

Report: Walls crumbled before collapse

Iowa city says 3 residents still unaccounted for

Scott McFetridge, Hannah Fingerhut and Ryan J. Foley
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES, Iowa – A structural engineer report issued just days before an Iowa apartment building partially collapsed indicated a wall of the century-old structure was in imminent risk of crumbling, yet officials did not order residents to leave and said Thursday they relied on the engineer’s assurances that the building remained safe.

Three residents of the six-story building in the eastern Iowa city of Davenport are still unaccounted for and there are no immediate plans to demolish what remains of the extremely unstable structure, according to local officials. Crews were using drones to scan the building and consulting with experts about how to safely bring down the structure while being respectful of bodies that could be buried in a debris pile, Mayor Mike Matson said.

“It’s dangerous, and it’s shifting,” Matson said. The six-story building partially collapsed shortly before 5 p.m. Sunday. Rescue crews pulled seven people from the building in their initial response and escorted out 12 others who could walk on their own. Later, two more people were rescued, including one woman who was removed from a fourth-floor unit hours after authorities said they were going to begin setting up for demolition.

Earlier this week, authorities said five people were missing, but Davenport Police Chief Jeff Bladel said during a media briefing Thursday morning that two of them have since been accounted for and are safe. One moved out of the building a month ago and was found in Texas, and the other was found locally.

City officials on Thursday named those unaccounted for as Brandon Colvin, Ryan Hitchcock and Daniel Prien. The city added that “It is believed these three individuals have high probability of being home at the time of the collapse and their apartments were located in the collapse zone.”

The city on Wednesday night released documents, including structural engineering reports, that show the building’s owner was warned that the parts of the building were unstable.

An engineer’s report dated May 24, just four days before the collapse, suggested patches in the west side of the building’s brick façade “appear ready to fall imminently” and could be a safety hazard to cars or passersby.

The engineer’s report also detailed that window openings, some filled and some unfilled, were inse-

cure. In one case, the openings were “bulging outward” and looked “poised to fall.” Inside the first floor, unsupported window openings help “explain why the façade is currently about to topple outward.”

“The brick façade is unlikely to be preserved in place, but it can be brought down in a safe, controlled manner,” the report stated.

Despite the warnings, city officials did not order that about 50 tenants leave the building.

Rich Oswald, the city’s director of development and neighborhood services, said officials relied on assurances from the structural engineer that the building wasn’t in imminent danger of collapsing. Asked whether the city should have required an examination by an engineer not paid by the building owner, Oswald said professional engineers can be trusted.

“A professional engineer is certified, right? They put their stamp on that. That’s their professional career to make those decisions,” Oswald said. “An engineers report stamped by that engineer is a qualified report. They have state licensing. That’s their job.”

Residents in recent months have made numerous complaints about the building, and documents show that others also notified the city of potential problems.

MidAmerican Energy, an electric and gas utility, complained to the city in early February about an unsafe and deteriorating brick wall at the west corner of the building. The utility told city officials that its employees would not work in the area until improvements were made, including the installation of scaffolding.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, beginning at 9:00 A.M., or as soon thereafter as the items may be heard, to review the following items:

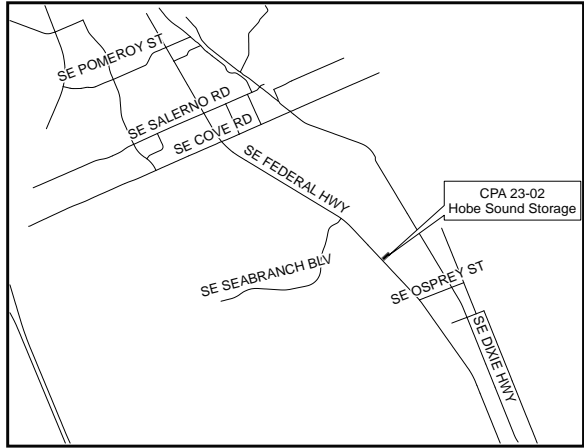
AN ORDINANCE OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, REGARDING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT 23-02, HOBE SOUND STORAGE, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF THE MARTIN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTING PROVISIONS, SEVERABILITY, AND APPLICABILITY; PROVIDING FOR FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This is a request by Employees Money Purchase Pension Plan & Trust of Boca Cardiology Associates, Babic and Vinci, P.A. to change the future land use designation from Medium Density Residential to General Commercial on approximately 4.01 acres. The subject site is located on the east side of S.E. Federal Highway, south of S.E. Heritage Boulevard and north of S.E. Poinciana Lane. Formerly known as Vineyard II, V026-002, an amendment to the Zoning Atlas was approved in 2006 on this property.

