
**SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2003**

ROLL CALL

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

INVOCATION

Steve Persson of the First Baptist Church gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Alderperson Maness moved to approve the agenda and Alderperson Leach 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

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Joint School Board/City Council Meeting of November 17, 2003;
- B. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of November 17, 2003;
- C. Minutes of the Zoning Board Meeting of July 22, 2003;
- D. Payment of the Bills for December 1, 2003 in the amount of \$202,624.47.

Motion

Alderperson Stowe moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Kessler 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.

Mayor Swedberg said there were about 20 Boy Scouts in the audience for their citizenship badge. Ray Heran, Assistant Scoutmaster, said they were Troop 40 from St. Mary's Church and appreciated being at the meeting.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas said December 15th they would honor employees with anniversaries. Mr. Nicklas said he wanted to take the time to thank John Brady for his leadership on the Home Street project as well as Water and Public Works for their work on the project. Mr. Nicklas also thanked the Fire and Police Departments for honoring Representative Wirsing and former Fire Chief Linville upon their deaths.

Engineer – John Brady reported on a traffic study for a 4-way stop at Ottawa and Main requested at the last Council meeting. Mr. Brady said the Police Department conducted the study the previous Tuesday. He said the standards were 500 vehicles per hour at an intersection 8 hours of the day and 200 vehicles per hour on the minor street. He said they conducted the study at the peak traffic times of the day and reported only 151 vehicles at the intersection. Mr. Brady said that intersection did not merit a 4-way stop.

Building & Zoning –Lyle Doty – no report

Treasurer – Ken Mundy – no report

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle said Former Chief John Linville was buried with full firefighter honors. He had been a firefighter for 24 years and retired as Chief in 1992. Chief Riddle said he had left behind a fine department and had started the EMTI program. Chief Riddle thanked his widow Barbara and daughter Nancy for stopping at the Fire Department earlier in the day.

Police Chief – Don Thomas - no report

Public Works Supt. – Fred Busse - no report

Mayor Swedberg thanked Superintendent Busse for his help moving the Santa House to its location on State Street.

Water Supt. – Ebe Smith - no report

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – no report

Ordinance – no report

Police & Fire – no report

Sewer & Water – no report

Streets & Walks – no report

PUBLIC HEARING

None

ORDINANCES

- A. Ordinance No. 2003.66--An Ordinance Amending Title 3, "Business and License Regulations," Chapter 2, "Liquor Control," Section 11, "Building and Location Restrictions," Paragraph A, "Specific Locations Established," of the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. Second Reading.**

Mayor Swedberg said this was heard on first reading November 17th to give the public opportunity for comment. He said Park District Director David Peek was in the audience to answer questions. Mayor Swedberg said there was a plat of property showing the exact location where alcohol would be served. Mayor Swedberg highlighted the following conditions:

→ Alcoholic beverages shall be consumed on the premises only;

- Space for the consumption of alcoholic beverages shall be limited to an indoor lounge, restaurant, or food court, or an attached area for outside seating. Such outside seating shall be an adjunct to the food service business of the Park District;
- Any allowable outside seating shall be enclosed with a non-barricade type fence or railing or other barrier that allows viewing;
- Access to any outdoor seating shall be limited through the licensed premises or monitored entrances that are controlled by employees during all hours when alcohol may be served;
- Outdoor seating shall not be included to meet the required guest seating capacity;
- Music may be played in the outdoor area but may not exceed ordinance limits;
- The hours of operation are restricted from twelve o'clock noon until dusk.

Aldersperson Paulsen said he thought this was long overdue and felt it had kept the Park District at a disadvantage.

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to approve Ordinance 2003.66 and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. Six Alderspersons voted aye with Aldersperson Stowe abstaining. Motion carried 6 - 0 - 1.

Park District Director David Peek said he appreciated Council's support and said they would take their responsibilities seriously.

B. Ordinance No. 2003.67—An Ordinance Concerning the Recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals With Regard to the Request of Laurence and Donna Dibblee for a Variance from Section 9-7-3 of the Sycamore City Code to Permit a Five-Foot Tall Fence in the Required Front Yard. First and Second Reading.

Manager Nicklas said the Zoning Board of Appeals heard this appeal last week and asked Zoning Officer Doty to join in with details. Mr. Nicklas said the Dibblees had a unique lot with 3 front yards and to conform to Sycamore zoning they would only be allowed a 3-foot fence on 3 sides of the lot. He said they met 2 of the 3 hardships required to grant a variance, but could not meet the hardship of not being able to yield a reasonable return on their property. He said the Board felt empathy for the circumstances, but recommended denying the request for variance and staff recommended concurring with the Zoning Board.

Mayor Swedberg said the Zoning Board did their job, but Council may need to review some of the restriction in the near future. Mayor Swedberg said he did not think their request was out of order.

Zoning Officer Doty said the Zoning Board discussed reviewing the restrictions and requirements while keeping in mind visibility of driveways next to fences.

Aldersperson Stowe said he thought they should hear this on first reading in order to review restrictions before making a final decision. He said he would like to save them the cost of republishing.

Manager Nicklas said they were already revisiting the Zoning Code and the process would take about two months. He said he thought the requester wanted an answer before that.

Consensus of Council was to hear the ordinance on first reading.

Mr. Nicklas said he would get suggestions for new fence regulations to the Council at the next meeting. Zoning Officer Doty said the regulations were in the City Code, so the change would not need to go to Plan Commission, but eventually the regulations should go into the Zoning Code.

Motion

Aldersperson Bauer moved to hold over Ordinance 2003.67 until the January 5, 2004 meeting and Aldersperson Maness 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 a Presentation By the Sycamore Economic Development Commission, Featuring a Local Business.

Manager Nicklas explained the Economic Development Committee recommended featuring a local business at Council meetings. He said the first to showcase their business would be Ideal Industries & Sycamore Prairie Business Park's Chairman of the Board Dave Juday.

Mr. Juday handed out brochures of Ideal's product line and Sycamore Prairie Business Park. He said Ideal Industries had changed and grown since the 1970's and said that manufacturing employment was down 11% in the U.S. and down 15% in China. He said the distribution market was tough and their customer base had changed and their largest customer is Home Depot. Mr. Juday said they had to be where the customer wanted them to be and sell what the customer wanted. He said they had to maintain their product differentiation and strive for being the low cost producer by doing more for less. Mr. Juday said it was a conscious choice to have their world headquarters in Sycamore and have done everything they can to maintain the family ownership style. He said over the last two weeks they reduced the work force by 30 people and he said that was an agonizing decision.

Mr. Juday said they did not want to be the last factory in town which is why they developed Sycamore Prairie Business Park. He said he could have bought the land and built houses and made money with less stress. He said he did it to establish a manufacturing base and they needed the City's help by also providing a residential base.

Mayor Swedberg thanked Dave Juday for the business profile of Ideal and Sycamore Prairie Business Park.

B. Consideration of the Annual City Property Tax Levy.

Manager Nicklas said before he launched into this item he wanted Council to know that in the next 24 hours he was drafting a letter to Superintendent Bob Hammon to pass onto the School Board regarding CCI property tax abatement. Mr. Nicklas said this was the kind of company desired for the abatement program. Mr. Nicklas thanked Mr. Juday for not only taking care of Ideal Industries, but looking out for Sycamore with Sycamore Prairie Park and attracting a broader tax base.

Mr. Nicklas said he would bring back the levy and abatements as ordinances at the December 15 meeting.

Hearing no discussion, Mayor Swedberg moved onto the next item.

C. Consideration of the Bids for the Remodeling of the Public Safety Building.

Manager Nicklas said the second lowest bidder has submitted a letter accepting the lower bid according to the City's Local Preference Policy. Mr. Nicklas said Ringland Johnson submitted the lowest bid, but he did not feel they met the criteria of the local bidder policy which states the business must be located in DeKalb County. Mr. Nicklas said the language was crafted so the home base is located in the County and after conferring with the attorney, they concluded a local office did not meet the criteria. Mr. Nicklas recommended awarding the contract to Irving Construction under the Local Preference Policy.

