

Alton Mayor Goins Vetoes Full-Time Code Enforcement, Planning Directors Requirement

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ALTON - In a rare move earlier this week, Alton Mayor David Goins vetoed an ordinance passed by the City Council that would've required the city to employ a full-

time Director of Code Enforcement and a full-time Director of Planning and Development.

Currently, both positions are filled by Greg Caffey in a part-time capacity. While some council members have called for dedicated full-time employees for each, Mayor Goins has given multiple reasons for his stance against the proposed requirement in the past and while presenting his veto on Nov. 8, 2023.

At the [Oct. 9, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting](#), Alderwoman Betsy Allen said she believes both departments need a full-time director - not because Caffey had expressed difficulty handling both roles, but because her constituents have said they “would like more assistance.”

“I believe that both departments, it’s a large responsibility, and I think that it requires two people, or a full-time for each position. They’re not part-time positions,” Allen said. “We clearly have lots of issues that we need to work out.”

That same meeting, Alderman Nate Keener asked City Attorney Tonya Genovese whether the council had the authority to require these director positions, to which she replied they can amend the City Code to add the requirement, but cannot appoint anyone to either position - only the mayor can appoint someone, which would then need the consent of the City Council.

Mayor Goins said the city is down two full-time code inspectors and currently only has four, who track over 17,000 land parcels and 11,000 housing units. He said the city needs more code enforcement officers rather than a full-time director.

“You’re going to be paying a salary and a pension and everything to somebody that’s just going to sit behind a desk,” Mayor Goins said. “We don’t actually need a director, we need two more people that can go out there and do the job of code enforcement.”

Caffey said the proposed resolution has little to do with himself or his abilities.

“It’s really not a referendum about my ability to perform in this dual capacity or the effectiveness thereof,” Caffey said. “It’s really a question of the mayor’s ability to set policy, utilize staff, and make fiscal decisions under the power that’s vested in him under state statute and city code.”

At the City Council meeting that followed [on Oct. 11, 2023](#), the ordinance passed its first reading 4-3, with Alderman Keener and Alderwomen Rosie Brown and Stephanie

Elliot voting “no.” The ordinance then passed its second reading [on Nov. 8, 2023](#) on a 5-2 vote, with Elliot and Keener voting “no.” However, the ordinance was vetoed by the mayor just a few minutes later.

“Upon review of the various aspects of this matter, and particularly the financial obligations of the City of Alton, the Alton City Council has failed to provide any factual information demonstrating that any change in administrative staffing would be beneficial to the City of Alton,” Mayor Goins said as part of his veto message to the council. “Moreover, the council has been advised that the hiring of two additional code enforcement inspectors within the Code Enforcement Department would be a more prudent allocation of local resources.”

After Goins’s veto was placed on file, Alderwoman MacAfee said the council had “a right to vote against this” with a two-thirds majority vote. It was later clarified that the council could file a motion to reconsider the veto at their next meeting on Nov. 22, 2023. That motion would need a two-thirds majority, or at least five members of the council, to vote in favor to pass.

A video of the full Nov. 8, 2023 Alton City Council meeting is available at the top of this story, on [Riverbender.com/video](#), or on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#).