
**SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2007**

ROLL CALL

Mayor Ken Mundy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Grace Adee, Alan Bauer, Terry Kessler, Darren Knuth, Rich Neubauer, Pete Paulsen, Chuck Stowe, and Gregory Taylor.

INVOCATION

Father Timar of St. Mary's Catholic Church gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Alderperson Taylor moved to approve the agenda and Alderperson Adee 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

Joe Bussone announced that a Veteran's Day service will be held at the Courthouse Sunday, November 11, 2007 at 10:59 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular City Council Meeting of October 15, 2007.
- B. Release of Closed Session Minutes for the Council Closed Session Meetings of January 15, 2007; April 16, 2007 and August 20, 2007.
- C. Approval of Closed Session Minutes for the Council Closed Session Meetings of April 16, 2007; May 21, 2007; August 6, 2007; August 20, 2007; September 4, 2007 and September 17, 2007.
- D. Authorization to Destroy the Closed Session Tapes from November 7, 2005 through April 3, 2006.
- E. Payment of the Bills for November 5, 2007.
- F. Monthly Budget Report.

Motion

Alderperson Bauer moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Adee 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 Paulsen said the Girls Varsity Volleyball Team won this evening at Supers Sectionals and will advance to the State Finals.

Aldersperson Kessler commended Assistant City Manager/Treasurer Brian Gregory for his work on the City's website.

Aldersperson Paulsen commended City staff for a job well done for their work organizing and cleaning up after Pumpkin Fest.

Mayor Mundy also thanked City staff for their work with Pumpkin Fest. He noted that the flags at the Courthouse will remain up until Veteran's Day.

- A. Sycamore Economic Development Commission member Berni Schelkopf will introduce Dan Schneider of Schwan's Ice Cream Company who will briefly summarize his firm's products and services.

Dan Schneider, General Manager of the Sycamore Schwan's, said that Schwan's started as a dairy in Marshall, MN in the 1950's and when the dairy was going out of business one of the son's loaded a Dodge panel van with Schwan's ice cream and sold it to farmers. He said since then their product line has expanded to vegetables and entrees. He said the company is still privately owned by the Schwan family. He said that Sycamore was their first depot location in Illinois and they have recently built a \$1.5 million depot on Afton Road. He said most of the products they sell they manufacture or buy the company that manufactures it. He said they stand by their products with a 100% guarantee.

- B. Recognition of the Sycamore High School Boys and Girls Cross Country Teams.

Aldersperson Taylor introduced the teams and coaches and said the Girls Team finished 9th in State and the Boys finished 1st in the AA State Championship.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas said later in the evening he would be looking for direction on the City's portion of the annual property tax levy.

Engineer – John Brady reported that the sidewalk program is completed except for a protective coat, the tree program is completed, the street program will be completed in 7 to 10 days with some incidental surfacing, and the final concrete pour for exterior work for this year the week of November 12 which will wrap up the site work for this year.

Building & Zoning – Lyle Doty – no report

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle highlighted the fire prevention education efforts of Firefighters Hepker, Ward, Maciejewski, and Reynolds. He said that about 640 kids toured the station, and about 2,000 children were seen at the schools, and then about 300 more preschoolers and home schooled children toured the station. He said toward the end of the year they have a fire prevention program for high school seniors.

Treasurer/Asst. City Manager – Brian Gregory said since May 2005 there have been over 100,000 hits to the City's website. He said he has added building and zoning permit applications and much of the information used in the Comp Plan review meetings. He encouraged the public to use the feed back section.

Public Works Director – Fred Busse announced that Treatment Division Superintendent JC Roach has been nominated for Operator of the Year by the Illinois Protection Agency’s Division of Water Pollution Control, Field Operations Section.

Assistant Public Works Director – Ebe Smith reported that Well #8 is now online with radium removal so now both Wells 6 and 8 are pumping water without any radium in it. He said they have to take quarterly samples.

