

Mayor Dave Olson called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on August 14, 2017 with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were: Mayor David Olson, Cheryl Sanden, Matt Schutte, Kevin Knutson and Emily Krage. Also present were: Chris Peterson, Audrey Hegland, Randy Thesing, Eric Leitzen, Ellyn Baumann, Marlene Schultz, Amanda Langheinrich, Pastor David Wiersbe and Carol Meeks.

Public Comment: Concern was expressed regarding the unsightly high grass and weeds that are repeatedly found on certain lots in the City - that it generally is the same properties that are always in violation. Thesing explained that it is the City's policy that when grass/weeds reach 6" in height, the owners are sent a letter requiring them to abate the situation within 7 days of receipt of the letter. If not, the City will take care of it and charge the property owner \$40/hr. This process is repeated each time the property is in violation. After discussion, it was suggested that the policy be reviewed and adjusted to be more efficient.

Additional Agenda Items: Peterson added: Additional Street Bench.

Variance - 314 W. Spruce Street: Marlene Schultz is applying for a variance for her property at 314 W. Spruce Street, where she plans to build a new home. At this time the house would have a front yard setback of 25 ft. vs. the required 30, and a rear yard setback of 13 ft. vs. 30 ft. required. A public hearing was held on August 7, with no comments against the proposal and one in support of the proposal; the Planning Commission recommended Council approve the variance with the condition that it meets all requirements of the building code. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE VARIANCE FOR 314 W. SPRUCE STREET PROVIDED IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE BUILDING CODE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

OHV Committee Appointments: Peterson presented the list of individuals interested in serving on the OHV Advisory Committee for Council approval. Listed were the responsibilities of this committee. Their task will be to serve as a resource for the project, give updates and make recommendations to the City Council. A CEDA facilitator, paid for by excess OHV funds, will assist the group at their meetings. MOTION TO APPOINT STEVE RISCHETTE, JOHN BECKMAN, KEN JOHNSTON, JR., JON HIBBS, TONY SCHULTZ, MITCH BUBLITZ, RANDY STEINFELDT, MILO BJERKE, GEOFFREY O'BRIEN, KATE NELSON, CHRIS RODGERS TO THE OHV ADVISORY COMMITTEE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Peterson stated that a City staff person will always attend the meetings and that it is important that everyone understand that their purpose must be to act in a responsible manner with an open mind to determine how this project can move forward in the best interests of the City.

Ellsworth Street Pay Request: A request for final payment has been received from the contractor on the Ellsworth Street project in the amount of \$17,535.84. Some concern still exists about the boulevard reseeding that has not germinated in some areas. The Council felt this should not be the homeowner's responsibility to correct. MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SANDEN TO PAY \$15,535.84, HOLDING \$2,000 THEN PAY THE REMAINING BALANCE ONLY WHEN IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GRASS ISSUE HAS BEEN RESOLVED; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Cedar Street Tree Update: Krage, serving as Tree Board Chairperson, stated that at their last meeting they discussed the Cedar St. trees that are growing too large and uprooting the sidewalks. The MnDot landscaper was consulted and suggested the openings around the trees be opened up to encourage the tree roots to spread out away from the sidewalk. This has been done with three trees on the north side of Cedar St; mulch was applied around the opened area. MnDot said the trees had grown larger than anticipated which caused the problem; usually they would have been removed before this occurred. This matter will be discussed at a later time after the trees have had time for expanded root growth.

Free Church – Handicapped Parking: A request has been received from the Free Church for two handicapped parking spaces on the southwest corner of Spruce and Ellsworth Streets. The church entrance and lift are near this location so

it would be most convenient access for those who need assistance. After discussion, MOTION WAS MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO ALLOW TWO HANDICAPPED PARKING PLACES AS DESCRIBED PROVIDED THE SIGNAGE INDICATES NO PARKING ONLY WHEN CHURCH IS BEING HELD; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The church volunteered to pay for whatever costs are involved.

Playground – Proposed Design: An update on the Mission 66 Playground project was provided by Schutte. A large detailed overview of the Playground was displayed; Schutte stated the entire playground will be inclusive for those with special needs, especially the wheelchair swing that has been sponsored by a local business. Pieces of equipment can be directly sponsored as a tax deductible contribution. A fence composed of individual pickets will surround the Playground; as a fundraiser, each picket can be sponsored with a name or business inscribed. They are selling very well, \$40 each or three for \$100. The pickets as well as the Playground components will be made of a durable composite material that will last for many years.

