

City Council Minutes: November 19, 2007

CITY OF FULTON

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 19, 2007

Mayor Van Zuiden called the meeting to order and directed the deputy clerk to call the roll. On roll call, Mayor Howard Van Zuiden, Aldermen Charles Dykstra, Gene Field, Charlie Letcher, Warren Juist, Wes Letcher, Bill Loerop and Ron Roels answered present. Merle Sterenberg, with notice was absent. Also present were Randy Balk-City Administrator and Deputy Clerk, Dan Clark-Public Works Director, Heather Bennett-Tourism Director, Clink Kettler-Zoning Officer, and Jim Rhoades-Chief of Police.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

There was no communication from visitors.

Ald. Field moved, seconded by Ald. C. Letcher to approve the regular council meeting minutes of November 5, 2007. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Ald. Roels moved, seconded by C. Letcher to approve the bill list. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Ald. C. Letcher moved, seconded by Ald. Juist to approve the treasurer's report. Roll call vote/all yes/ motion carried.

Mayor Van Zuiden asked the council if they wanted to meet only once in December. After discussion Ald. Dykstra moved, seconded by Ald. Loerop to meet only on December 3, 2007 unless another meeting is needed. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Tourism committee gave their report. Opening remarks by Heather Bennett were given. Bennett thanked the council for forming the tourism committee. Bennett stated that they have been meeting for seven months and that they have started to prioritize items relating to tourism. One of the requests the tourism group suggested to Public Works was to mow closer to the weekends at our tourism sites. The Early American Crafters have started giving tours. To date they have given 20.

Barb Mask next spoke to the council on community appearance/parks position. Mask shared how attractive surroundings initiated by the city encourage others to maintain their properties. Mask asked the council to take a leadership role.

Aldermen discussed that some of the items on the list were due to vandalism. Others were out of the city's control, for example, state highway right-of-ways.

Nancy Kolk then reviewed maintenance items. Kolk encouraged the city to keep up the good work on maintaining the structures. Kolk said the committee felt it needed to start a list of who is responsible for what. It is meant to be a communication tool between the various groups and the city. Ald. Loerop asked the volunteers to do the small maintenance items that the city might not have the time or opportunity to do.

Jane Orman discussed the programming and expansion of hours at the tourism locations. Orman suggested that expanding the hours, for example like Heritage Canyon, could bring in more revenue. Orman also questioned the use of the Frisbee and Shuffleboard areas. The committee is asking the city to consider more signage to these areas with instruction on how to play the games. Orman evaluated the current advertising and suggested that the city increase the dollars spent.

Bill Loerop reviewed the donation agreement that the city has with Henk Hielema. Loerop has asked Ron Koehn, a volunteer miller who has a good relationship with Mr. Hielema, to see if we can locate the collection, possibly at the fire station in case the museum is not realized this year. The area needed would be a site that is a slightly larger than the council chambers. Loerop said they hope to have a decision by January.

Next Loerop reviewed the finances. Loerop discussed the hotel/motel tax and did some forecasting of the receipts. Loerop asked the council to consider budgetary changes for the tourism fund, including the percentage of disbursements.

Ald. Dykstra commended the committee for their work and Loerop commented that he thought the committee has worked well together.

Bennett concluded the presentation by thanking the speakers. The city was given a list of recommendations for consideration. They included:

- Hiring of Park's Position to handle community appearance issues
- Start date for part-time public works employee at heritage Canyon (Bud Smith) moved up to around April 15, rather than the first of June

- Extend Heritage Canyon hours (buildings open) back to April 15 thru December 15, weather permitting
- Creation of signs/possible equipment rental at Frisbee Course and Shuffleboard Courts-Heather Bennett and Dan Clark could coordinate
- Hotel/Motel Tax- Heritage Canyon Parking Lot Loan
- Tourism Fund Proposal

Options for Hotel/Motel Tax:

Transfer to reserve account for future projects
Payoff interest and loan for Heritage Canyon Parking Lot
Transfer funds to the Windmill/Heritage Canyon Fund.

Randy Balk reviewed the tax levy with the council. Ald. Loerop reviewed where the city has needs and if we didn't raise the tax levy what effect it would have on the budget. Ald. C. Letcher commented that the department heads would have additional funds for operations. Ald. Roels suggested using a portion towards debt reduction. Ald. Juist said we have to stop robbing from Peter to pay Paul. City Treasurer, Garry Medema was concerned by hearing the council use the word subsidize. Medema said currently, labor is paying its fair share in water and sewer. Ald. C. Letcher discussed multiple steps or doing it just once. Balk commented, it is a difficult task for the council but it has not been done in a very long time and the correction needs to take place. The city comparables show the City of Fulton has held the line for a long period of time. This would require a public hearing because the increase is over 5%. Mayor Van Zuiden said if we don't we may have to raise water fees.

Ald. Roels moved, seconded by Ald. C. Letcher to approve the tax levy and to schedule a public hearing on December 3, 2007 at 5:30PM in the council chambers. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Balk reviewed the benefits of having a Competitive Community Initiative Study. The city has not had a comprehensive plan since 1970. If approved, DCEO would provide skilled leaders to help the city develop a steering team to organize the goals and initiatives of the city. Ald. Roels commented that we have a lot of groups now who seem to be doing that. Ald. Loerop brought up the needs for an assisted living unit. Balk mentioned other needs and that there may be some no one has thought of or suggested yet.

Ald. Dykstra moved, seconded by W. Letcher to approve that the city administrator submits a grant. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Ald. Juist excused himself from the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Ald. Loerop suggested that the council advertise for the position of caretaker at Heritage Canyon. Balk commented that the two applicants from the city have been interviewed and that they are still in consideration for the position. The caretaker committee suggested the opening up of the position before a final decision was made. Ald. Loerop moved, seconded by Dykstra to approve opening the position of caretaker to the public. Roll call vote/all yes/motion carried.

Everyone moved, seconded by the rest to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes recorded by,

Randy Balk

City Administrator

Deputy Clerk