, including an amendment to the Alton City Code regarding cannabis tax funds, the adoption of the Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan, and much more. The council also laid over a resolution regarding an agreement with Viking USA, LLC, which has raised some concerns from council members.

A resolution amending the Alton City Code, specifically [the section on the Municipal Cannabis Retailers' Occupation Tax](#), passed unanimously. This amendment delays the disbursement of funds generated by cannabis sales taxes for one year so that city officials can decide on the best ways to use those funds once they have an idea of the amount generated, which will likely be next fiscal year.

The City Council also voted to approve the Americans With Disabilities Act Transition Plan of the City of Alton. Under this plan, several properties and parks around Alton will be made more accessible and ADA-compliant. Within two years of the plan's adoption, parking lots in downtown Alton and the parking lot at Eunice Smith Arboretum will be evaluated for ADA compliance. An ADA-compliant ramp will also be constructed at the Police Department Training Building by the end of this year, and accessibility upgrades will also be made to the swimming pool at the Alton Marina.

A resolution authorizing the City of Alton to enter into a Lease Agreement and Scheduling Agreement with cruise line Viking USA, LLC, was laid over to the next meeting. Concerns have been raised by a few alderpeople in past meetings regarding some of the terms of the agreement, which as currently written, include but are not limited to the following:

- Viking may sublease or license the land outlined in the lease agreement, including portions of Riverfront Park, without the city's consent.

- Viking may assign or transfer the rights granted to it by the agreement without the city's consent.
- Viking may terminate the lease agreement without cause upon 30 days' notice.
- The City of Alton may not terminate the lease agreement at any time unless Viking breaches the conditions of the agreement.

If approved, the agreement would be in effect for a five-year term, which could be renewed up to three times. Alderman Charles Brake expressed concern about the agreement's terms and renewability, saying, "we lose control of our riverfront."

Alderman Raymond Strebel said he has been in discussions with Viking about these concerns, and Viking has agreed to concede certain terms of the agreement, though he is still awaiting their final decision on one of those terms. Strebel moved to lay over the motion until their decision is made and an updated agreement can be prepared for them to vote on.

A resolution to consider an ordinance requiring training sessions for each city official and employee concerning "the prohibited activities applicable to their respective position and the rules of ethical conduct to be demanded of each City official and employee" also passed. Essentially, this was passed to comply with the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act, which requires all municipalities to adopt it into their code.

The City Council also approved two property demolitions, one at 2107 Hazel St. and one at 303 Harriett St., the latter of which S. Shafer Excavating Inc. won the demolition bid for. S. Shafer Excavating Inc. was also awarded a property bid for 519 Anderson Street in the amount of \$12,300.00.

Element Turf & Outdoor Solutions, LLC of Alton was awarded a bid for mowing services for city and county-owned properties in the amount of \$5,000.00 per month, specifically "to mow 281 parcels at least every four weeks."

A full recording of the Alton City Council's Feb. 22 meeting can be watched above, [on Riverbender.com](#), or on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#).