

Mayor Dave Olson called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on November 13, 2017 with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were: Mayor David Olson, Matt Schutte, Kevin Knutson and Emily Krage. Also present were: Christina Peterson, Audrey Hegland, Randy Thesing, Chief David Breault, Roger Meyer, Sarah Wexler-Mann, Sue Wiegrefe, Joe Krage, Erin Dorbin, Brady Auger, Karla and Hein Bloem, John and Eileen Loken, Eric Leitzen-Fillmore County News and Lorraine Culver.

**Public Hearing:** Mayor Olson opened the Public Hearing, Vacation of a Portion of St. Paul Street, into session at 6:00 pm. The purpose of the hearing is to consider a street vacation on St. Paul Street, located next to the ballfields and Rosendahl Auto. Peterson explained that the closure will not occur until more is known about Dollar General definitely locating here, but the public hearing was being held to allow for any public comment.

Mayor Olson asked if there were any public comments. Question: *What has been discussed and possibly decided upon so far regarding Dollar General?* Peterson responded that the only things that have been done so far is to sign a purchase agreement for the lot that the City owns; the other lot needed by Dollar General is privately owned. She stated that nothing further will occur until the land needed is acquired, whether it be located at this particular site or elsewhere in the town, or even not at all.

Question: *What is the City's responsibility in getting the word out to the public to avoid rumors. There is no official communication from the City on issues that would be of interest or concern to the public.* Council responded that the agenda is posted on the City's website the Friday prior to the meeting and minutes are published in the Banner for all to see. There being no further public comment, Mayor Olson closed the Public Hearing at 6:04 pm.

**Trailhead Park Zip-Line Update – Roger Meyer:** Meyer provided an update about the recent installation of a zip-line in Trailhead Park. It has been completed, inspected by a licensed state inspector, and a grand opening held. There were only two minor corrections necessary as per the inspector, which have been taken care of. The zip-line will be inspected every year, including checking for any possibility of vandalism damage. It will be open and staffed by volunteers on weekends. The cable will be removed every evening and stored in the Nature Center. At this time, it is closed for the year and will open again in the spring. It has proved to be a very popular addition to the Park.

**Southern MN Initiative Foundation Grant – Erin Dorbin, KARST Driftless Guidepost:** Peterson introduced Erin Dorbin, of KARST, and asked the Council to accept a \$10,000 grant agreement from SMIF to fund a county-wide project she is coordinating, entitled "Stories – YES Houston." An additional \$5,000 grant from the Smithsonian has been received. The project will involve up to 10 area youths from 8-12<sup>th</sup> grade, connecting them with a wide variety of people to research and document local history stories. Another outcome from the project may be ideas to connect the Trailhead with the downtown.

Dorbin will begin recruiting youth for the project, including students from HHS. It is one of six communities selected to participate in this project this year. She will schedule orientation workshops on the interview process, research and documenting their findings, and finally, participants will produce an exhibit based on their interviews. MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO ACCEPT THE \$10,000 SMIF GRANT FOR THE KARST PROJECT; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Trailhead Park – Owl Center Lease:** The Owl Center is requesting an exclusive perpetual easement from the City for the new Owl Center aviaries and paths pertaining to the portion of the Trailhead Park, north of the band shell extending west of Hwy 76 to the bike trail. The proposed Owl Center building would be on private property. They

have drafted an Easement Agreement for Council approval. Krage questioned Item 4.3 under Construction and Maintenance and Repair, as to what the City's responsibility would be regarding the drainage ditch. Thesing stated that the City must retain control over the drainage ditch as it must be maintained.

It is the Center's intent to obtain the legal and binding Easement Agreement at this time even though the Owl Center will not be built in entirety until funds are available. Bloem stated that having the Agreement in place will aid in fundraising efforts. If the Center does not take possession of the property within 10 years of executing this document, the easement rights shall be terminated. Options for the City would be to grant the easement which would mean a one-time payment; if structured as a lease, it would mean annual payments. The City will get advice on the value of the property, bearing in mind the value would be different than ordinary acreage. Bloem stated she had sought advice from a local realtor who said it is not possible to appraise the property since there are no comparisons available. She requested the Council approve and sign the Easement Agreement as a legally binding document, even though actual building and exchange of money will not occur at this time.

Parking: A question was voiced regarding parking for the Owl Center. Bloem said they intend to use the Nature Center parking lot, since it has 80 parking spaces and should be adequate. The Council felt this should be discussed further.

Question: Does the Owl Center have a minimum area is needed for the paths and aviaries, since the City must keep the drainage ditches and ponding areas clear. After further discussion, it was decided to follow procedure and direct the Planning Commission to review the Agreement and make a recommendation to the Council.