Police Chief – Don Thomas said that during the 5 days of Pumpkin Festival the Police Department used 135 employees and volunteers. He said there were 105 people working the parade and thanks to Lt. Cary Singer’s direction most of the vehicle traffic was out of town by 4:45 p.m. He announced that Officer Ann Carlson has returned to the United States from Germany where she has been serving at a military hospital and will be back in Sycamore working in a couple of weeks.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – no report

Ordinance – no report

Police & Fire – no report

Sewer & Water – Chairperson Alan Bauer reminded residents not to rake leaves into the streets.

Streets & Walks – no report

PUBLIC HEARING - None

ORDINANCES - None

RESOLUTIONS - None

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Award a Demolition Contract to American Demolition in the Amount of \$16,700.00.

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to award the contract to American Demolition for \$16,700 and Aldersperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Aldersperson Taylor asked why there was such discrepancy in the bids.

City Manager Nicklas said there was a pre-bid meeting and it was clear there was a difference in opinion of how difficult it would be to pull out the steel and leave the walls standing.

Roll call vote

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

B. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Award a Contract to Gilfillan, Callahan & Nelson for Conceptual Design Services for a New Police Facility.

Motion

Aldersperson Knuth moved to award the contract to Gilfillan, Callahan & Nelson and Aldersperson Neubauer seconded the motion.

Roll call vote

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

C. Consideration of Community Proposals for the Future Use of the Engh Farmstead.

Alice Elliott, DeKalb County Court Services Juvenile Supervisor, said she thought there were some misconceptions about the kinds of kids that would be housed in the proposed safe house after her first presentation to Council. She said they are not talking about violent offenders, but kids that come into the system through domestic violence and, in actuality, are the victims. She said there is a need for a safe and secure place for those kids to stay and when the Engh Farm became available they thought it would be an ideal setting for a safe house. She said she has seen what a proper home environment can do to change the life of a child. She said this is an opportunity to invest in the youth of this community.

Aldersperson Kessler asked why not use one of the houses the County is purchasing for expansion in Sycamore. She said it is hard not to ask the question, why those houses are torn down and not used for this purpose.

Ms. Elliott said she was not sure, but perhaps it was a lack of foresight and communication.

Aldersperson Kessler asked what the elected County Board position is and what do they have in mind for a safe house.

Ms. Elliott said they are looking for short-term and long-term housing.

Aldersperson Paulsen asked what the projected average population would be for the safe house.

Ms. Elliott said it would depend on how many kids the foster family would have, but they were thinking five kids. She said right now they contract with Kane County's Juvenile Facility for those kids needing to be detained, but some of the kids should not be exposed to that population in a facility they do not really need to be in.

Aldersperson Adee asked how many kids they could house in the safe house.

Ms. Elliott said probably no more than five because they do not want a group home, but are looking for a family setting with a structured environment to house the kids for 72 hours to 6 months.

Aldersperson Taylor asked if they had a contingency plan.

Michelle Donahoe, Executive Director of Sycamore Historical Society and Museum, explained that they are excited about partnering with the Park District and the YMCA, but still have details to work out. She said the Historical Society would utilize the small house for office and archives, the large house for exhibits, programs and storage, the garage possibly for storage and programs and the outside for programming, gardens, and signage to interpret the other parts of the farm so that story would be maintained. She said they would like to

offer day camps scout programs, special events for days off school and weekends, a founders day event, vintage game day, and ice cream socials.

Aldersperson Adey asked if they would retain the buildings for farming.

Ms. Donahoe said they would preserve the interpretation of the farm, but would not farm the land.

Rob Wilkinson, Executive Director of the Kishwaukee YMCA, said their mission is to improve community health, increase developmental assets in youth, to increase partnerships and collaborations, and outreach. He said the Engh Farm property would allow them to take programming out into the community. He said it is the intent of all 3 partners to keep the farm feel. He said this would be a secondary site for summer camp and after-school programs. He said they would like to place a fitness trail around the property and create trails from the school and neighborhood to the property. He said they need to raise funds for capital improvements and make the 600 sq. ft. Morton shed usable year-round.

David Peek, Executive Director of the Park District, said that in 2004 Mr. Engh approached the Park District about taking on the homestead and the idea at the time was to preserve the character of the property. He said part of the dialog at that time was finding a permanent place for the Historical Society. He said the Park Board chose not to take the property at that time because they had tenants and there was not public access. He said that the three entities are pulling this together and want to honor Mr. Engh's intention and keep the character to the site in tact.

City Manager asked Mr. Peek if what was written in the background was still correct information. He said according to that proposal the lead agency would be the Park District with a master lease up to 5 years and as a part of that a sublease between the Sycamore Historical Society and Museum and the Park District and conditionally a letter of understanding between the Kishwaukee YMCA and the Park District. He asked how long they would need to address the unresolved issue to the satisfaction of all three parties.

Mr. Peek said the component with the Sycamore Historical Society is almost completed, but the cost of sharing space with the Y is unresolved. He said he would like 60 to 90 days.

Mr. Nicklas said the DeKalb County Court Services proposal had some specific numbers and the City would want to see that from the other proposal.

Mr. Peek said they have had some local contractors give estimates on making the pole barn a year-round facility and the park staff is looking at the other buildings to see what they might need.

Aldersperson Kessler said when she was on the Recreation Commission the Community Center had senior programming and she said she thought they should keep in mind that the seniors need a place to socialize.

Mr. Peek said there is a dire need to service different populations in the community and they are trying to partner with other entities to accomplish that, but it is a work in progress.

Mayor Mundy said he thought it was intriguing that three not-for-profits are working together.

Aldersperson Kessler said she thought they were leaning toward the Park District/Sycamore Historical Society/Kishwaukee YMCA proposal even though there are details to be worked out. She asked if that was the case, should they let DeKalb County Court Services know.

Mayor Mundy said he did not want to be hurried with a decision and they are still entertaining both proposals.

Aldersperson Paulsen said he saw the need for the DeKalb County Court Services safe house and did not want to take a vote yet and asked the public to stay involved. He asked if there would be a public hearing for public comment.

Mayor Mundy said this is not intended as an action item.

Mr. Nicklas suggested placing this as a public hearing and an action item on the agenda for the first meeting in January.

Mr. Peek said he could crunch the numbers for the initial improvements in 60 days and have a pretty good idea of where they stand. He said there would need to be further dialog with the City regarding access.

Aldersperson Taylor asked if there was a contingency plan if this site did not work out.

Rob Wilkenson said they have been in discussion with the Park District for 6 to 8 months and they will continue those discussions no matter what happens with this.

Michelle Donahoe said the Historical Society would keep looking for a site.

Alice Elliott said the Court Services would continue to look for a safe house location.

Aldersperson Stowe said he thought the public hearing in January was a good idea.

D. Consideration of an Administration Request for Direction Regarding New Funding Options for Street Improvements.

City Manager Nicklas said he added a gasoline tax funding option for Council consideration and said it was a calculated guess for the expected revenue because the State does not separate fuel sales from miscellaneous items sold for food and fuel stations. He thanked Intern Adam Orton for gathering and compiling the information. He said he noted that whatever Council decides to do will have an impact in some fashion. He said they will have a public hearing on any options they look to take action on. He said the Chamber is having a meeting on November 19 to discuss the options.

Aldersperson Neubauer said it looked like a one cent gas tax would bring in about \$78,571 and asked if there would be administrative costs.

Mr. Nicklas said the tax would be administered internally with existing personnel and he could report the impact after the first year.

Aldersperson Neubauer asked if this tax would interfere with gas stations wanting to locate in Sycamore.

Mr. Nicklas said he did not have an answer to that, but said there are other factors that prospective businesses use for deciding locations.

Alderson Taylor asked if sales tax is increased, how soon before the tax would go into effect.

Mr. Nicklas said he assumed they would make it effective May 1, but they would work that out with the Department of Revenue. He said the City would not capture our share of the tax for two or three months.

Alderson Taylor asked at what point the City would be able to make bond action in order to make a significant impact on street repairs.

Mr. Nicklas said, practically speaking, the program is half in place for next year as part of the 2003 bond monies for the 100 block of S. Main Street, possibly the 1st 100 block of E. State Street, and some work on Locust. He said there is only so much work we can do in any given year with our staff. He suggested Council decide on a prioritized street maintenance list on the revenue levels and ramp up the first year and the second the third and succeeding years see the revenue stream at the optimal levels. He said that only two of the options would generate money right away and those are the sales tax and gas tax. He said the impact fees and special service areas are incremental and slow processes.

Alderson Neubauer asked if they want to spend \$2 million next year, when would a sales tax need to go into effect.

Mr. Nicklas said if they want to be prudent, they would not be able to spend \$2 million the first year because they would not have it. He said the first year they might go for quick fixes with \$500,000 to \$600,000 in street maintenance such as resurfacing and crack fixing and that would triple what was done this year.

Mayor Mundy said this is a long-term proposition.

Alderson Stowe said as a consensus they should rule things out and should wait to look at special service taxes as subdivisions come in.

Alderson Kessler said she attended a Chamber meeting concerning the Comp Plan review and was asked to meet with some of them individually about the street improvement funding options. She said she will bring back those findings.

Mayor Mundy said the Chamber is meeting this month to review the funding options and those findings will be taken into consideration, but it comes down to how aggressive Council wants to be with street improvement.

Alderson Knuth said he thought Council should put a Transportation Impact Fee into place now.

Mr. Nicklas asked when they wanted to bring this back.

Mayor Mundy said he thought after the Chamber's workshop.

Alderson Bauer asked if the Hotel/Motel tax was considered.

Mr. Nicklas said a good part of that is obligated on an annual basis to debt service and Chamber support and for the past two years for the lobbyist contract. He said those dollars can be used for general purposes, but they have tried to use it for local downtown purposes.

Mayor Mundy asked Council their feeling for a general timeline for a public hearing.

The consensus of Council was to have the public hearing at the December 3, 2007 meeting.

E. Consideration of the Annual City Property Tax Levy.

City Manager Nicklas said the City's EAV is up this year by an amount just under what it was up last year. He said a lot of that, reportedly, has to do with a big bump in commercial investment in our community. He said he provided a number of options in the background and recommended the 2.5% (estimated rate of .56598) increase because it is consistent with the "cap" facing other local taxing bodies and would reduce the City tax rate. Mr. Nicklas noted that he thought house pricing may drop, but that is not reflected in the estimated EAV. He said the Library levy is the other part of the Corporate Levy and the Library Board has recommended a 7% levy increase. He said the combined City and Library Corporate rate should be about 14.5% to 15% lower than the 2006 rate.

Aldersperson Bauer said he was leaning toward the 4%, but knowing about the multiplier takes it back considerably and he said he was okay with the 2.5%.

Aldersperson Stowe gave 2.5% the thumbs up and so did Aldersperson Knuth.

Aldersperson Kessler asked if residents got their properties reassessed, how that would play out.

Mr. Nicklas said residents can apply for a reconsideration and the decision is made by a Board. He said there are not a lot of successful changes in any given year.

The consensus of Council was to go with the City increase of 2.5% and the Library increase of 7%.

F. Consideration of an Administration Request for a Closed Session to Discuss Land Acquisition.

Motion

Aldersperson Kessler moved to go into Closed Session at 9:35 p.m. and Aldersperson Taylor seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

Motion

Aldersperson Paulsen moved to return to Open Session at 10:22 p.m. and Aldersperson Taylor seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Aldersperson Stowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 p.m. and Aldersperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Voice vote

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

Approve:

Mayor - Ken Mundy

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith