
**SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2003**

ROLL CALL

Mayor John Swedberg called the meeting to order and Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Alan Bauer, Andrew Larson, Barbara Leach, Cheryl Maness, Pete Paulsen, Chuck Stowe and Janice Tripp. Alderperson Pam Blickem was absent.

INVOCATION

Steve Perrson of the First Baptist Church gave the invocation

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Alderperson Maness moved to approve the agenda and Alderperson Larson seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons present voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of January 20, 2003;
- B. Payment of the Bills for February 3, 2003 in the amount of \$325,052.44.
- C. Plan Commission Minutes for the Meeting of January 13, 2003.
- D. Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes for the Meeting of June 25, 2002.

Motion

Alderperson Bauer moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons present voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

Alderperson Maness inquired about the removal of the fence around the new public parking lot at Somonauk and State and Mr. Nicklas said the Street Department would remove it when the ground thawed so they could get the posts out of the ground. Ms. Maness said that a person inquired and offered to remove the fence and take away the debris. Mr. Nicklas said he felt it was the City's responsibility.

Aldersperson Tripp reported three communications regarding the streets in Turner Subdivision wondering when they would receive curbs, gutters, and sidewalks to upgrade the neighborhoods. Administrator Nicklas said it was a question of sources and uses and a challenge to the Council because this would require increased taxes. Ms. Tripp said the callers were willing to pay utility taxes if that revenue would improve the streets.

Aldersperson Larson said that there were semi-tractors parking in his neighborhood and inquired if there was an ordinance addressing this. Administrator Nicklas said that anything over one ton was not permitted parking on residential streets.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Administrator – Bill Nicklas said that if there was a vehicle issue like Aldersperson Larson was inquiring about, they should contact him or the police chief. Mr. Nicklas said that Engineer Brady and Police Chief Thomas had a response to the traffic issues in Townsend Woods. Mr. Nicklas handed out suggested names and logos for the new City Hall and invited Council comments.

Engineer – John Brady - no report

Building & Zoning - Lyle Doty – no report

Treasurer – Ken Mundy – no report

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle said yesterday was Ground Hog Day and that according to Sean Penn everyday was Ground Hog Day in Afghanistan. Chief Riddle reported that the dispatchers had begun training to run the fireboard at the County.

Police Chief – Don Thomas reported that in a week more Telecommunicators would go over to the County leaving a skeleton crew of five people to run dispatch twenty-four/seven. Chief Thomas explained that once dispatch was eliminated the building would be locked after 5:00 p.m. The outer door entering the police department will be open and the inner door locked with a phone between the two doors. The outer door will be equipped with a thumb latch to lock the door behind the person in case they are in danger and the phone can be used to call 911 for the County to dispatch an officer. Chief Thomas said that research proved that once a victim was inside the door their pursuer generally would drive away. Dispatch would be vacated mid-March.

Chief Thomas reported that the Townsend Woods intersections he researched for traffic signs had little traffic history. He said that in new subdivisions, sign placement was guided by traffic control engineering. Chief Thomas recommended placing yield signs on Ashwood Drive @ Kevin and Martin Streets.

Public Works Supt. – Fred Busse – no report

Water Supt. – Ebe Smith thanked Public Works for their assistance with the eight watermain breaks that occurred since the last Council meeting. Superintendent Smith also said the two industries, Seymour and Ideal, were very cooperative during the repair of watermain breaks near their businesses.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – no report

Ordinance – Chairperson Cheryl Maness said she would like to have the liquor license review placed back into Ordinance Committee and Mayor Swedberg agreed.

Police & Fire - no report

Sewer & Water – no report

Streets & Walks – Chairperson Pete Paulsen thanked Engineer Brady and Chief Thomas for their attention to traffic control in Townsend Woods Subdivision.

PUBLIC HEARING

None

ORDINANCES

- A. Ordinance No. 2002.68—An Ordinance Concerning the Recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals With Regard to the Request of Mike Carpenter, dba Prairie Place LLC, and Andy Morreale, dba Energym, for a Variance From Section 11.08.01 B, 1(a) of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Sycamore. First and Second Reading.**

Administrator Nicklas explained that Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Morreale had businesses at 1711 and 1715 DeKalb Avenue. Mr. Nicklas said they were requesting a sign variance. Mr. Nicklas explained that Zoning Officer Doty supported the variance because given the narrow dimensions to the lot, two ground signs allowed by the current code would be more obtrusive than one pylon sign and the proposed pylon sign was in character with the signage on that portion of Sycamore Road. Mr. Nicklas said the Zoning Board recommended its approval by a vote of 5 to 1 with one member suggesting placing the sign as far back on the 20-foot easement as possible.

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to hear Ordinance 2002.68 on first and second reading and Aldersperson Larson seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons present voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to approve Ordinance 2002.68 and Aldersperson Bauer seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons present voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

RESOLUTIONS

None

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation Regarding a New Telecommunication Tax.

Administrator Nicklas provided Council, at their direction, with further background for the Telecommunication Tax as well as a tax on all utilities and fee and license increases. Mr. Nicklas explained that the increases were a way to keep property taxes down.

Aldersperson Tripp asked if the Telecommunication Tax was only on long distant calls and Mr. Nicklas said the tax was on the basic service before any taxes.

Aldersperson Maness recommended going with a 5% tax so this would not have to be revisited and raised like the Home Rule Tax. Ms. Maness said this tax could be justified after working on the budget.

Aldersperson Bauer agreed that the Home Rule tax was started too low, but he felt it was the Council's responsibility to keep taxes down and wanted to initiate the tax at the lowest rate possible.

Aldersperson Larson said he would rather see building fees increased before starting a Telecommunication Tax, but if that were not feasible he would support Aldersperson Maness with the 5% rate.

Mayor Swedberg said he understood Aldersperson Maness' reasoning, but he thought this was an unknown gain and encouraged Council to hold the Telecommunication Tax to 3.5%. The Mayor did not want to burden the economy with any more tax than necessary.

Administrator Nicklas explained the reason he suggested 4% was that it could only be raised in July and he said that practically speaking he would be hard-pressed to sustain the City's level of service with less.

Aldersperson Tripp said she would rather support a full utility tax, but would be willing to go with a 5% Telecommunication Tax. Ms. Tripp also recommended the \$3000 annexation fee - that new development needed to support the burden it was placing on the existing town.

Aldersperson Paulsen agreed that new development should pay for itself, but said that replacing K-Mart lost revenue was only a short-term problem and did not want to create an excess of revenue.

Aldersperson Tripp said she did not think an excess was possible when the City needed to begin an aggressive street repair program.

Aldersperson Maness said that increasing the annexation fees to \$3000 was asking new people to pay for things that should have been repaired twenty years ago. Ms. Maness said that the Telecommunication Tax would involve the whole population.

Aldersperson Tripp said the annexation fee increase could be rebated to industrial and commercial development. She said she did not want to discourage the type of development that created jobs, but felt that residential development could be slowed down.

Mayor Swedberg asked for approval or disapproval of Administrator Nicklas' recommendations.

Motion

Aldersperson Maness moved to accept a 5% Telecommunication Tax and Aldersperson Tripp seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a roll call vote. Those Alderperson voting aye were Maness, Stowe, Tripp, and Larson. Those Alderperson voting nay were Leach, Paulsen, and Bauer. Motion carried 4 – 3.

Motion

Alderperson Larson moved to accept the recommended fee increases for building, dog licenses, and liquor licenses and Alderperson Bauer seconded the motion.

Administrator Nicklas suggested eliminating the dog license increase, he said he could most likely find that \$2000 or so somewhere else.

Motion

Alderperson Stowe amended the motion for fee increases by eliminating the dog license increase and raising scavenger fees to make up that difference. Alderperson Bauer agreed to the amended motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote. All Alderpersons present voted aye. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Motion

Alderperson Tripp moved to accept increase the annexation fee to \$3000 and dedicating \$2000 of it to the general fund, \$500 to the sewer fund, and \$500 to street repair over and above that already budgeted and Alderperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote. All Alderpersons present voted aye. Motion carried 7 – 0.

B. Consideration of an Administration Report on the Bids for the Conversion of the Former Henderson Building.

Administrator Nicklas said the City received three bids Friday, January 31, 2003. Mr. Nicklas said the low bidder was Ringland-Johnson of Rockford, but because of the City's local preference policy, local firm Irving Construction was willing to accept the lowest bid amount. Mr. Nicklas said he and John Brady and Mr. Irving walked through the building and felt confident that Mr. Irving understood the plans and scope of work. Mr. Nicklas asked for a sense of the body to execute a letter notifying Mr. Irving that the City intends to award a contract on contingency that over the next couple of weeks his shop drawings come in and meet or exceed all the specifications. Mr. Nicklas said he would have a resolution awarding the contract at the next regular meeting. The Council gave approval to execute the letter.

C. Consideration of an Administration Report on the Bids for the Conversion of the Community Center.

Administrator Nicklas said they received three bids for the conversion of the Community Center. Mr. Nicklas said the low bid of TASC Contracting was consistent with the project budget of 1.2 million dollars. No action was expected. Mayor Swedberg asked for recommendations from jobs completed by TASC. Mr. Nicklas said they would walk through the building with TASC personnel to go over the specifications.

D. Consideration of an Administration Report on the Bids for the Conversion of the Former Street Division Garages.

Administrator Nicklas explained that the bids had been extended by trade. Mr. Nicklas said the lowest bids came in totaling \$120,000 and only \$80,000 had been budgeted. He said they may throw out all the bids and talk with individual contractors. Mr. Nicklas explained that the Street Division was already doing some of the work, but they were limited because of other responsibilities.

APPOINTMENTS

None

Mayor Swedberg reminded Council that the Council-Manager Ad Hoc Committee would be meeting Wednesday

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. and Aldersperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Approve:

Mayor – John L. Swedberg

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith