

# Mayor gets new development powers

Ronald Hawkins rhawkins@reporter-times.com

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## MARTINSVILLE

Mayor Phil R. Deckard was granted additional economic development authority Thursday night by the Martinsville Common Council.

The council gave Deckard the authority to establish a re-development commission along with “the expenditure of funds as necessary.”

The commission will have five members, three appointed by the mayor and two by the council. Deckard said there would also be a non-voting school board member on the commission.

Council member Eric Bowlen said, “We felt we needed an economic development mechanism in place. It’s needed to create a TIF district.”

A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district is a public financing method used for re-development and community improvement projects.

In addition to other parts of the city, a TIF district is something that Rediscover Historic Martinsville might want to use as part of downtown revitalization efforts, councilman David Trout said.

Many potential new businesses want to see that such a district is in place and that the community has economic development authority, Trout said.

Deckard said he wanted to have the commission in place “as soon as we can get it together.”

The board will consist of volunteers, but could have legal and other expenses.

The funding will come from EDIT funds, said clerk-treasurer Mary Lou Peden and council members.

Asked if there was anything pressing that created the need for the commission, the mayor said, “It’s important for most cities that want growth to have redevelopment commissions.”

In other business, the council:

— Was introduced to Joy McCarthy Sessing, the new executive director of the Morgan County Economic Development.

— Re-elected Gary Lester as its president for 2010.

— Heard that negotiations with Gilliatte Inc., the Indianapolis builder of the city’s new fire station, are continuing. Ross Holloway, city engineer, said the company had been “very responsive” in discussions on completing the work that still remains to be done or repaired at the station that opened last summer.

— Gave final approval to a rezoning ordinance that would allow the former Grassyfork Fishery building to become a conference and banquet center. The building at 2902 E. Morgan St. has been zoned agricultural, but the change will make it B-2, a business classification. The approval came with several restrictions to use, in addition to those in the zoning, and other conditions.

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