
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2006

ROLL CALL

Mayor Ken Mundy called the meeting to order and Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Grace Adey, Alan Bauer, Terry Kessler, Darren Knuth, Barbara Leach, Cheryl Maness, Pete Paulsen, and Chuck Stowe.

INVOCATION

Mayor Mundy asked for a moment of reflection.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

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

Voice vote

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

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

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 in the amount of \$291,894.11.

Motion

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

Voice vote

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

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

Alderperson Kessler said in light of the recent parking ordinance for streets in Ward 1 she has assessed the streets in Ward 4 and will get that information to the City Manager. She said that besides fire trucks maneuvering the streets they should keep in mind the snow plows. She suggested the other Wards assess their streets and get the information in by the end of the month.

Alderperson Paulsen asked for an update on the work on Route 23 North and Landahl and Townsend Woods.

City Engineer Brady said there are some problems with the utilities, but they will try to work around them. He said the pole should be moved this week and some paving will be done, but the fiber optic cable and ComEd are in the way.

Alderperson Maness asked if the curb at Bethany east of Somonauk will be done before winter.

City Engineer Brady said yes, but as of today they found the gas main is shallow, but he thinks they can work around that.

Mayor Mundy said he and Juanita attended DeKalb's Sesquicentennial Ball at the new renovated Altgeld Hall and in 2 years Sycamore will celebrate our Sesquicentennial. He also said the estimates for revenue are out and are 6 to 7% overall increase and that along with the monies picked up by our special census will be a plus for the City.

A. Introduction of our newest full-time paid firefighters Adam Honiotes and Ryan Gustafson.

City Clerk Smith swore in new firefighters Adam Honiotes and Ryan Gustafson. Chief Riddle explained that Firefighters Honiotes and Gustafson have gone through the Paid-On-Call College Internship program and have proven themselves to be the type of people desired by the Department.

B. Proclamation declaring the week of October 2-6, 2006 "Fire Prevention Week" in the City of Sycamore

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas said now that we have the audited budget numbers, the budget will be updated. He said in November Council will spend time talking about what taxes to levy and at the 1st December meeting they will hold a public hearing on the tax levy and at the 2nd December meeting they will take action on the levy.

Mayor Mundy inserted that City Council, Department Heads, Sycamore Economic Development Commission members, and other interested parties toured Upstaging's new facility on the former Turner-Cooper property.

Engineer – John Brady reported that the City Clerk's office has taken orders for 16 trees and runs through October 10, 2006. He asked the media to help get out the information about the Tree Program.

Building & Zoning – Lyle Doty thanked Superintendent Busse for Public Works employees painting the Building/Engineering building. He also reported that 2 of the 3 homes that burned in July in Parkside Estates are once again under construction and the 3rd will start construction in a couple of weeks.

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle – no report

Treasurer/Asst. City Manager – Brian Gregory said the numbers through August are at the 33% benchmark and revenues are running at 37% and expenses are at 25%. He said the state shared revenues are strong and the day-to-day interest rates are also strong at 5.81% in August. He said the audit will be presented tonight and a copy will be available at the Library.

Public Works Supt. – Fred Busse reported that leaf pickup will begin October 16 and they will pass through the parade route the week before Pumpkin Fest. He said the information has been sent to the media.

City Manager Nicklas said he already noticed some residents have already placed leaves on the parkway and asked the media to publish the map to inform residents of the pickup schedule.

Water Supt. – Ebe Smith reported that Thursday 2 tanks for Well #8 will be arriving and placed in the building. He said Well #9's tanks will arrive the following week and Well # 6's tanks will arrive in November.

Police Chief – Don Thomas stated that people will not be allowed to secure spots on the parade route until Friday, October 27th at 4:00 p.m.

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. 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.

