

The Huntsville Times

Council set to discuss smoking ban for Madison

Experts on both sides will be invited to work session in fall

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MADISON - Madison city leaders are looking at an opportunity to generate up to \$10 million for capital projects.

They're also mulling over ordinances to restrict smoking in public places and prevent residents from parking cars in their front yards.

The City Council has set a work session for the end of September to discuss an ordinance to eliminate smoking in all work and public places in Madison.

The Clean Indoor Air Ordinance was introduced at Monday night's meeting. Councilwoman Cynthia McCollum, who first asked fellow city leaders to consider an ordinance in June, said a panel of experts on both sides of the issue will be invited to make presentations.

"This is to educate all of us about the perils of smoking to children and everyone else," McCollum said. "It will also reflect public opposition from business owners about how it will affect business and any person or entity."

Before the council votes on the ordinance, at least one public hearing will be held.

"Quite frankly, as this type of ordinance has gone in other cities, it can get emotional," McCollum said. "Madison has always prided itself in being fair, and this issue will be handled fairly."



"It can get emotional."

Councilwoman
Cynthia McCollum

Last September, the Huntsville City Council approved an ordinance that requires restaurant owners to either outlaw smoking throughout their premises or allow it and not allow employees or customers under age 19 on the premises.

Another proposed Madison ordinance restricting residents from parking their vehicles between the front of their home and the street was also up for review Monday night.

Council members will vote on the proposal at the Aug. 29 meeting to give the public an opportunity to comment on the restrictions.

Resident Bebe Oetjen, who regularly attends meetings, asked the council to consider enforcing similar neatness ordinances on businesses.

The council approved Councilman Larry Vannoy's proposal to allow financial consultants from Joe Jolly & Co. to draw up paperwork on the city's options of refinancing two of its bond issues through an opportunity created by Hurricane Katrina.

A federal act passed after last year's disaster would enable the board to add up to \$9.8 million to its bond debt, refinance for 30 years at a better interest rate and keep the debt payments the same as they are now.

In other business Monday, the council approved:

- Paying \$10,000 a year to the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce;

- Hiring a junior city engineer.