

SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

January 15, 2007

City Council Committee Meetings

6:30 P.M. Meeting of the Ordinance Committee. The City Council's Ordinance Committee will meet to discuss a proposed revision to the City's Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO"). On January 2, the Council expressed support for a re-consideration of the parameters for illuminated electronic signs, as defined in the sign regulations of the UDO. In recent months, a number of scrolling electronic signs which were permitted under the UDO regulations have raised concern from an aesthetic and a safety standpoint. The very colorful and eye-catching electronic features that are now commercially available have exceeded the expectations of many observers and have raised anxiety that certain commercial areas—especially the central business district—might gradually drift toward an uncharacteristic and objectionable "look" as more electronic signs are installed.

The current sign prohibitions are noted below:

6.8.4. Prohibited Signs. The following signs shall not be permitted in any zoning district:

- A. Flashing signs, except electronic message boards which show temperature, time, business or public service messages for not less two (2) second intervals.
- B. Signs which are wholly dependent upon a building for support or mounted on the roof, which project more than six (6) inches above the highest point of a building or roof to which they are attached, unless permitted otherwise, herein.
- C. Signs which constitute a hazard to public health or safety.
- D. Signs displaying obscene, indecent or immoral matter.
- E. Signs mounted on trailers or motor vehicles, provided that signs containing the name, address or business identification of the owner or user and displayed on a motor vehicle in use and portable signs defined herein are exempt from this Section.
- F. Attention-getting devices including, but not limited to, inflatable, moving, rotating or undulating signs, or light beams except as otherwise permitted with a special events permit.

- G. Signs which, by reason of size, location, content, color, or manner of illumination, obstruct the vision of motorists or interfere with the visibility or effectiveness of any traffic sign or control device on public streets.
- H. Signs which make use of words such as "Stop," "Look," "One-Way," "Danger," "Yield," or any similar word, phrase, symbol or light so as to interfere with or confuse pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- I. Signs displayed within or extended over public right-of-way, except those erected or authorized by a government authority.
- J. Signs which obstruct ingress or egress from any fire escape, door, window, or other exit or entrance.
- K. Advertising, business, or identification signs on light poles of establishments.
- L. Signs painted directly on trees, rocks and fences and other structures or objects, except walls.
- M. Festoon lighting.

The very general allowance for “business or public service messages” in (A) needs some refinement, in the staff’s opinion. Some possible revisions are presented below (revisions are in italics):

6.8.4. Prohibited Signs. The following signs shall not be permitted in any zoning district:

- A. *Flashing signs and illuminated electronic message boards.*
Explanation:
 1. *In the downtown business district defined in Section 6.7.2,E of this code, electronic message boards are prohibited.*
 2. *In C-1 Neighborhood Business Districts, electronic message boards are prohibited.*
 3. *In C-2 Business Districts [other than the downtown business district referenced in (1), above] and C-3 Highway Business Districts, electronic message boards may show the time, temperature, business hours, and business or public service messages. Such messages may scroll, but may not re-cycle in less than two (2) second intervals. In addition, the background for such print shall not feature simulated fireworks, explosions, flags flying, or other distracting electronic displays. Electronic message boards at or near intersections shall not use red or green colored lettering in order to avoid confusion with traffic control devices.*
- B. Signs which are wholly dependent upon a building for support or mounted on the roof, which project more than six (6) inches above the highest point of a building or roof to which they are attached, unless permitted otherwise, herein.
- C. Signs which constitute a hazard to public health or safety.
- D. Signs displaying obscene, indecent or immoral matter.

- E. Signs mounted on trailers or motor vehicles, provided that signs containing the name, address or business identification of the owner or user and displayed on a motor vehicle in use and portable signs defined herein are exempt from this Section.
- F. Attention-getting devices including, but not limited to, inflatable, moving, rotating or undulating signs, or light beams except as otherwise permitted with a special events permit.
- G. Signs which, by reason of size, location, content, color, or manner of illumination, obstruct the vision of motorists or interfere with the visibility or effectiveness of any traffic sign or control device on public streets.
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- K. Advertising, business, or identification signs on light poles of establishments.
- L. Signs painted directly on trees, rocks and fences and other structures or objects, except walls.
- M. Festoon lighting.

