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Kelly Wood wants to get area businesses involved in Lawrence redevelopment

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BODY:

Wood to lead Lawrence redevelopment effortsLAWRENCE -- The Lawrence/Fort Harrison Development Corporation has its first executive director.

Kelly Wood, 33, who formerly worked as a neighborhood liaison to Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson's office, has been in her new job for about two weeks. She introduced herself to Lawrence City Council members Monday.

"There will be lots of community involvement," Wood said. "We're very interested in using local businesses in everything we do. It has to be a group effort."

The corporation is a nonprofit set up to help redevelop troubled areas in Lawrence, said Karen Horth Powers, president of the board.

Wood knows how to seek grant money and create alliances with other nonprofit organizations, said Horth Powers. Wood will be helpful to board members, who are volunteers, she said.

Wood, who lives in the Springdale neighborhood on Indianapolis' Eastside, said she thinks her new duties will allow her an opportunity to make a positive impact in Lawrence.

The corporation's office, in a commercial building at 4437 N. Franklin Road, is one example.

"The organization bought the building on Franklin Road because they want to be a visible part of the community," Wood said.

Also Monday:

* Council members heard a report from James Ammeen Jr., who is representing the city as it takes back its waterworks operations from Lawrence Utilities LLC, a private company.

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Ammeen told council members that the deal ending litigation between the city and Lawrence Utilities and allowing the city to take back the operation is more cost-effective than other proposals have been.

"I want to express on behalf of the mayor her satisfaction," said Ammeen.

Mayor Deborah Cantwell did not attend Monday's meeting -- held on the eve of the municipal elections.

Call Star reporter Cathy Kightlinger at (317) 444-5534.

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