The project is going well, especially considering it hasn't been underway for a very long period of time. A gazebo nearby is planned that will be built after the playground has been completed; it will be created by high school industrial arts students as a class project. The gazebo will provide shelter and also serve as a gathering place for people to watch the children at play or socialize. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KRAGE, TO APPROVE THE CONCEPT SKETCH OF THE PLAYGROUND; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Owl Center – Easement Proposal: The proposed International Owl Center will be located near the Trailhead Park in the area of existing houses, and will need a large portion of the greenspace for the planned aviaries and breeding program. Since the green space is City-owned land, they have requested a lease or easement arrangement. Peterson has been researching this with the LMC and the City attorney regarding the format of the agreement. The City cannot allow an easement without charging market price; however, knowing this Center will be of benefit to the City, a use agreement could be possible for an extended period of time for a minimal fee. It was noted that since the Owl Center is a nonprofit, there would be no property taxes paid.

The greenspace area is in the flowage easement. The distances between the ponding area vs. flowage easement should be determined. The area will be fenced for security and also to monitor visitors who will pay a fee to enter. The area requested will be from the levy to the highway, which would be the entire portion east of the Trail north of the drainage ditch. Peterson will work with Karla Bloem to develop an agreement. Bloem stated she would like to know if the City intends to charge vs. if the land would be free of charge for them to use.

Water Treatment Project – reject bids: The funding necessary for the water treatment plant did not materialize this year as expected, so at this time, all bids must be rejected until a later time. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO PASS A RESOLUTION TO REJECT ALL BIDS FOR THE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY (BID DATE JUNE 7, 2017); MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chamber of Commerce Event: Initially another street dance was planned for August; this will be postponed until possibly September.

Small Towns Grant Application: The KARST organization is now located in the former Schultz Law Office on Cedar Street, serving as an incubator for artists and other community-oriented groups. The KARST representative has worked on a similar project for Lanesboro, which focused on the arts. She is proposing a similar project in Houston, using Smithsonian grant funds of \$5,000 for video and other equipment necessary; the project would focus on leadership development and collaborative transformational opportunities for Houston. She would then apply for a \$10,000 SMIF grant to conduct the project, which would involve high school students who would participate in the project. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KRAGE, TO APPLY FOR THE SMIF SMALL TOWN GRANT PROGRAM; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2018 Budget – Meeting Date: Peterson explained that the preliminary levy; once approved, it cannot be increased so care must be taken in its development. The initial work session will be scheduled soon; should be held before the next Council meeting. It was decided to meet on Friday, August 18, at 5 p.m. At the September Council meeting, the preliminary levy and the 2018 Budget will be set and made available to the general public.

Fire Truck Replacement: The Fire Board won't be meeting at this time, but stated that they need a new pumper, which would be over \$60,000. This will be a shared cost to both the City and townships. MOTION BY KRAGE, SECONDED BY SANDEN, TO APPROVE A MAXIMUM OF \$25,000 FOR THE CITY'S SHARE FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE A NEW PUMPER TRUCK; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Additional Bench: New public benches were needed along Cedar Street and adjacent streets; one had been placed by the American Legion. To pay for these, a sponsorship program was developed where people or businesses can pay for half or an entire bench as a memorial or to honor someone. A permanent weather resistant plaque is then ordered inscribed with the person's name to be honored and sponsor's name. The Legion has requested an additional bench be ordered that will be a memorial for Gayl Vetsch, employee and long-time Legion supporter, that will be placed next to the door. MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY SANDEN, THAT AN ADDITIONAL BENCH BE ORDERED TO BE PLACED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION, AND THAT THE COST IS \$600 FOR AN ENTIRE BENCH; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Minutes: MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE JULY 10 MEETING MINUTES; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Report: MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KRAGE, TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. **Review of Bills:** MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SANDEN TO PAY THE BILLS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Department Reports:

Maintenance: Levee Recertification: Inspectors were here to inspect the levee; deficiencies cited were: existing cornfield area west of town that abuts the levee, and the area where the annual fireworks are done every year. Levee culverts need to be televised; it has been five years since this was done, so it should be done again now. Another deficiency identified by the inspectors regarded the rock that had been placed on top of the levee. There is grass growing through it which was not approved. Thesing will bring these areas into compliance.

City Administrator: Peterson has arranged for the old files previously stored down in the former ambulance shed to be brought back up to the City offices to prevent damage from mold or mildew that was found on one wall. Anything of historic value has been preserved, and financial records retained, as was any original old Council minutes. She suggested the Council consider purchasing a dehumidifier for the storage area to deal with the dampness.

Fire Department Minutes were included in the Council packet for review.

Adjournment: MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:16 PM BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.