

SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA
October 2, 2006

City Council Workshop Meeting
6:00 P.M.

The City Council will convene an informal workshop meeting at Upstaging Incorporated at 821 Park Avenue. The owner of the firm, Robert Carone, and manager Peter Maggio will conduct a tour of the firm's facilities which opened in November 2004.

Since the firm's purchase of the former Cooper-Turner complex on Park Avenue, extraordinary progress has been made in the renovation and upgrading of this industrial facility, which was built in 1907. The Upstaging ownership and management have pursued an ambitious construction program throughout the approximately 140,000 square feet of industrial space. Some of the firm's most impressive renovation achievements include the following:

- a) the restoration of the brick façade of the former office area and the opening of the interior office space to natural light by installing new skylights in the old barrel-style roof;
- b) The construction of a 21,600 square foot, forty-foot tall open assembly area behind the office area to provide a set-up area for stage lighting.
- c) The creation of a trucking or logistical center with outdoor parking on 8 acres of concrete driveway.

Upstaging has been in business for 32 years. The award-winning firm specializes in the transportation of entertainment equipment, stage lighting systems, event consulting, and the storage of entertainment equipment. The firm was formerly headquartered in Mundelein, Illinois. Upstaging's clients include some of the most prominent entertainers and corporations in the world, including Sting, Eric Clapton, Madonna, Metallica, Bob Dylan, Barbara Streisand, Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, and The Rolling Stones among others.

.....

Regular City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **INVOCATION**
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
5. **AUDIENCE TO VISITORS**
6. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of September 18, 2006.
 - B. Payment of the Bills for October 2, 2006.
7. **PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.**
 - A. Introduction of our newest full-time paid firefighters Adam Honiotes and Ryan Gustafson.
 - B. Proclamation declaring the week of October 2-6, 2006 “Fire Prevention Week” in the City of Sycamore.
8. **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**
9. **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**
10. **PUBLIC HEARINGS--None**
11. **ORDINANCES**
 - A. **Ordinance No. 2006.40—An Ordinance Amending Title 7, “Public Ways and Property,” Chapter 1, “Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Ways, General Provisions,” Section 7-1-10, “Harmful Deposits; Litter,” to Add a New Section C, of the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.**

During the past summer, more residents experimented with a variety of ground coverings in our city parkways than in any season in memory. “Parkway” in this instance refers to the public space between the back of city curbs and the public sidewalk. The repair work in public parkways may have been owing to the damaging effects of the severe drought in the previous summer and the continuing difficulty of growing a good stand of grass without regular watering. It was also possibly owing to the fact that most people may not be aware of the Unified Development Ordinance’s prescription for sodding or seeding in the parkways (Section 6.6.3).

The type of “coverings” that have caught the eye of our Public Works, Water, and Police departments include decorative stone, lava rock, and washed stone. In some instances, the paving of parkways has occurred without city consultation or approval. Additionally, some residents have planted wild flowers and grasses that grow to heights of several feet or more. Why would any of these resident initiatives be objectionable? There are several general reasons:

 - a) The City’s water and sewer lines are often located below the parkway areas, as well as other utility infrastructure owned and maintained by Com Ed, NICOR or

Verizon. When repairs are needed, any extraneous coverings would have to be removed. Do we want our work crews to take the extra time and incur the extra cost to restore such areas with whatever variety of covering that was present when the infrastructure repair was made? Does the City have to stockpile a variety of stone and other materials to make such restoration? We know the private utilities will not restore the parkways except with sod or seed, based on their franchise agreements with the city.

- b) Loose, coarse coverings such as stone or stone chips will eventually get into the street and thence to our storm catch basins as a result of mowing and snow removal activities. When loose stone surrounds fire hydrants, our routine flushing activities typically wash large amounts into the street.
- c) Tall grasses and wildflowers have caused vision problems for motorists at intersections.

Recently, a well-intended resident placed a substantial amount of lava rock around a city hydrant. Before approaching this resident, our Police department discovered that our City Code is quiet about what may, or may not, be placed on our parkways, although the City Code is very detailed in its prohibition against any placing of materials on our sidewalks and streets without prior approval of the City Engineer. The attached ordinance would update the City Code by inserting language to make it unlawful to “**pave or to place gravel, decorative stone, lava rock, paving brick, prairie grasses, wildflowers, or any ornamental landscaping materials (except mulch) or plants in the parkway.**” Of course, trees that are approved by the City Engineer will continue to be permitted, along with the various wood-based mulches that typically surround the bases of such trees.

City Council approval is recommended.

12. RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution No. 473—Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Easement with Ideal Industries for a Public Bike Path Along Peace Road in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

This resolution conveys a five-foot easement on property (Lot 4) within the Sycamore Prairie Business Park, immediately north of W. Prairie Drive and adjacent to the Peace Road right-of-way, for the purpose of constructing the new Peace Road bike path. A plat of easement is attached. The grant of easement is conditional upon the completion of the paved bike path and seeding within three years. The County of DeKalb plans to construct the bike path, largely at the City’s expense, in 2007.

The County Engineer has approved the easement as depicted on the attached exhibit. City Council approval is recommended.

B. Resolution No. 474—Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Easement with Krpan’s Grand View Townhomes III, LLC for a Public Bike Path Along Peace Road in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

This resolution conveys a permanent ten-foot easement along the Peace Road frontage of Krpan’s Grand View Townhomes III, for the construction of the new Peace Road bike

path. A plat of easement depicting the area to be used for the construction of the bike path is attached. This easement has no conditions concerning the timing of the construction of the bike path.

The County Engineer has approved the easement as depicted on the attached exhibit. City Council approval is recommended.

13. **CONSIDERATIONS**

A. Consideration of the City of Sycamore's Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2005-2006, Including the Independent Auditor's Report.

Dennis Hildebrandt and his audit team from Siepert & Co., LLP have completed the audited financial statements for the City of Sycamore as of April 30, 2006, along with the independent auditor's report. Several features are noteworthy:

1. As of April 30, 2006 the restated General Fund cash reserve was \$5,227,840.62, an increase of \$1,104,290 over the cash balance of \$4,123,550.59 on April 30, 2005. This balance represents 50% of the budgeted FY07 expenditures (\$10,334,204).
2. The Water Fund ended FY05-06 with an operating cash surplus of \$587,828 and a cash reserve of \$4,777,625.86.
3. The Sewer Fund ended FY05-06 with an operating cash surplus of \$423,768 and a cash reserve of \$5,349,877.62.
4. In the Independent Auditor's Report it was noted that the City was in compliance with the guidelines established by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB 34) for calculating and depreciating the cost of public improvements, infrastructure, and property in general.

Representatives of the accounting firm of Siepert & Co. will be on hand to answer any Council questions.

B. Consideration of an Application for a Supervised Public Display of Fireworks.

The Sycamore Pumpkin Festival Committee has submitted an application for a permit to display fireworks on Saturday, October 28, during this year's Pumpkin Festival. Such a permit is required by the City Code (Title 4, "Public Health and Safety," Chapter 5, "Explosives and Fireworks"). Once approved, any display must be supervised by the Fire department.

The proposed display will be located on Park District property off Airport Road and should be visible throughout the city. The firm providing the fireworks is "Mad Bomber Fireworks Productions," a company which has a long history of safe and successful fireworks demonstrations, notwithstanding its incendiary name.

City Council approval is recommended.

C. Consideration of a Downtown Conservation District.

At the regular City Council meeting of July 3, the City Manager requested the Council's direction on several options to preserve the "look" of downtown facades for which the City has been extending renovation and remodeling grants for three years. The options for public action were as follows:

- ✓ The formulation of an "overlay" in our zoning code to establish the desired downtown look as public policy, not unlike the Urban Design Standards the Council approved in October 2001. Such an approach would encourage voluntary cooperation.
- ✓ The formulation of a regulatory approach requiring property and business owners to allow publicly-appointed officials to comment upon, or even condition, any plans to alter the appearance of their property. Such reviews would be performed by a permanent architectural review committee.

The Council directed the City Manager to take up this matter with the ad hoc Architectural Review Committee ("ARC") with the expectation that a recommendation would be brought back to the Council. The ARC met on Wednesday, September 13, to discuss a shell ordinance prepared by the City Manager. In the preparation of this draft, the City Manager was mindful of the Council's July discussion, during which a preference was expressed for some expansion in the role of the ARC, short of a rigorous regulatory approach. The key points in the draft considered by the Committee (see attached) are as follows:

- a) The ARC would become a permanent advisory body.
- b) The ARC would take on some expanded duties, such as reviewing downtown façade improvement plans in an advisory capacity, whether or not the building owner has requested grant assistance. The ARC would not be involved in routine maintenance decisions. However, when a permit application for a facade alteration was submitted to the Building Department, the Building Commissioner would refer the request to the ARC for an advisory recommendation prior to the issuance of a permit. Examples of facade improvements that would trigger the ARC's involvement include any sign or awning replacements, lighting improvements, door or window improvements involving structural work such as new headers (which is sometimes the case with window or door replacements). Additionally, the Building Commissioner would be expected to make a referral to the ARC when, in his judgment, the repair would conflict with the State Street streetscape vision commissioned by the Council in 2003.
- c) The ARC would only have an advisory capacity with respect to facades within a newly designated "Conservation District," which conforms to the present downtown area that is the focus of the annual façade grant program. This area includes properties on the north and south sides of State Street between Main Street and Sacramento Street.

This modest approach does not add new regulations, but could extend the permit review process by one to two weeks in the case of certain downtown façade improvements, in order to give the ARC and Building Commissioner time to consider the long-term impact of such improvements in the downtown core. This approach also relies upon the willingness of downtown business owners to respect the restoration goals of the Council

and the ARC without further restrictions on repairs that might not require a permit, such as painting. In other words, a building owner could still paint his or her building with incompatible colors and designs to make a marketing statement, without any interference from the city government or its advisory committee.

Other communities have gone further by establishing permanent historical commissions whose permission is required for any exterior building improvements prior to the issuance of city permits. Neither the ARC nor the Council nor the City staff are presently inclined in this direction. Thus far, there is a consensus that further measures could be enacted should voluntary cooperation be unsuccessful.

If the Council wishes to proceed, the City Manager recommends the invitation of all building owners who might be affected to an informal forum to learn more about the proposal and to have an opportunity to voice their opinions, prior to any Council action.

14. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

15. APPOINTMENTS

16. ADJOURNMENT