The Ordinance Committee’s direction is welcome. When the committee settles upon a draft, the City Manager will take the suggested language to the Plan Commission for a public hearing, and then back to the City Council, as the UDO requires.



**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 January 2, 2007.
- B. Payment of the Bills for January 15, 2007.
- C. Plan Commission Minutes for November 13, 2006.

7. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

8. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

9. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS--None

11. ORDINANCES

A. Ordinance No. 2006.60—An Ordinance Approving a Development Agreement Between the City of Sycamore, Illinois and Dahlko, LLC. First and Second Reading.

At the last regular City Council meeting of January 2, 2007, the Council considered a staff proposal whose principal purpose was to facilitate the creation of a public park in the Townsend Woods subdivision. The attached agreement confirms the understanding that was supported by the Council by unanimous voice vote. The terms of that understanding are as follows:

- a) Keven Dahl, the principal owner of Dahlko LLC, agrees to sell 24.04 acres of undeveloped land to the Sycamore Park District for the full appraisal price of \$132,000 (\$5,490 per acre).
- b) The City of Sycamore agrees to convey a 105' x 125' platted well site to Keven Dahl in return for his conveyance of a similar-sized area of land, at no cost, to the Sycamore Park District adjacent to the separately conveyed property described in (a), above.
- c) The City agrees that the developer, at his sole expense, may extend City water and sewer to twelve platted lots within the jurisdiction of the County of DeKalb, north of the Northtown subdivision. The developer and his successors or assigns agree that the owners of said lots shall pay the City one-and-one-half times the required City water and sewer user fees, as they may change from time to time.
- d) Keven Dahl shall be responsible for the entire cost of the installation of traffic signals on the two east legs of the intersection of IL Rt. 23 and Mt. Hunger Road, and the traffic signal bases and hand holds on the west side of IL Rt. 23 at Mt. Hunger Road. The City shall be responsible for installing the traffic signal poles and lights on the west side of the intersection of IL Rt. 23 and Mt. Hunger Road.
- e) Keven Dahl or Dalko LLL shall be responsible for completing the relocation of a 10-inch water main along Mt. Hunger Road in accordance with engineering plans that have been approved by the City Engineer.

City Council approval is recommended.

12. RESOLUTIONS--None

13. CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of a Report from Patricia Daley of the Daley Policy Group.

Patricia Daley will be present to update the Council on her lobbying efforts in the City's behalf. She is currently working under her second one-year contract with the City of Sycamore, which will expire on June 30, 2007. Ms. Daley has principally been focused on securing federal and state funding for a short list of capital projects that includes (a) the final mitigation of environmental hazards on the Harvester Square site on South Avenue; (b) the reconstruction of Bethany Road from Peace Road to Somonauk Street; and (c) the reconstruction of California Street (for one block south of State Street). A detailed explanation of these projects with possible costs is attached.

As the Council is aware, capital project "earmarks" were scarce in the last session of the 109th Congress. As the first session of the 110th Congress begins, Ms. Daley is continuing her consultations with members of the Illinois Congressional delegation and the new Democratic committee chairs and subcommittee chairs involved in the federal budget and appropriation process.

B. Consideration of an Administration Request on the Proposed FY2007-2008 General Fund Budget.

On January 2, preliminary projections of General Fund, Water Fund, and Sewer Fund revenues and expenditures for Fiscal Year 2007-2008 were circulated to the City's department heads. Since that time, some minor adjustments have been made after consultations between the City Manager and the City's management team. The following proposals are presented to the City Council for review and direction. Upon the Council's direction, the City Manager will work with the department heads and other administrative personnel to prepare a preliminary draft of a complete fiscal year budget for all operating departments. At the second Council meeting in February (February 19), the Council will be presented with a proposed capital budget for FY08.

General Fund Revenues

On the revenue side, the principal assumptions for FY08 are as follows:

1. No new taxes.
2. A slight adjustment in the garbage fee to cover the 2006 Waste Management fee of \$15.28 per unit. The City currently passes along a cost of \$15.08 per unit per month.
3. As in each of the last ten years, the increase in the annual City property tax levy has been constrained to result in a decrease in the City's property tax rate. The general portion of the levy (including debt service) will be \$1,528,278 or \$35,540 more than FY07, but \$12,407 less than the general levy in 2000, owing to substantial increases in pension obligations over recent years. The pension obligations in FY08 will comprise 35.5% of the City's overall 2006 tax levy.
4. The local share of the combined state income tax proceeds is expected to rise to about \$87.00 per capita, an increase of 5.5% over the FY06 budget level of \$82.50 per capita, but the major factor in the projected 12.44% increase in this revenue category will be the January 2006 City census of 14,866. This assumes that the state

legislature does not change the formula for this important revenue-sharing program in the Spring legislative session.

5. Once again, the former Kmart building and shopping center is not expected to generate measurable sales tax revenue in FY08. The First Rockford Group's development of the Sycamore Commons subdivision (the Artery Farm) will not generate new retail sales tax for at least another year. If Jewel proceeds with the development of the store at Peace, Plank and Rt. 23, the first sales tax proceeds will not likely reach us until state disbursements in February 2008.
6. Based on year-to-date trends and a month-by-month comparison with the past three fiscal years, our overall sales and use tax revenues are projected to rise by about \$430,269 (8.6%) over projected FY07 year-end levels. This amount represents about 43% of the projected increase (\$994,259) in General Fund revenues in FY08 over budgeted FY06 revenues.
7. Annexation revenue will decrease by an estimated \$50,000.00 because of a lack of new annexations and a slower pace toward final plat approvals expected for later phases of already-approved subdivisions. The projected FY08 annexation fee revenue of \$50,000 will be \$510,509 lower than the actual revenues in FY04.
8. Engineering plan review and building inspection fees have dropped by over 40% in FY07 and we expect the dramatically slower pace of local housing starts to continue in FY08. The FY08 totals for building inspections, electrical inspections and plumbing inspections will compare more closely with the budgeted total for FY05 than FY07.
9. The total of all new General Fund dollars in FY08 is projected to be \$11,588,972 (+9.47%) over the FY07 General Fund revenue budget of \$10,586,213.

A word of caution: the revenue estimates that can be derived from trends established in the first eight months of this fiscal year are suggestive but far from absolutely reliable. For example, sales tax revenues (excluding restaurant/bar and telecommunication taxes) make up 36 percent of the projected FY08 General Fund revenues but are collected by the state and remitted to local governments at least two months after they are incurred. This means that the recent December tax warrants reflect purchases in October. In other words, the impact of consumer spending in the key months of November and December is not yet known.

For reference, here are some historic General Fund revenue numbers:

FY98-99 (actual)	FY99-00 (actual)	FY00-01 (actual)	FY01-02 (actual)	FY02-03 (actual)	FY03-04 (actual)	FY04-05 (actual)	FY05-06 (actual)
\$6,612,370	\$7,170,939 (+558,569) +8.5%	\$7,237,239 (+66,300) +1%	\$7,820,749 (+585,510) +8.1%	\$8,084,211 (+263,462) +3.37%	\$9,425,257* (+1,341,046) +16.6%	\$9,689,513 (+264,256) +2.8%	\$11,346,037 (+1,656,524) +17%

*The large increase in FY04 is misleading: the City took its development "dividend" in terms of annexation fees upfront rather than over a period of 4-5 years at the time of final platting. This one-time allowance applied to the North Grove Crossing, Sycamore Creek, Parkside Estates, and Willows developments. The total of all annexation fees was \$810,509 (\$250,000 was placed in the Capital Fund to cover a variety of vehicle and equipment purchases in FY05). Overall inspection and plan review fees brought in another \$265,000 more than the level of previous years.

General Fund Expenditures

In FY08 the General Fund will spend \$1,204,118 (11.64%) more than we budgeted in FY07. The principal spending assumptions for the General Fund in FY08 are as follows:

- a) Health insurance costs in the General Fund alone will increase by 10% (or 15% overall, including the Water and Sewer Fund contributions) and worker comp costs will decrease by 4%. The City will also pay a one-time cost of \$40,000 to buy down a SLEP obligation from the mid-1990s.
- b) As in FY07, the street maintenance allocation in the Public Works budget (731-8316) will be \$100,000 with an additional \$100,000 allocation from the Capital Fund (06-8316) to maintain the annual budget of \$200,000 for crack-filling, alley repair, and minor re-surfacing projects.
- c) An additional \$100,000 will be transferred from the General Fund reserve to the Employee Benefit Assistance Fund (Fund 23) in order to fund two large payouts of accrued leave to retirees after May 1. The General Fund Reserve is the appropriate source in that the reserve serves only two essential functions: to provide for accrued leave obligations of the City and to provide for emergency operations or other special, one-time capital outlays that would otherwise bear on local taxpayers.
- d) A new police officer will be hired after August 1. This hire will constitute a net increase in shift strength;
- e) A new firefighter will be hired after May 1 and a second firefighter will be hired after September 1. In addition, two lieutenant promotions will occur. With these two hires and promotions, the Fire department will have sufficient personnel to support two fire stations later in FY08.
- f) A new laborer will be hired by the Public Works department during the summer of 2007.
- g) A number of the deferred FY07 hires will have a greater impact on the FY08 budget because of their twelve months of pay and benefits (e.g. both firefighters, the executive secretary, one of the two police officers, and the Street Division laborer).
- h) Wage and salary increases will incorporate union contractual increases of about 4 percent;
- i) Management pay increases are based on the results of the management pay survey completed in the fall of 2006. The last comprehensive management pay review was completed in 2002. Targeted pay levels for senior managers are at about the mid-point of average salaries for similar positions in comparable cities. In most cases, the increases are 4%. In some instances larger increases are merited in terms of the survey results.
- j) Commodities and contractual services are generally steady at FY07 levels, with the exception of upward revisions to meet our insurance requirements (noted in the General Fund Support budget), utility costs, etc.
- k) The City's public safety dispatch costs (710-8344) will be \$558,000.00, an increase of 2.8% (\$15,000).
- l) An additional \$200,000 will be added to the General Fund's debt service obligations to fund streetscape improvements on South California Street, S. Main Street and East State Street in the summer of 2007.
- m) The total of all new General Fund dollars in FY08 is projected to be \$11,556,822 (+11.72%) over the FY07 General Fund revenue budget of \$10,344,204.

Here's a look at General Fund spending in recent years:

FY98-99 (actual)	FY99-00 (actual)	FY00-01 (actual)	FY01-02 (actual)	FY02-03 (actual)	FY03-04 (actual)	FY04-05 (actual)	FY05-06 (actual)
\$6,310,616	\$6,298,779 (-\$11,837) -.2%	\$6,393,527 (+\$94,748) +1.5%	\$6,588,461 (+\$194,934) +3%	\$7,395,346 (+\$806,885) +12.25%	\$8,015,401 (+\$620,055) +8.38%	\$8,652,696 (+637,295) +7.95%	\$9,831,746 (\$1,179,050) +13.6%

Water and Sewer Funds

I am still trying to fathom the loan requirements for the Water Fund in FY08 but here are some general assumptions concerning both enterprise funds:

1. "Revenue-neutral" water fee schedule revisions will be investigated if the IEPA approves; that is, reductions in residential fees will be pursued if they can be offset by modest increases in commercial and industrial fees.
2. A new laborer will be hired for the Treatment Plant from the Sewer Fund on or about July 1.
3. To address seasonal mowing and other maintenance functions, two part-time temporary positions will be maintained. As in FY07, one will be funded by the Water Fund and the other by the Sewer Fund. The first two part-time temporary employees hired in FY2007 have been very productive and their experience has been constructive.

City Council direction is requested.

C. Consideration of a Closed Session Regarding Personnel Matters.

- 14. OTHER NEW BUSINESS**
- 15. APPOINTMENTS**
- 16. ADJOURNMENT**