City Manager Nicklas explained that the parkway is the green area between the sidewalk and the street. He said that typically there is grass and a tree of a certain species that does not grow too tall or too fast to interfere with wire or penetrate too deep to interfere with the underground infrastructure. He said he recently discovered that our code is silent regarding other types of coverings in the parkway that some of our staff are concerned about that pose problems for routine maintenance. He said materials such as gravel, decorative stone, and lava rock end up in the street and in our storm sewers and create problems. He said some types of plantings obscure intersections or passing vehicles and creates safety hazards. He suggested considering prohibiting this list of items that have found their way into our parkways, although they would not be able to go back and retroactively require people to pull the items out.

Aldersperson Knuth said the word plant is pretty broad because grass and trees are plants.

Mr. Nicklas said he does not equate trees and grass to plants, but if there is better terminology he would take Council’s suggestions.

Aldersperson Knuth said the background refers to the City having to stockpile different types of materials to replace what may get torn up in repair work. He suggested that it is not the City’s responsibility to replace anything but grass or sod.

Mr. Nicklas said if it is the City’s initiative to do the work, the residents expect the City to replace the parkway the way the City found it.

Aldersperson Knuth said he would rather have an ordinance that states that the City would restore the parkway to grass.

Aldersperson Leach asked if this included plantings around mailboxes.

Mr. Nicklas said it would because the problem is some of the planting grow too tall and we do not have the staffing to work with people to limit their initiatives.

Aldersperson Leach said tracking who had it before the ordinance would be a large issue.

Mr. Nicklas said they would need to go on the honor system and if we don't do it soon, with all the new units coming in, we will never be able to regulate it.

Mayor Mundy asked Engineer Brady if the landscape architects in the area are aware not to plant tall plantings in the parkways.

Engineer Brady said some of them are.

Aldersperson Adee asked about vines around mailboxes.

Mr. Nicklas said the post office may have concerns about that, but our main concern is the wide area of parkway landscaping and paving.

Aldersperson Stowe suggested adding that the City will not be responsible for replacing illegal landscaping.

Aldersperson Maness agreed with Mr. Stowe, but suggested allowing planting with limits of height and no rocks as long as there is the statement that the City will only return the parkway to grass.

Aldersperson Paulsen agreed to limit the height of plantings and to let the residents know that they plant at the risk of the City having to tear it up.

Mayor Mundy said one of the trade-offs for allowing only grass and trees is a clean look affect. He said most properties have front and back yards they can adorn. He said access is needed for the City and the utilities.

Aldersperson Knuth said to use the phrase "at the homeowner's risk" because he did not want to punish a homeowner who takes care of their landscaping.

Mr. Nicklas said he was hearing good suggestions and he could come back with more elaborate suggestions. He said the intent is not to punish, but to prevent people from spending money and time for something that might need to be torn up.

Aldersperson Stowe said he thought they should leave this on first reading and get suggestions to Mr. Nicklas.

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.

City Manager Nicklas said this and the next resolution deal with the City's interest in seeing a bike path built along the east side of Peace Road behind Sycamore Prairie Park and Krpan's Townhome development.

Aldersperson Bauer said he hopes the Plan Commission gets a hold of this and realizes how important it is to get these things on the plans as they are developed.

Mr. Nicklas said this was in our Comp Plan that was approved in 2003 and in our Countywide Bikeway Plan. He said it is an engineering challenge and there has been some negotiating with the County Highway Department on how Peace Road will be widened and how to have the bike path within the right-of-way, which is the preference of the County Engineer. He said the intent of putting in a bike path has been there.

Aldersperson Maness asked if negotiations were ongoing with the Farm Bureau as well.

Mr. Nicklas said the County took the lead in that portion and have not gotten the easement.

Aldersperson Maness asked if it would be to our benefit if Council contacted the Farm Bureau.

Mr. Nicklas said it is the County's right-of-way so they are the lead agency.

City Engineer Brady said he will be on some grades to see if the bike path will fit in the construction easement.

Aldersperson Maness said for safety reasons she did not want people to ride on Peace Road.

Mr. Nicklas said he felt the same way, but it is not our jurisdiction.

Aldersperson Paulsen asked if there were easements from Krpan's north to Route 64.

