

# City council approves bonds

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## Bonds to help create veterans memorial

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The Huntington City Common Council voted Tuesday evening to allow the Huntington City Redevelopment Commission to take out bonds in order to fund several projects, including a veterans memorial at Memorial Park.

According to an email sent out by Bryn Keplinger,

director of the Huntington City Department of Community Development and Redevelopment, the bonds will be for up to \$7 million. He said in the email bonds will only be issued for what the projects actually cost.

"These are revenues the redevelopment commission is going to get," Keplinger said at the meeting Tuesday night. "We're just bonding against those revenues in anticipation. It's not the first time the commission's bonded; it's not the last time the commission's

bonded."

He added it will have no impact on tax rates or on the general fund.

Troy Irick, president of the redevelopment commission, said there were three project areas the bonds would help finance: flood mitigation on the east side of town, work on "key gateways" to the city and several parks and recreation projects, including trails and greenway projects and several updates to Memorial Park.

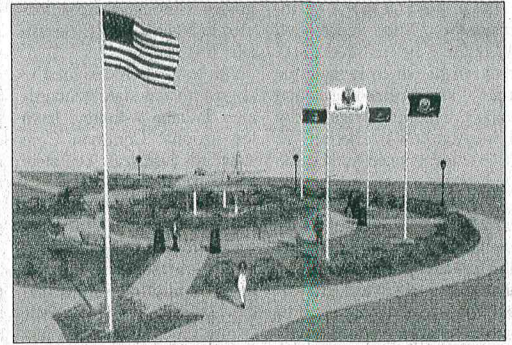


PHOTO PROVIDED

**VETERANS PARK:** Shown is a conceptual drawing of the veterans park that will be located at Memorial Park.

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Irick said the updates to Memorial Park will include moving the basketball, pickleball and tennis courts and the creation of a new veterans memorial at the park.

Keplinger said in the email the first part of the park project will go out to bid on Feb. 27 and the veterans memorial will be bid in late March with the intent of having it finished by Veterans Day.

In the email, he states the cost for the parks and recreation projects is estimated to be around \$4.1 million.

Several veterans showed up at the meeting in a show of support for the memorial and Rodney Funk, former commander of the Indiana Veterans of Foreign Wars, spoke to the council in support of the memorial.

Funk said his former position took him to all 157 VFWs in the state.

"Invariably (the other VFWs) were so proud, they wanted to take me out to their veterans memorial in their parks," he said. "Some of these were very small, some were very, very impressive. ... That's what brought it home to me, traveling around the state...that's one thing we need to have here."

Funk said several veterans have come to Huntington after he told them about the Sunken Gardens.

He said they were impressed by the park and asked the council what it would be like if Huntington had a park like what has already been designed.

"We need this," Funk said. "We sincerely need this."

Of the money being bonded out, around \$250,000 of it will go toward flood mitigation in the area of Brawley and Lindley streets, according to Keplinger's email.

"A lot of that is going to be spent on studying the issue and then we'll see where we go from there, but in order to fully solve or try to improve upon things you've got to understand what issues we have," Keplinger said Tuesday. "We've had a number of floods in recent years and the intensity of those is only increasing out there."

The road projects will include ceremonially naming Old U.S. 24 to "Bishop Noll Parkway" and putting it under a "road diet" from First Street to Broadway Street, Keplinger said in

an interview Wednesday.

"You've got four total roadway lanes there," he said. "The traffic volumes there don't warrant those lanes, so we're going to go ahead and eliminate two lanes."

The lanes will be converted into turn lanes and walking paths, Keplinger said. In addition, there will be additional signage, more plantings and better business access.

On First Street from Old U.S. 24 to Market Street will have a new curb and gutters as well as better signage, he added.