**Playground Project – Grants:** Peterson and Hegland have been working on a large \$40,000 matching grant for the Mission 66 Playground. The City cannot technically apply for the grant so the school agreed to be the sponsoring agent and partner in the project at no cost to the school, with the Mission 66 group doing the work and fundraising. As of this date, it is unknown how specific the partnership can be. In order to make the November 22 deadline, and meet the required \$40,000 matching funds, it is requested that the Council agree to back this amount, with the reassurance that there is more than this amount available in cash and reputable pledges on hand. MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KNUTSON, TO BACK THE MATCHING FUNDS NECESSARY AS OUTLINED BY PETERSON, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$40,000; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Attorney Jed Hammell Resignation:** City Attorney Jed Hammell is closing his law practice. The City has been using both Flaherty and Hood of Winona as well as Hammell for civil/land use legal services. Peterson recommended continuing with Flaherty and Hood for now. Regarding prosecution services, the Council would prefer to retain a local attorney in Hammell's place. Chief Breault will be asked to make a recommendation to the Council for a local attorney who would best serve the City's needs for prosecutions.

**Annexation by Ordinance (Ord. 226) – Follow-Up:** The annexation has been completed and filed at the County and with the State Office of Boundaries. Peterson recommended two years of taxes be reimbursed to Houston Township to meet the legal requirement. The annual tax amount at township rate was calculated by the County Auditor in the amount of \$676.92. MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO REIMBURSE \$676.92 PER YEAR FOR TWO YEARS TO HOUSTON TOWNSHIP; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**2017 Street & Utility Improvements (Elm and Stoddard Streets) – Pay Estimate #1:** MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO PAY THE \$250,012.62 TO ALCON CONSTRUCTION OF ROCHESTER FOR THE STREET AND UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS ON ELM AND STODDARD STREETS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Fire Relief Association – Gambling Permit for February 17, 2018:** MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 17 GAMBLING PERMIT FOR THE FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Sheldon Valley Sportsman's Association – Gambling Permits for January 19, 2018 and February 16, 2018:**

MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO APPROVE THE GAMBLING PERMITS FOR THE SHELDON VALLEY SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION FOR JANUARY 19 AND FEBRUARY 16, 2018; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Banyon Accounting Software Training:** With Larry Jerviss retiring at the end of the year, Peterson requested Council's approval to bring a representative from Banyon to Houston for two days for onsite training for Suzie Peterson, Jerviss' replacement. The software training would include utility and fund/pay accounting, and cost of \$800.00. MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO BRING A BANYON REPRESENTATIVE ON SITE TO PROVIDE TWO-DAYS OF SOFTWARE TRAINING ON UTILITY BILLING AND FUND/PAY ACCOUNTING FOR SUZIE PETERSON; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Peterson will arrange for the training.

**Water Meter Reader – Purchase:** As of next year, MiEnergy will no longer read the City's water meters. In order for the City to read the meters, a new hand-held reader is necessary. Thesing recommends the Orion Trimble Ranger 3 at a cost of \$8,500. Along with many other desirable features, the Orion will interface directly with Banyon and will download automatically into the system. This will save many man hours of hand entry as had previously been necessary. MOTION BY KRAGE, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO PURCHASE THE ORION TRIMBLE RANGER 3 READER AS RECOMMENDED; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Fire Department – Assistant Chief Appointments:** Fire Chief Joe Krage stated there were three applicants for the two positions for Assistant Chief. The Personnel Committee and Fire Department personnel interviewed the three and recommend the Council appoint Brandon Olson and Steve Skifton as Assistant Chiefs for a two-year term. MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO APPOINT BRANDON OLSON AND STEVE SKIFTON TO TWO-YEAR ASSISTANT CHIEF POSITIONS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Minutes:** MOTION BY KRAGE, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 10 MINUTES AS PRESENTED; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Financial Report:** MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. A second MOTION WAS MADE BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO PAY THE BILLS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Department Reports:**

Maintenance: Snowplowing season is approaching. The City will plow the streets when 3 inches of snow has accumulated, and everyone must comply with keeping their cars off the street during this time. Thesing stated that the Elm Street and Stoddard Street reconstruction went well and is completed. Maintenance staff are hanging Christmas wreaths and decorations on the main streets.

Chamber: Sarah Wexler-Mann reported that the Chamber has had some successful events this year and hopes to get more volunteers to free up her time to work more with the local businesses. She is attempting to get a volunteer internship with area high school students to work with local businesses on a job shadowing basis. She has finished up the grant work for the summer concert series. She mentioned the Hollidazzle that will be held on Saturday, December 2 with a holiday decoration contest for local businesses, with prizes given. Knutson expressed his appreciation to Brady Auger for actively promoting the area businesses and some new promotion ideas.

Tree Board: Krage stated MnDot came down regarding the Cedar Street tree problem. The City cut back some of the cement around the trees that were uprooting the cement of trees located by businesses in hopes the roots would spread out further, eliminating the problem. This will be rechecked next year. The Tree Board is reapplying for the Tree City designation.

**Adjournment:** MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:35 PM BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY KRAGE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.