Mr. Nicklas said they have sufficient space in the right-of-way as they move north.

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to approve Resolution 473 and Aldersperson Stowe seconded the motion.

Roll call vote

Mayor Mundy called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderspersons Bauer, Kessler, Knuth, Leach, Maness, Paulsen, and Stowe voted aye with Aldersperson Adee voting nay. Motion carried 7 - 1.

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.

City Manager Nicklas explained that as with the previous resolution this is an attempt to provide for an area for the extension of the bike path.

Motion

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

Aldersperson Adee asked if with the 4-lane road, this would leave little space for a bike path.

City Engineer Brady said parts of that portion of the road will be 5-lane. He said there are areas with 120 foot right-of-way and there will be curb and gutter by Woodgate and Walgreen's. He said north of Route 23 there is 150 foot right-of-way so that will be easier to work with.

Mr. Nicklas said if it were not for the City of Sycamore's advocacy there would not be a bike path through this stretch of Peace Road.

Roll call vote

Mayor Mundy called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Alderspersons Adee, Bauer, Kessler, Knuth, Leach, Maness, Paulsen, and Stowe voted aye. Motion carried 8 - 0.

CONSIDERATIONS

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

Dennis Hildebrandt of Siefert & Co., LLP said that separation of duty is the only internal control issue reported on that will probably remain because of the size of the City. He said the City has taken measure for checks and balances of segregation of duties and there are no other audit findings. He said that last years issues have been addressed and improved and he commended Assistant City Manager/Treasurer Brian Gregory and City Manager Bill Nicklas for their work. Mr. Hildebrandt said the City's legal debt limit is \$18 million compared to \$14 million in 2005. He said the City finances are in very good shape.

City Manager Nicklas said the increase in the debt limit is a function of the increase in our community's EAV.

Aldersperson Bauer said it is pleasing to get an audit like this because he remembers audits with grocery lists of things that needed to be done to tighten up our internal auditing system. He said the staff headed by Mr. Nicklas works hard to make sure we get a clean audit.

Mayor Mundy thanked Bill Nicklas, Brian Gregory, and the department heads for their work in spending within their limits.

Mr. Hildebrandt said as of today all the required reports have been filed.

Mr. Nicklas thanked Mr. Hildebrandt for his promptness and Brian Gregory for his efforts in producing the numbers and reports for the audit.

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

City Manager Nicklas explained that the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival Committee has requested to display fireworks at the park Saturday, October 28.

Motion

Aldersperson Leach moved to approve and Aldersperson Knuth seconded the motion.

Aldersperson Maness asked the time for the fireworks.

Jerry Malmassari, Pumpkin Fest Committee representative, said they would be held at 7:30 p.m.

Voice Vote

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

C. Consideration of a Downtown Conservation District.

City Manager Nicklas explained that at the July 3 Council meeting they discussed what might be needed to preserve improvements that were partially funded by the Downtown Improvement Grants over the past 3 years. He said the idea in the background was reviewed and recommended by the Architectural Review Committee. He said the program would still rely on voluntary cooperation, but it does insert the Architectural Review Committee in a more permanent advisory role working with our Building Department when something requires structural work or electrical improvement or other outside improvements that would require a permit. He said the Building Commissioner would refer those requests to the Architectural Review Committee.

Alderson Leach said this is a minimalist approach and the key is the voluntary cooperation of the business or building owner. She said, as was suggested in the background, it is important to have an informational meeting with the downtown business and building owners.

Alderson Stowe said he thought it was important to keep the downtown looking good and this program should not infringe on anybody too much.

Alderson Maness likes the fact of keeping the process to 1 or 2 weeks. She said that as they heard earlier in the evening at Upstaging, how appreciative they were of the simple and steam-lines process for remodeling their building.

Mr. Nicklas said the next move is to extend invitations to the property and business owners to hold an informal forum to get suggestions.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Alderson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. and Alderson Leach seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

Approve:

Mayor - Ken Mundy

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith