
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF AUGUST 2, 2004

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, Terry Kessler, Cheryl Maness, Pete Paulsen, Chuck Stowe and Janice Tripp.

INVOCATION

Mayor Swedberg asked for a moment of silent reflection.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Alderperson Bauer moved to approve the agenda with the addition of a Closed Session to discuss personnel and Alderperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 -0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Alderperson Kessler asked to have Joe Bussone sworn upon his late arrival.

Peter Barick, 433 W. High Street, requested no change in election of the treasurer position. Mr. Barick also noted that the 5 options regarding the Council position on residential growth management all fail on one point in that annexations are permitted. He said the inspectors are overworked and will not be able to make thorough inspections. Mr. Barick said the advisory question called for no annexations for 7 years.

Martha Wetzel, 839 Vaughn Street, said a reason is needed for a recommendation for a change. She wanted to know what proof there was that an appointed treasurer would improve the position. She said an elected official answers to the public and an appointed official answers to very few. Ms. Wetzel said as far as growth, the Council should be listening to the citizens.

Carolyn Watson, 1863 Kerrybrook Court, said the word "moratorium" does not bother her a bit because the definition is a temporary cessation of an activity. She said the only development desired is industrial or commercial. Ms. Watson encouraged Council to say no to residential developers.

Darren Knuth, 1844 Perry Court, said he finally got the information that the future population desired for Sycamore is 25,000 by the year 2020. He said we're there with the permits already on the books. Mr. Knuth said that Sycamore will still be desirable in 2014 if they hold off permitting until then.

Mike Carpenter, Carpenter Real Estate and Development, DeKalb, said he has developed three lots on Route 23 two of which are in Sycamore. He said it is a time of attractive interest rates and development activity is good. Mr. Carpenter said retail is driven by rooftops and Sycamore is losing sales tax to DeKalb. He said he attended the shopping center conference in Las Vegas and people were asking what is going on in Sycamore.

Steve Hovany said he was asked to speak on behalf of a few developers as a consultant from Schaumburg. He said he has been in the fast growth communities, including Naperville, for 30 years. He said it is a myth that growth causes tax rate increases; he said that costs increase with no growth. Mr. Hovany said that developers want to go where growth is receptive.

Loretta Muller, 802 Longwood, DeKalb, said if development is attracted by lower interest rates why is the City giving away incentives. She urged Council to do an impact study. She said clarification is needed between residential, industrial, and commercial growth when talking about limiting growth. She asked what size of City Sycamore would like to become. Ms. Muller asked if the City would add permit numbers and population expectations on the Website.

Joe Bussone, 1725 Brock Circle, thanked Alderpersons Kessler and Tripp for their session discussing and explaining the 5 options on the agenda. Mr. Bussone said he had lived in Sycamore for 50 years and during that time Sycamore has seen moderate growth. He said he has had faith in City Council and staff for years and that faith has increased over the past 5 to 10 years. He said he is putting that faith in Council tonight. He said he respects C.A.R.E.'s right to their opinion, but he does not agree with them and urged Council to vote for Option 5.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the City Council Meeting of July 19, 2004;
- B. Payment of the Bills for August 2, 2004 in the amount of \$102,389.70.

Motion

Alderperson Stowe moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Larson seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 -0.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

- A. Consideration of a Presentation by the Sycamore Economic Development Commission.
Sycamore Economic Development Commission member Bill Nicklas will introduce Joel Barczak of Blumen Gardens who will give a brief overview of his firm's products and services.

Manager Nicklas introduced Joel Barczak ,co-owner with his wife Joan, of Blumen Gardens located at the corner of South Avenue and Edwards Street.

Joel Barczak passed out coupons for 15% off in honor of their 15-year anniversary. He said he graduated from NIU and went back to Kishwaukee College, met his wife, and started Blumen Gardens. He said they do landscaping design and installation, garden maintenance, and run a retail garden shop. Mr. Barczak said his wife won a landscape design award from Chicago Tribune in 2003. He said thoughtful design, quality workmanship, natural materials, and locally grown plant materials differentiate them as a business in their industry. He said they have been in business for 15 years and started the retail sector 8-9 years ago and is the most visual portion of their business. Their goal is to be a regional gardeners destination and are creating fans of Sycamore. He said they are developing a tearoom and a dance hall. They have a seasonal staff of 30 with 5-7 employees throughout the year and the past 2 years overall sales have exceeded \$1,000,000. Mr. Barczak thanked his staff, customers and the City of Sycamore.

Alderperson Bauer requested a report from the Chamber or Discover Sycamore for items the Council has funded.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas thanked Public Works and the Police Department for their help with the Car Show. He said that Chuck Criswell and his team will be at the next Council meeting. Mr. Nicklas said 4 bids were received for the old Public Works pickup truck with Janet Ott's high bid of \$750. Alderperson Larson asked if there was any warranty and Mr. Nicklas said it goes as is.

Motion

Alderperson Maness moved to accept Janet Ott's bid of \$750 and award her the truck and Alderperson Leach seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

Engineer – John Brady said Keven Dahl has awarded contracts for the Maplewood intersection improvements and the second phase will start in 2 – 3 weeks. Mr. Brady inquired about the parking signs at 311 North Avenue and Police Chief Thomas said they have been removed.

Building & Zoning –Lyle Doty asked for indulgence from the Council because his assistant is on medical leave for 2 – 3 weeks.

Treasurer – Ken Mundy said July financials will be prepared for the next meeting. Treasurer Mundy said he brought up the idea of the appointed treasurer position and said that 208 of the 320 in the Illinois Municipal Treasurer's Association are appointed. He said he thinks the public interest will be served better with a hired rather than an elected Treasurer especially because a Finance Officer was established a few years ago. Mr. Mundy said he will serve unpaid through the transition of responsibilities. Treasurer Mundy recognized the efforts of Senator Burzinski and Representative Pritchard during the State budget process and noted that university and municipalities did not take a hit.

Assistant Fire Chief – Cary Niewold – no report.

Alderperson Larson asked about the Firefighter entrance exam Saturday and Asst. Chief Niewold said 36 of the 37 candidates showed up for the test.

Police Chief – Don Thomas reported that the Car Show was a success and thanked Lieutenant Cary Singer for taking the lead. Chief Thomas said neighbors have been notified there will be an ordinance eliminating parking on one side of the street for Donlin Court and the 100 block of Page Street.

Public Works Supt. – Fred Busse – no report

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 – Chairperson Paulsen thanked everybody for turning in sidewalk surveys and said they would meet again August 16, 2004.

PUBLIC HEARING

None

ORDINANCES

- A. Ordinance No. 2004.26—An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Sycamore, Illinois Adopting an Appointed Treasurer’s Position to Replace the Elected Treasurer’s Position. Second Reading.**

Manager Nicklas said this is one of several steps needed. Mr. Nicklas said Sycamore has been fortunate to have Mr. Mundy in the position for a long time because of his banking experience. However, Mr. Nicklas said the State Statutes do not demand any requirements for skills or attendance for the elected position. He said by making this an appointed position it is accountable to the Council at the staff level.

Motion

Aldersperson Maness moved to approve Ordinance 2004.26 and Aldersperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. Seven Alderspersons voted aye and Aldersperson Larson voted nay. Motion carried 7 - 1.

- B. Ordinance No. 2004.30—An Ordinance Prohibiting the Use of Compression Release Engine Brakes Within the Corporate Limits of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.**

Manager Nicklas said this will be enforced by the Police Department and considered a misdemeanor offense.

Mayor Swedberg asked if would be necessary to sign the City limits and Mr. Nicklas said there will be appropriate signage.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to hear Ordinance 2004.30 on first and second reading 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 8 -0.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to approve Ordinance 2004.30 and Aldersperson Stowe seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 -0.

RESOLUTIONS

None

CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Consideration of an Administration Request for Clarification Regarding the Council’s Position on Residential Growth Management.**

Mayor Swedberg asked Alderperson Maness to restate her motion that was postponed from the last meeting.

Motion

Alderperson Maness moved to accept Option #1 with the addition of investigating a real estate transfer fee (now represented as Option #5) and Alderperson Tripp seconded the motion.

Mayor Swedberg said he would hear audience comment first.

Bob Boey, 320 Windsor Drive, DeKalb, said he has lived in DeKalb since 1981 and he worked for Anaconda for 33 years. He said he bought the Anaconda building in Sycamore in 1985 and developed the building into the Sycamore Industrial Park. There are 700,000 square feet on 35 acres of land that house 12 tenants. He said his business, American Bare Conductor, is located in his industrial park and manufactures copper wire and cable useful for conducting electricity. He said he has been a member of NIU, Kishwaukee Hospital, and Kishwaukee College boards. Mr. Boey said with vision and planning, growth can be a good thing. He said Sycamore has become polarized with the word growth to the point of being counterproductive. He suggested moving away from the word "growth" and mutually develop a vision for the City of Sycamore. Mr. Boey said that no growth is not a reality and runaway growth is not a good thing, but they should be able to arrive at a compromise.

