

Godfrey Considering Updated Hotel Study

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
September 6 2023 11:40 AM

GODFREY - The Village of Godfrey may be considering a new study to gauge interest in a hotel opening in the village following conversations between village officials, a realtor, hotel company representatives, and more.

Economic Development Director Jim Mager said at Tuesday's Finance Committee meeting that Godfrey is missing out on revenue from visitors having to stay overnight in Alton or elsewhere - but the first step in bringing a hotel to Godfrey would be to conduct a new hotel study, since the last one was conducted in 2017.

"We ought to maybe reconsider doing an updated study," Mager said. "In 2017, we had just set up the Business District, but now we are in a position that if we did come up with a positive hotel study, that we certainly could be aggressive in improvement and also incentivizing if we had to.

"I think it would be a good idea, given the wonderful park that we have, we now have some degree of athletic tourism. The shame of it is, people come into town, they use our park, and then they've got to go to Alton for the overnight. So I really think we ought to look at the hotel climate and attract one over to Godfrey."

Mager said a realtor selling property at the intersection of Illinois 255 and Montclair Avenue asked him if the village would fund an updated hotel study so they can submit the results to Cobblestone Hotels.

Mager said he and Mayor Mike McCormick spoke with Cobblestone representatives, who said hotel construction would only move forward after they had secured \$2 million

in local equity and financing from a local bank. Mager said none of the representatives for two Godfrey banks he spoke with expressed a “significant appetite” for the loan deal, and no other potential for equity investment has been identified.

Cobblestone Hotels is a smaller regional hotel company that owns several other hotel brands and typically serves smaller communities. However, Mager said he believes it would be best for Godfrey to try recruiting a national hotel brand.

“I’ve done some research on Cobblestone, and there's really nothing wrong with their hotels, but they’re not a national brand. They’re a regional brand and they tend to locate in small towns ... not really the same profile as Godfrey,” Mager said. “If we’re going to go through this effort, we should try to recruit a national brand, not necessarily a regional brand - the point being, if you go with a national brand, you’re going to have brand preference, you’re going to have national registration systems.”

He also noted that if national brand hotel developers see market conditions as favorable, they do not rely on local investment to begin construction. Customers may also have reward points with certain national hotel brands, and Godfrey would be directly competing with Alton’s national hotel brands.

Mager said the hospitality industry is starting to bounce back from the pandemic - while business travel is still down, leisure travel is coming back strongly and is near pre-pandemic levels. He added there are two possible options at different points for the hotel study - a \$4,000 option which includes a market overview but no in-person site evaluation, or a \$9,000 option which does feature an in-person site evaluation.

While Mager did not ask committee members to take any official action on the hotel study Tuesday night, he asked them to take this information into consideration as they determine whether or not to pursue an updated hotel study.

A full recording of the Sept. 6 meeting can be watched at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).

