

Central location for city agencies discussed by Visioning panel

by **Jim Morrison**
News Editor

VINTON – Housing and a central site for city facilities are among the possible uses for the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School discussed by the city's visioning committee a week ago.

Now, committee members want suggestions from you. A "drop-in" public meeting will be April 5 from 6 until 9 p.m., to allow people to drop in, talk with committee members and then leave.

Melissa Schwan, Vinton Unlimited executive director and a Visioning Committee member, encouraged members of the public to give their input. The committee will then prepare a report for city

council members who will make the final decision.

Chris Ward, Vinton city administrator and a Visioning Committee member, said moving City Hall, the fire department and the municipal electric plant to the Old Main Building might be a possibility. With the emergency units in one location it would become a command center.

With the fire department beside the Cedar River and the Ambulance Station beside Henkle Creek, moving them to a central location away from the potential for flooding would make sense.

Not only would it

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consolidate city operations into one location and move them away for possible future floods, it would shift the backup emergency communications to a safer location.

"You want to have your emergency communications kind of far apart," said Ward.

Ward said Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) wanted the fire station and electric plant relocated.

Other suggestions included a destination museum, a brewery or a distillery, housing and relocating Kiwanis Park from the south side of 13th Street to the north side beside the current track. Because of a geothermal well field in

that area, new buildings cannot be constructed on it, but a park could be placed on it. Ward said the site now occupied by Kiwanis Park at some point was laid out for a housing addition complete with streets and sewers.

There is also strong support for retaining AmeriCorps., said Schawn and Ward.

"There were ideas concerning business, housing, government, art and culture, a tourism component," said Schwan.

She pointed out the Visioning Committee had no decision making power. It will make recommendations to the city council.