Ken Andersen, 680 Hopkins, spoke as a member of the Sycamore Park Board. He read a resolution the Park Board passed at a special meeting on July 27, 2004 with a vote of 4 in favor and 1 abstention. Resolution 3-04 was read as follows:

The Sycamore Park District Board of Commissioners hereby resolve that the City should aggressively pursue commercial, retail and industrial growth. As for residential growth, it is in the Sycamore Park District's best interest to allow growth even if limited. We will review each development on a case-by-case basis, and act in the very best interests of the park district.

Mr. Andersen said they have already lost one development and fears we will lose more that will be beneficial to the Park District.

Gregory Taylor, 1239 Yorkshire Drive South, said he is a resident and consumer and holds no interest in development. He said it is a misconception that people who work out of town spend their money out of town. He said they do not buy their groceries outside the community. Mr. Taylor said the community seems to have two camps, pro and con growth and both groups really want the same thing and that is managed growth. He said there are mechanisms in place that have not had an opportunity to work yet. He said the City and School will have time to accommodate the growth. Mr. Taylor said the impact fees will help pay for the school buildings and more homes paying property taxes will pay for the operations. He said, regarding the referendum, that pollsters will tell you that he or she, who writes the question, determines the outcome. Mr. Taylor said elected officials cannot do whatever the voters tell them to do or they would have to place every issue on the ballot. He said that Option #5 is the way to go.

Grace Adey, 1469 Longwood, reminded everybody that there is a lot at stake such as crowded schools, crowded parks, and rich farmland. She said that agriculture is the top business in DeKalb County. She said "we" don't want to become a big City. Ms. Adey said "we" are not responsible for providing jobs for people.

Mac McIntyre, 118 Oak, DeKalb, Executive Officer of DeKalb County Building and Development Association, and business owner in Sycamore said City staff and volunteer citizens have put a lot of effort into a very innovative growth-management tool. He said this is the only community in Illinois to place a hard boundary around their town.

Joe Bussone, 1725 Brock Circle, said he neglected earlier to compliment the Plan Commission and the work they do. He said if there was time and money to educate all the residents they would vote for Option #5.

Mayor Swedberg read Option 4 as follows because some of the points were not included in the background:

1. Retain the Comp Plan's Land Use Plan of 2003.
2. Consider new annexation requests on their merits. While keeping Ordinance 2003.65 intact, negotiate annexation agreements that delay the first permit of any development approved in 2004 until 2012. Take the same approach with annexation proposals submitted in 2005 by negotiating a deferral of new permits until 2013. Thereafter, as we review the pace of permitting on our "Timeline," we may feel "caught up" or we may find that economic forces beyond our control have altered the projected pace of permitting. This approach allows willing sellers to plan for their estates, and may invite some interested developers to invest in Sycamore's future. It may also avoid the negative impact of a moratorium policy on commercial interests, while purposefully deferring the onset of new streams of permits to a later point in time.
3. Raise our expectations for voluntary contributions that can be used for operating purposes by the School District or the City. A \$3,000 per unit threshold for School contributions should overcome the net operating expense and produce a modest surplus in light of present trends in housing prices.
4. Aim for an annual population increase between 3% and 4% per year once the impending wave of new population growth associated with the unregulated inventory of platted lots passes.
5. Request a "fiscal impact of development" study over a projected 20-year period. To include a detailed analysis of fiscal impact of the currently approved annexations, service level assumptions and the detailed costs and revenues for all city departments, school, park, and library facilities, with the objective of growth to pay for itself.

Mayor Swedberg said there is a motion and second on the floor and opened discussion to Council.

Aldersperson Kessler said after the last Council meeting and because she had not heard from people in her Ward, she made 143 phone calls to households to attend a meeting to discuss growth. She researched history of building over the past 10 years and gave a shortened version of her presentation to Council. In 1994 there were 79 total housing starts and industrial and commercial valuations were declining and the City engaged NIU's Center for Governmental Studies to assist in a growth plan. She said in 1996 Sycamore hired the first City Administrator and in 1998 formed a Competitive Communities Initiatives Committee that looked at infrastructure, growth, and quality of life in Sycamore. May 2000 a Comp Plan was adopted, the first in 40 years. The Downtown Streetscape project was done in 2001 and in October 2001 the first urban design guidelines were established. The Comp Plan was revised in 2003 with input from the residents, other taxing bodies, DeKalb County Development and the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce. She said the 2003 Comp Plan defined boundaries. Ms. Kessler talked about the commercial and industrial growth over the past few years and said the Chamber has 301 members employing 1356 employees 253 of which are Sycamore residents. She said the Comprehensive Plan reduces density of housing and has encouraged talk of a boundary agreement between Sycamore and Genoa. She talked about impact fees helping to fund infrastructure for sewer and water needs. Ms. Kessler said that property tax rates have declined and the increase of the reliance on commercial sales taxes has increased 40%. She said that people did not realize all the planning that had taken place. Of the 143 phone calls, 43 attended Ms. Kessler's Ward 4 meeting. She said it was her impression, though she sought no consensus, to let the plan and pacing stay as it is and research a real estate transfer fee.

