

MINUTES OF THE BEATRICE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

A work session of the Beatrice City Council was held on the 26th day of January, 2015 at 8:11 p.m. at the BPS Administration Meeting Room, 320 North 5th Street, Beatrice, Nebraska.

Attending: Mayor Wirth, Councilmembers: Billesbach, Catlin, Clabaugh, Cook, Kerr, Morgan, and Parde.

Absent: Fairbanks.

Mayor Schuster announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is available in the meeting room and is accessible to members of the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve agenda as submitted.
- b. Receive and place on file all notices pertaining to this meeting
- c. Receive and place on file all materials having any bearing on this meeting.

Moved by Catlin, seconded by Billesbach, that the items listed under the consent agenda be approved, accepted, and/or ratified as presented.

Roll Call: Yea: Billesbach, Cook, Catlin, Clabaugh, Kerr, Morgan and Parde.

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Light on the Trails

Mayor Stan Wirth noted that this agenda item was request by City Councilman Ted Fairbanks. Councilman Fairbanks was not in attendance due to a previously scheduled absence. Mayor Wirth noted that the item would be brought back at a future work session meeting.

Code Enforcement in the Downtown

This item was brought at the request of City Councilman Rich Kerr. Councilman Kerr asked that the City Administration develop a policy to deal with vacant and irresponsible building owners. The Council discussed the Nebraska City ordinance which was passed in 2009. City Attorney Greg Butcher noted that the Nebraska City ordinance only deals with “vacant” buildings which are not actively for sale or rent. Butcher noted that such an ordinance may not have prevented the collapse of the 407 Court building. Councilman Kerr inquired about prior fire inspections and if those continue to this date. City Administrator Tobias Tempelmeyer noted that should the City’s inspection department go into some commercial buildings, those buildings may likely be condemned. The Council proceeded to discuss varying ideas for a vacant/commercial building inspection ordinance. Councilman Catlin noted that property owners who have their buildings up to code should be allowed to do whatever they wanted with those buildings, including leaving them vacant. Councilman Morgan would like to see the Nebraska City ordinance as a starting point for developing a formal policy. Michael Sothan Executive Director of Main Street Beatrice spoke about varying policies, “carrots and sticks”, loan programs, and certified local government certifications. Such certification would help provide assistance and programing to

the City to help develop and implement policies. David Lang and Kate Ratigan spoke as local downtown building owners. Lang spoke about the need for incentives and penalties. Ratigan noted that we should not be telling property owners what they can and cannot do with their property. Ratigan would like to see basic inspections to make sure buildings are “weather tight” and free from water/roof issues which are a predominate cause of structural concern. Mayor Wirth instructed City Administration to gather ideas and examples for future presentation to the Council. Councilman Parde wondered if a committee should handle the issue. The Nebraska State Historical Society is scheduled to speak at the February Work Session regarding certified local governments.

Impact of Minimum Wage Increase on the Water Park and Public Properties Department

City Administrator Tobias Tempelmeyer presented information on the recent state law change to the State of Nebraska minimum wage laws which recently took effect. While the City is not subject to the state minimum wage, Tempelmeyer explained that having wages lower than minimum wage in the private sector makes it hard to find quality workers. This problem specifically affects the Public Properties Department which has summer lifeguards and seasonal workers. Director of Public Properties Mark Pethoud explained how the City handled prior increases to the minimum wage. Tempelmeyer noted that the Water Park the increase in minimum wage will cost an additional \$5,000.00 in 2015 and another \$6,500.00 in 2016. These costs can be covered by a modest increase in fees and passes. These increases would require a new Fee Resolution which will need to be passed at the next City Council meeting to be in effect for a majority of the 2015 swim season. Tempelmeyer noted that in the main Public Properties Department the minimum wage increase in 2015 will result in an increase of \$2,170.56. The intention is to absorb this increase and work within our budget for 2015. The increase in 2016 is anticipated to be approximately \$5,800.00 and will be addressed in the 2015-2016 Budget.

Replacement of Curb and Gutters in Areas with Curbside Sidewalks

City Engineer James Burroughs and Street Superintendent Jason Moore presented information regarding the status of curbside sidewalks, specifically related to their status in relation to replacement of curb and gutters. Many projects in the City have required the replacement of curbing and gutters while the sidewalks (the responsibility of the adjacent property owner) are left in varying levels of disrepair. This causes sidewalks to sit below the height of a standard six inch (6”) curb creating a hazard. Other situations cause the curbing to be only a few inches high to match the low sidewalk thus creating storm water issues in a curb and gutter system designed to carry water predominantly across the roadway downstream. An additional concern is the installation of ADA accessible ramps in areas of sidewalks in disrepair. The Council discussed the idea of sidewalk districts and the idea of sharing the costs of sidewalk replacement with the property owner paying for the concrete and the City covering labor costs. The Council discussed the specifics of the upcoming Scott Street project between 6th and 11th Streets. The future of Stoddard Elementary, the potential expansion of Scott Street, the level of disrepair of the current sidewalks along Scott Street, and the installation of ADA ramps are all considerations that are playing into the planning and implementation of that project. These concerns are found in many of the other street related projects around the City. City Administration would like to develop a standard policy for dealing with this issue. One option discussed was reducing the amount of streets which are resurfaced and updating the sidewalks along all street projects. City Administration will continue to look at this issue and develop a policy recommendation for consideration at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Parde, seconded by Morgan, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Roll Call: Yea: Billesbach, Clabaugh, Cook, Kerr, Morgan, and Parde.

Nay: Catlin

MOTION CARRIED.

Attest:

Stan Wirth, Mayor

Linda S. Koch, City Clerk