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Editor

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## Canton mine discussed

Both a proponent and opponents of the North Canton Mine offered their thoughts and suggestions for the project to the Canton City Council Tuesday.

Following a February announcement that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will continue with the mine's permit renewal process despite a partial denial of its permit application, environmentalists and a mine spokesperson shared information and ideas in a public participation session.

Joyce Blumenshine, chair of the Sierra Club's Heart of Illinois Group, asked the council to consider offering its comments on the permit renewal during the public commentary period established by the IDNR. She said the IDNR will likely accept comments until the end of March.

"I hope you will vote to comment on the importance of this watershed for Canton and to protect this important public resource," Blumenshine said in a memo offered at the meeting.

Additionally, Brenda Dilts, chair of the Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues, reinforced her group's mission.

"We are preserving and protecting Canton Lake because we feel it is very important," she said. "Our purpose statement is simple: The purpose of this group is to foster awareness for and appreciation for our environment and the Canton Lake, its watershed and protection of its water resources."

Brian Perbix, of the Prairie Rivers Network, also urged the council to reach out to the IDNR.

"We respectfully submit that Canton has too much to lose if this mine is allowed to go forward, and request that on behalf of all who rely on Canton Lake for clean drinking water, the City of Canton formally submit a letter to the IDNR withdrawing its support of the proposed mine."

Greg Arnett, spokesman for Capital Resources Development Company, LLC, said several agencies, including the IDNR and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, have reviewed the project and determined it is all or mostly in compliance with the regulations.

"All the people that are supposed to be charged with taking care of the environment, protecting the public interest, protecting the water, protecting the farm ground — they all said it's a good project and this project has been approved save one small stretch of a stream."

Arnett made the first comments from the mine since hearing officer Jack Price both affirmed and denied parts of the application in a decision issued Feb. 12. Price cited incorrect environmental labeling for Ravine 6, a tributary that feeds into the west branch of Copperas Creek.

The council did not discuss or take action on the issue following the presentations.

In addition, City Administrator Jim Snider presented the council with a draft of a four-year contract for police department employees.

The agreement, reached through arbitration with Policemen's Benevolent & Protective Association, would allow employees a 4 percent pay raise for the first year of the contract and a 2.5 percent increase in the subsequent years, Snider said.

The payments will be made retroactively, starting with Fiscal Year 2011.

Additionally, the contract would allow for a bi-weekly pay period and an additional paid holiday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Snider added the agreement still needs review by both the police union and the arbitration agency.

The council also viewed special event and street closure permit applications for several upcoming events.

Leonard Barnard presented the applications for the Cruise-In, an annual antique car and motorcycle show sponsored by the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce. It is slated for June 14.

"It's one of the biggest things that comes to Canton," Barnard said. "It brought in 300 cars last year, and we couldn't count the people."

Due to the success of last year's event, Barnard asked the city to close additional areas on and off of Elm in addition to the area around Jones Park.

Additionally, Dana Smith, tourism and marketing assistant for the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development, discussed the applications for the Canton Farmer's Market.



PHOTO / ALYSE THOMPSON / DAILY LEDGER

First Ward Alderman Dave Pickel meets with members of environmental group Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues at the City Council meeting Tuesday. Both environmentalists and a North Canton Mine spokesperson offered comments.

Sponsored by Canton Main Street, the event would be held in the CEFCU parking lot and Jones Park every Saturday from 7 to 10 a.m. from June to September.

Alice Herrick, of the Sweet Shoppe, also presented a permit application for a sock hop to be held Sept. 10 from 5 to 9 p.m. Herrick said she scheduled the event for a Tuesday evening, rather than a weekend, in hopes of high attendance. "Weekends, people are busy," she said. "Most people are home during the week."

Pending the presentation of liability insurance, the 50s and 60s-themed event would offer dancing and live entertainment. The council sent all three applications to next week's meeting for approval.

#### **Other business**

- City Treasurer Nicole Marter updated the council on the Local Debt Recovery program. She said the city has collected \$15,984.55 in past due water and sewage bills.

- Marter also discussed the implementation of Springbrook, the city's new software system. She said the city will be ready to go live with all of the program's financial modules by the end of the month. Marter added that progress has been going faster than originally expected.

- Second Ward Alderman Jeff Fritz offered a copy of two notices regarding pool and fencing permits and roofing licenses.

All pools containing more than 24 inches of water must be fenced in, and those who are installing any kind of pool holding 500 gallons or more of water must apply for a pool permit prior to installation.

Additionally, contractors performing roofing work for profit must have a license issued by the city.

Permit and license applications are available at [www.cantonillinois.org](http://www.cantonillinois.org). Or, call 309/647-5022 for more information.

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