Aldersperson Leach said she solicited 150 residents in her Ward by phone to get opinions and listen about the growth issue and she calculated 7.4% want to continue as is, 8% have no opinion, and 84.6% want to slow growth down. She said the people were informed and talked about the Comp Plan and current permit numbers. Ms. Leach said in the Plan Commission background of March 8 the petitioner agreed to hold off until 2009 and Mr. Nicklas said the next year permits for a new subdivision might be comfortably issued would be 2012.

Mr. Nicklas said that statement was made during concept review and then the petitioner proposed, under formal review, extraordinary amount of land be donated to the School for an elementary school and the Park District. He said Council had previously directed that extraordinary measures might lead to earlier permitting.

Aldersperson Stowe said he is hearing praise for drawing a ring around the City and then hearing that the City will die if it does not grow. He questioned what will happen when the projected 25,000 population is reached. He said he does not care how big we get he wants costs covered. He said an out-of-house study is needed to determine if growth will pay for itself.

Aldersperson Larson said he agreed about the study process and asked how it would be funded.

Aldersperson Stowe said money should be found and the Park and School Districts should participate in the study. He said he does not want to settle for voluntary contributions; development costs must be covered.

Aldersperson Larson inquired if he would add that to the existing motion or make it a separate motion.

Amended Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to amend Aldersperson Maness' motion by adding a request for an RFP for a feasibility study and Aldersperson Larson seconded the motion.

Aldersperson Maness asked what this would cost and if the City had funding for that study.

Manager Nicklas said it would run about \$10-15,000 or more. He said they could shift the monies budgeted for mapping he had earmarked for use for industrial and commercial attraction.

Aldersperson Tripp said she would like to have the School District and Park District help pay for the study.

Mayor Swedberg said the Future Growth Forum committee discussed this and the School Board and Park Board representatives were taking the request back to their respective boards.

Aldersperson Kessler said instead of an amendment to the motion, she would like to see this done independently. She said she wanted input from the other taxing bodies and Mayor Swedberg said there was already an amendment on the floor.

Aldersperson Leach suggested phrasing the study as an investigation so it would not need to be brought back for another vote.

Aldersperson Paulsen said they need the cost benefit analysis in order to satisfy point 2 of the option to satisfy the break-even point in order to negotiate annexation agreements.

Aldersperson Maness reminded Council they can only approve impact fees that the Park District and School District request. She said she is assuming they have done their homework. Ms. Maness said people need to attend the appropriate board meetings to address concerns about the impact of growth on the schools and parks. She said she called Dr. Hammon to ask how long the School District has been discussing the addition of a new elementary school and Dr. Hammon said they have been discussing it for the past 5 to 7 years. Ms. Maness said the City should be looking at percentages rather than fixed amounts because the economy will be the driving force. She said the City has instruments in place to manage the growth.

Aldersperson Leach said they are adding staff and so that is no longer a growth tool. She said she also talked to School Board members and there is almost a full school in the northeast quadrant. She said if they needed a school before they will probably need another one. She said since the City's number of children per household differs from the School District's numbers a study is needed to be assured that development pays for itself.

Amended Motion Roll Call Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderspersons Paulsen, Stowe, Larson, and Leach voted aye. Alderspersons Maness, Tripp, Bauer, and Kessler voted nay. Mayor Swedberg broke the tie by voting aye. Motion carried 5 - 4.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderspersons Maness, Paulsen, Tripp, Bauer, Kessler, and Larson voted aye. Alderspersons Stowe and Leach voted nay. Motion carried 6 - 2.

B. Consideration of Aldersperson Bauer's request to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel.

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to go into Closed Session at 9:20 p.m. and Aldersperson Larson seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 -0.

Motion

Aldersperson Kessler moved to return to Open Session at 10:02 p.m. and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 -0.

APPOINTMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m. and Aldersperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 8 -0.

Approve:

Mayor – John L. Swedberg

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith