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## Commission increases age for purchasing tobacco

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The Leavenworth City Commission has approved an ordinance that will increase the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products in the city.

The ordinance, which increases the age from 18 to 21, was approved Tuesday with a vote of 3-2. Mayor Larry Dedeke and Commissioner Charles Raney voted against the measure.

City Manager Paul Kramer said the ordinance will take effect Sept. 1.

There is a national initiative in support of increasing the minimum age called Tobacco 21, and a number of municipal governments in the Kansas City area have adopted the idea.

At least eight other cities in Kansas have increased the minimum age for purchasing tobacco to 21, according to a Tobacco 21 website.

"I think it's a good program," Leavenworth City Commissioner Mark Preisinger said after the meeting.

Preisinger urged his fellow commissioners in December to consider changing the minimum age.

After the issue was discussed during a couple of study sessions, a majority of commissioners did not favor advancing the issue for a vote. At that point, Dedeke considered the issue dead.

But commissioners agreed to revisit the issue after a Tobacco 21 ordinance was passed in the city of Lansing.

Commissioners discussed the issue again during a May 24 meeting. And this time, there was a consensus to advance the measure for a vote.

Commissioners did not have much discussion Tuesday before they voted on the ordinance.

Kramer said the ordinance originally had been written to take effect July 1. But he said this may not give impacted businesses much time to educate employees about the new ordinance.

Commissioners approved the ordinance with an effective date of Sept. 1.

"I'm glad it was brought to a vote," Preisinger said.

Raney, who voiced strong opposition to the measure during the May 24 meeting, said he also was glad the matter had been brought to a vote. But he was not happy about the outcome of the vote.

Raney said he believes education is a better approach to combating smoking instead of restricting the rights of adults.

The ordinance will not change the minimum age for possession of tobacco products in the city. That age will remain 18. The ordinance only increases the age for purchasing the products.

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### In other business

The Leavenworth City Commission:• Approved an addendum to a real estate contract with Equis Hospitality Management. Equis purchased the site of the former Nights Inn at Third and Delaware streets to construct a new extended stay hotel.Under the agreement with the city, the company was supposed to start construction of the new hotel within nine months of the closing date for the purchase of the property.City Manager Paul Kramer said that deadline was June 1, but the agreement provides some flexibility.He said Equis has made a lot of progress but has not reached the point of starting construction.Commissioners approved an extension of the deadline until Aug. 1. • Accepted a bid from UMB Bank for the sale of \$5.7 million worth of general obligation refunding and improvement bonds with an interest rate of 1.66 percent. Commissioners also accepted a bid from Country Club Bank for the sale of \$1.625 million worth of temporary notes with an interest rate of 1.032 percent. • Approved the sale of Kansas state rehabilitation tax credits from the city to Henry Bloch for \$111,685. • Approved an ordinance to allow a special use for a solar collection system at 4200 S. Fourth St. • Approved an ordinance to update development regulations. • Approved a bid from Heritage Tractor in the amount of \$48,309 for a John Deere self-propelled mower. • Approved a contract with Affinis Corporation for an amount not to exceed \$35,612 for inspection

services for pavement projects. • Approved a bid from Ace Image Wear in the amount of \$24,857 for uniform rental services for the Public Works Department.

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