

Waukesha Common Council approves \$750,000 land purchase for new Water Utility headquarters

Also approves rezoning on Maple Street for use by Carroll University and ward/district map redrawing

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WAUKESHA – On Tuesday, the Common Council approved a \$750,000 purchase of approximate-

ly 11 acres of land along Chapman Drive, on which a new Waukesha Water Utility headquarters is proposed to be built. The motion passed 13-1, with Alderman Rick Lemke opposing (District 14). Alderman Jack Wells (District 6)

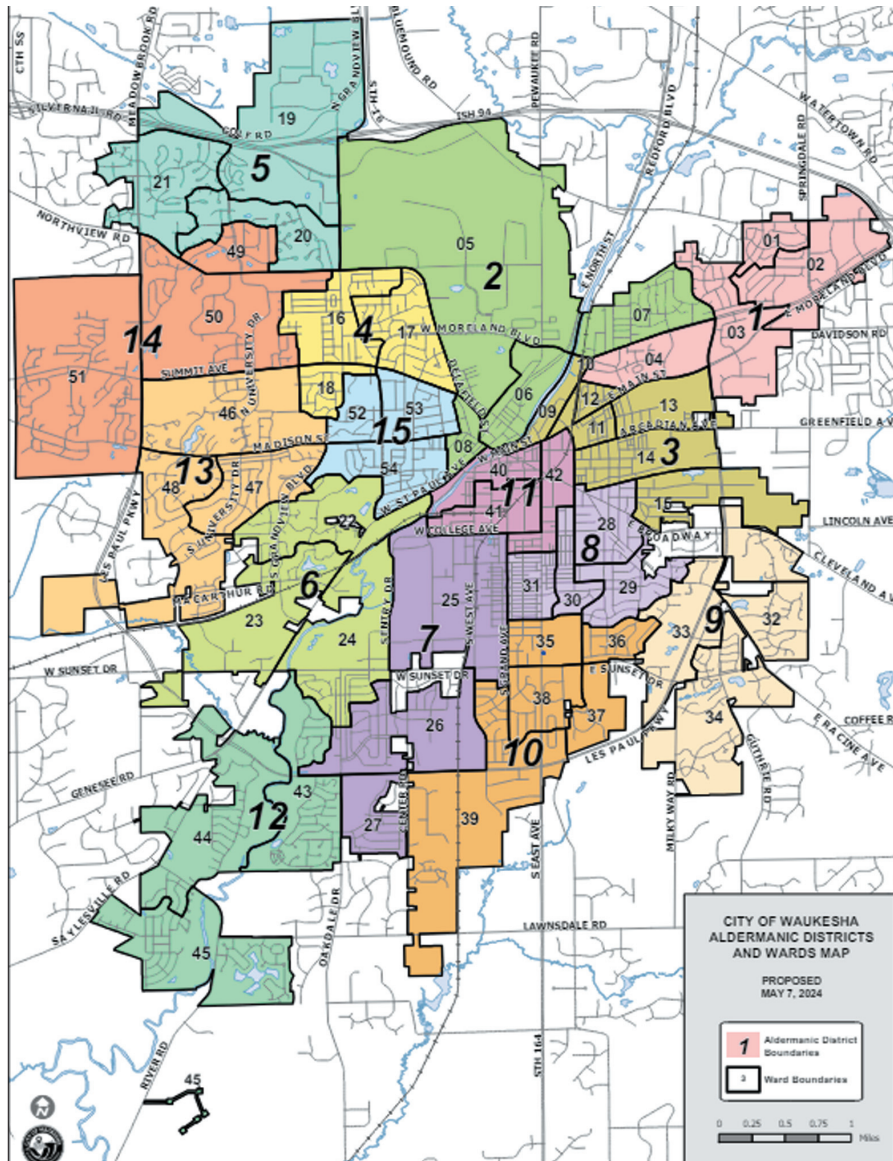
was not present. In a memo to the council dated May 2, Waukesha Water Utility General Manager Dan Duchniak presented an overview of why the new building is necessary and why the utility chose the location

on Chapman Drive. He said discussions about the future of the current headquarters at 115 Delafield St. began years ago; it was constructed in 1886, and the last major update was in the late 1970s.

In 2022, a facilities study was done to evaluate the future needs of the Water Utility, to determine if the current building would meet those needs given the major investments that would need to be

put into the aging building. Issues with the current building include the leaking roofs, asbestos remediation in two areas, security concerns, a lack of ADA compliance, and structural deficiencies, among other things. It was determined that building new headquarters would be more effective than continuing to renovate the existing one.

See **MAPS**, PAGE 6A



Waukesha city documents

This map depicts the newly adopted new aldermanic district and wards map.

Maps

From Page 1A

The Water Utility opted to relocate the headquarters to Chapman Drive rather than demolish and rebuild on the same site to avoid a temporary relocation of staff and operations during the project. Also, if moved to Chapman Drive, the Water Utility, Public Works yard, and the Clean Water Plant would be near each other, improving flow between the departments and response time to emergencies.

The Utility has been planning for improvements to the old building or the development of a new headquarters for years, even before the city made the switch to Lake Michigan water, and residents should see no change in water rates due to a new headquarters being built, according to Duchniak. The Utility has already budgeted \$19.1 million for either building upgrades or a new building at this time, and is pursuing additional federal funding options for water utility operations. Duchniak's memo also explained that the city's old well sites are likely to be sold, further offsetting the cost of the new headquarters.

Alderman Peter Bartels (District 5) made the motion to approve the purchase of the land on Chapman Drive for \$750,000. The agreement calls for \$50,000 of earnest money and provides a six-month period for the Util-

ity to complete environmental assessments on the property and apply for construction authorization from the Public Service Commission.

Duchniak previously told The Freeman that he hopes to see construction underway by late 2024 or early 2025.

Former Fox Head Brewery site

The council held a public hearing regarding Carroll University's proposal to re-zone two parcels, 211 Maple Avenue and 233 Maple Avenue at the former Fox Head Brewery site from manufacturing and general business districts to one institutional district. The university intends to demolish an existing structure on the 211 Maple parcel; there are plans to create a 243-space parking lot and reconfigure the existing building at 233 Maple Avenue for general educational uses.

After the public hearing, the council approved the rezoning, 13-1, with Alderman Rick Lemke (District 14) voting against the rezoning. He later said he was opposed to rezoning a taxable property into a tax-exempt property.

Re-warding and re-districting

The council also approved a new district and ward map, as required

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due to the redrawn state legislative maps going into effect for the fall general election.

The changes have to be made so individual wards are not split into more than one state legislative district.

At this time, Waukesha has 15 aldermanic districts; this will remain the same, but there are adjustments to a few of them. A southwestern portion of District 1 is redrawn into District 3, moving 35 residences into District 3. Also, a very small portion of District 3 containing 32 residences is redrawn into District 8. In the redrawing, two new wards were created, 53 and 54. There are also combinations of wards across the city. An updated map of the ward and district map is available in the online agenda for Tuesday's meeting.

The ordinance redrawing the maps was approved 13-1. Alderman Cory Payne (District 15) was the sole nay vote, citing how frequently his district's polling location has changed within recent years. The last aldermanic district and wards map was adopted May 3, 2022.