By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Two resolutions dealing with the city's redevelopment plan were on the city council's agenda Monday night, but no action resulted to move them forward.

Because of that, it's likely a "bucket" TIF project for a section of the downtown Imperial area won't materialize.

With no motions offered, the council chose not to vote on the issue.

Since the last meeting three of the four council members—John Arterburn, Chad Yaw and Doug Gaswick—said they visited with several business owners in the targeted downtown area and no one favored it.

"I'm in favor of the bucket TIF myself, but it's not worth the black eye we'd get over it," Gaswick said.

Mayor Dwight Coleman said he opposed the bucket TIF proposal as an inefficient program. He felt much of the money captured would go to attorney and administrative fees.

"In the meantime, our school needs to operate and would have to increase taxes," he said.

In a bucket TIF program, funds are diverted from the tax rolls to make both public and private business improvements in the specified area downtown. The tax dollar equivalent resulting only from upward changes in the bucket TIF area's valuation due to new construction, redevelopment or reassessment is "captured" and held in the "bucket" fund for projects that benefit the general public.

The proposed bucket TIF area would have encompassed from 8th Street south on Broadway to the Highway 6 intersection (by coop office), and include mostly residential areas one block east and west of that strip.

The additional tax funds gained from valuation increases could have been collected for up to 15 years and held in a "bucket" for improvements only in the specified area, rather than go to the taxing entities such as the school district, city and county.

TIF projects can only take place in a section of town that has been declared "blighted and substandard." That strip of downtown is one of five "blighted and substandard" areas identified in Imperial in a 2007 study.

It was estimated that about $190,000 could be realized "in the bucket" over the 15-year period.

Keno coming to Brickstone

Brickstone Grille & Sports Bar will be offering keno in September after a unanimous council vote.

Mike Nevrivy of Hastings Keno and Brickstone co-owner Beth Bremer were at Monday's meeting requesting the council's approval of the restaurant/bar at 415 Broadway as a keno sales outlet.

Nevrivy said the keno operation at the Imperial Eagles Club did not work out. He said very low sales, sometimes a few hundred dollars a month, were recorded when $5,000 to $10,000 should have been the norm.

Eagles ceased operation of keno earlier this month. It started operating keno in September 2011.

Nevrivy said the state has not yet approved the instant keno ticket kiosk. However, even with that option that will be available at all their outlets, a keno outlet is still required to "run the game," he said.

Other council business

- Six nuisance properties were addressed as the council and mayor met with Karl Elmshauser of West Central Nebraska Development District, the city's nuisance officer. One at 637 Park, previously declared a nuisance due to a dead tree, was rescinded as the tree was removed, he said. Other action included: 1) 640 Wellington declared a nuisance by resolution due to unlicensed vehicle; 2) 1319 Wellington declared for nuisance penal court enforcement procedure due to unfinished construction. This property was originally addressed in 2011; 3) 220 Park declared for nuisance penal court enforcement procedure due to unsecured building, and was also originally addressed in 2011; 4) 230 East 5th St., declared for abatement due to an unlicensed vehicle. While the council voted to abate the property, Elmshauser noted the owner said the vehicle would be taken care of by the end of the week; 5) 211 Park St., approved for abatement due to unsecured buildings. Elmshauser noted there are still 23 properties in Imperial that are involved in some phase of nuisance code enforcement from this year and last.
- The city may realize an estimated $22,000 from an atrazine class action settlement, according to Public Works Supt. Pat Davison in his report Monday. Imperial has a Community Water System (CWS), so it qualifies for filing a claim since past water testing showed atrazine in the drinking water from the city's power plant well, which has since been taken off the system. The lawsuit claims Syngenta knew atrazine would enter drinking water supplies. The company has agreed to a $105 million settlement. Davison said the city's claim has been filed.
- On a request from Agnes Strand, the council approved use of alcohol for a wedding reception to be held in the city gym Jan. 12, 2013. The council has approved other events in the gym that have included alcohol. A special license will not be needed by the Strands since alcohol will not be sold.
- A drawdown of $34,143 was approved from a Department of Economic Development (DED) grant used in part to fund kitchen renovations and siding at the city-owned Sunrise Apartments. Monday's request was the final one from the $100,000 DED grant.
- Budgets for the library and theatre were reviewed as the council continues to work on the 2012-13 budget.