All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard. The meeting will be held in the Commission Chambers on the first floor of the Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida. Written comments may be mailed to: Paul Schilling, Director, Martin County Growth Management Department, 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996. For further information, including copies of the original application documents or agenda items, contact Daphne Schaub, Senior Planner, Growth Management Department at (772) 288-5495.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding are entitled, at no cost, to the provision of certain assistance. This does not include transportation to and from the meeting. Please contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (772) 320-3131, or the Office of the County Administrator at (772) 288-5400, or in writing to 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL, 34996, no later than three days before the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.

If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at the meetings or hearings of any board, committee, agency, council, or advisory group, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record should include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.



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Value

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- Jupiter Island: \$3.4 billion, 10% increase
- Ocean Breeze: \$84 million, 26% increase
 - Sewall’s Point: \$921 million, 11% increase
 - Indiantown: \$2.3 billion, 13% increase

Stuart continued to bear the financial fruits of multi-family developments similar to last year, with projects such as Harbor Grove Apartments, with 324 units, and the Sovana at Stuart, with 182 units, being completed in 2022.

“In Martin County in the past 10-15 years, there haven’t been a lot of apartments (built). So that is one area we are kind of paying close attention to is the apartment market. Especially with the number of projects that are in the pipeline... that are being added to the tax roll here in the next year or two,” Andersson

said. “A lot of them are in the city of Stuart.”

Indiantown saw its first increase in taxable value in two years, with a 13% increase coming primarily from Florida Power & Light Co.’s addition of equipment at its spare-parts facility in the village, Andersson said. The equipment, also known as tangible personal property, is a taxable asset.

The residential portion of Indiantown’s tax base accounts for about 13%, while tangible personal property accounts for more than 86% of the tax base, according to Interim Village Manager Taryn Kryzda.

“That’s (tangible personal property)-driven, and that’s great. We welcome it,” Kryzda said of the taxable increase. “It’s very positive. I was happy to see that because, being new out here for the most part, I wasn’t sure what we had.”

Lina Ruiz is TCPalm’s watchdog reporter for Martin County.

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Rules

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and transgender men and women.

Another rule-development workshop scheduled for June 9 addresses a new law (SB 1438) that seeks to block children from attending drag shows. The law prohibits venues from admitting minors to “adult live performances,” which are defined as “any show, exhibition, or other presentation that is performed in front of a live audience and in whole or in part, depicts or simulates nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, specific sexual activities, ... lewd conduct, or the lewd exposure of prosthetic or imitation genitals or breasts.”

The Department of Education’s proposed rule would apply to school-sponsored events and activities.

The notice of the workshop says that the rule’s purpose would be to “protect the fundamental rights of parents by ensuring that children are not exposed to inappropriate school-sponsored events and activities.”

The department also appears poised to begin the rulemaking process on a rule the agency said aims to strengthen parents’ rights and “safeguard their child’s educational record to ensure the use of the child’s legal name in school.”

The workshop on that issue comes after DeSantis signed a controversial measure (HB 1069) that limits

the way teachers and students can use their preferred pronouns in schools.

Under the new law, which goes into effect July 1, teachers and other school employees will be prohibited from telling students their preferred pronouns. Educators also will be barred from asking students about their preferred pronouns.

The notice of the workshop about students’ names said the rule being developed would implement parts of laws related to school-district records and the rights of parents and students.

“A local procedure will be developed for a parent to specify any deviation from the child’s legal name in school. This rule will ensure full transparency to enhance the student’s record and protect parental rights. Other general amendments designed to strengthen student records will also be considered,” the notice said.

Also, the education department has scheduled a June 9 workshop to flesh out a process to handle disagreements over local decisions about objections to materials used in school or classroom libraries. The process would involve special magistrates and administrative hearings.

Another rule being developed will lay out a procedure for teachers to challenge certain directives from school districts or school administrators.

Under a new law (SB 1035) signed by DeSantis, educators could request special magistrates in instances if they are “directed by his or her school district or school to violate a state law” or State Board of Education rule.

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presents

Book bans: The attack on public education

10:30 a.m. Sunday, June 4

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At first light north of Roosevelt Bridge

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