Jerry Dunham, 8255 Gurler Road, said he was asked by Ringland Johnson August of this year to work for them and set up an office in DeKalb. He said the office was in his home and has a phone line and a fax and the company is interested in work in the area. Mr. Dunham asked Council to honor Ringland Johnson as the low bidder.

Mayor Swedberg asked if the phone line was his home phone line and Mr. Dunham said it was. Mayor Swedberg asked if there was other office staff and if there was a sign outside. Mr. Dunham said there was no other staff nor was there an outside sign.

Aldersperson Kessler said according to a letter from the Northern Illinois Builders Association Ringland Johnson's address was Cherry Valley.

Aldersperson Bauer suggested rejecting all bids and sending them out again.

Mr. Nicklas said they could vote for the local preference, award the bid to Ringland Johnson, or rebid. Mr. Nicklas said the local preference could be working against the City by limiting bidders. He said according to the local preference policy he did not think Ringland Johnson qualified as a local business.

Mayor Swedberg said he thought the decision should be made on the current bids. He said he did not think losing a \$231,000 job would turn a good, competitive company like Ringland Johnson away.

Aldersperson Tripp said she bought the argument of the home office and asked if most of the sub-contractors would be local and Mr. Dunham said they would.

Aldersperson Stowe said he understood the intent of the local preference policy and thought the wording needed to be clarified. He said the current wording does not specify headquarters located in the county.

Motion

Aldersperson Tripp moved to award the contract to Ringland Johnson for \$231,000 and Aldersperson Stowe seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. Five Alderspersons voted aye with Bauer and Paulsen voting nay. Motion carried 5 - 2.

Manager Nicklas asked how to propose using UAL Funds and Mayor Swedberg said he assumed that motion entailed that. Aldersperson Tripp said it did.

D. Consideration of the Annual Sycamore Chamber of Commerce Report on Recent Tourism Activities.

Beth Helton, Discover Sycamore Coordinator, said Discover Sycamore goals were to attract business and promote business. Ms. Helton said she has a list of available empty space and is in contact with the DeKalb Area Realtor Association and the City to try to attract businesses downtown. She said Discover Sycamore is reestablishing an economic committee to create a strategic plan for economic development. She said tourism is a main focus of Discover Sycamore and she has just been appointed as Visitor Bureau Committee Chair.

Rose Treml, Chamber of Commerce Director, said they had received 1500 responses from a newspaper insert. She said the Chamber promotes business and needs Discover Sycamore because they cannot do it alone.

Aldersperson Kessler said she appreciated the work being done.

E. Consideration of a Report From Assistant to the City Manager Brian Gregory on Recent Improvements to the City's Web Page.

Manager Nicklas said Council had asked him to enhance the economic development effort and one way of doing that was to update the web presence. He said Brian Gregory was instrumental in enhancing the website.

Brian Gregory, Assistant to the City Manager, said he was making the website more user friendly. He also had created a feedback section that allowed browsers to interact with the site. Mr. Gregory walked Council through his enhanced pages.

Aldersperson Stowe said he was impressed with the sight.

APPOINTMENTS

None

Mayor Swedberg thanked the ladies for the cookies and the Chamber for the chocolate. He said the downtown looks awesome thanks to the merchants, chamber, and city.

Aldersperson Kessler said she wanted to comment on the response from the Sycamore School Board in the Chronicle in regard to the CCI property tax abatement. She said we are competing with the world and need to be conscientious about getting industry. Ms. Kessler repeated what Dave Juday had said earlier that CCI could be the cornerstone of future industry. She said the City has reduced our tax rate and has been in constant communication with the school district regarding growth. She said the shortsightedness of the School Board disturbed her because there was no money lost since currently the land was taxed as agriculture.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. and Aldersperson Leach 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.

Approve:

Mayor – John L. Swedberg

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith