

Fertile City Council Minutes July 8, 2013

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, July 8, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Brian Nephew and Council members Dennis Hasler, Tanner Lehmann, Linda Widrig and Todd Wise.

There were no additions to the agenda.

Due to the absences of Barry Robertson and Kevin Nephew, the first item addressed on the agenda was the Environmental Learning Center report. Libby Eid reported that with the road and bridge projects that the Learning Center had shut down after June 17th. Up until that date, 13 volunteers had served a total of 40.5 hours.

For the airport committee, Mayor Nephew reported that the rest room was now installed and that the old beacon tower had been taken down. He also reported that the new LED lighting on the beacon would be installed soon.

For the personnel committee, Council member Widrig questioned the current policy on the accrual of all the year's vacation days on January 1 of each year and wondered whether the policy should be changed to avoid pay out of a full year when an employee leaves employment during the year. Council member Hasler stated that the Personnel Committee could look at other options to see if it could maybe be changed in a way so employees wouldn't lose any time off but would accrue it differently.

Kevin Nephew, Director of Public Works, had arrived at the meeting and gave his report. There were two building permits that needed approval and he stated that the Doug Nephew permit could be approved as long as he was within the setback limits and that he would go and measure for the new structure the following day. For the Dale Mackowick permit Nephew stated that he was within the setbacks and could be approved.

Council member Hasler then made the motion to approve both building permits with Doug Nephew's contingent upon Kevin Nephew approving the setbacks. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Kevin Nephew then explained the tank cleaning proposal that was on the agenda. He reported that the clearwell has been washed out but has never been professionally cleaned. He stated that the backwash tank had also never been professionally cleaned and that there was a good amount of sediment built up. Council member Hasler then questioned whether there would be an additional charge for sediment removal since Kevin had indicated more than three inches were built up. Nephew indicated that it could perhaps be cleaned out by someone with a vacuum truck.

Council member Lehmann then asked when the water tower was last inspected and cleaned. Nephew stated that it had been done about nine or ten years ago. This led to some discussion on water issues in general and Nephew went on to explain about the replacement of the plastic lines

at the treatment plant this fall. Mayor Nephew then inquired about whether there were any other issues or problems that needed inspecting or repairing. Kevin Nephew indicated that he wasn't aware of any.

Then the regular meeting was adjourned by Mayor Nephew, and Public Hearings were opened for a variance request made by Lee Abrahamson and an alley vacation request. For the variance it was explained that Abrahamson wanted to remove his front steps and replace them with a front porch. The new porch would be two feet closer to the street and closer than the front yard setback requirement. There were no public comments made on the variance request.

The Public Hearing was then held on the alley vacation request being made by Reid Jensrud. Terry Larson, who owns property that abuts the alley, was present to state that he and his wife did not want the alley vacated as they would have no access to their back yard if they wished at some point to build a garage or shed. Jensrud then shared a map with the Council that shows that Larson's have another alley to the south of their property that would provide them access. Larson then stated that there is a large tree in that alley right of way that blocks his access.

Jensrud then explained to the Council that he wanted the alley vacated so that he could have it graveled in the future to use as his driveway to access a garage he planned on building south of his house. He explained that he had been told by John Frohrip that the City would not pay to have it graveled and that if it were to be graveled that he would have to pay for it himself. Jensrud stated that if he was going to have to pay for the gravel that he wished to own the alley.

This was followed by a discussion on how much it would cost to have the alley graveled and maintained by the City rather than vacating the alley. Mayor Nephew then asked Terry Larson if graveled the alley would be satisfactory to him and Larson stated that it would be.

There being no further questions or comments the Public Hearing was adjourned on a motion by Council member Wise, seconded by Council member Hasler. The motion was carried and the Public Hearing closed. Mayor Nephew then reconvened the Council meeting.

On a motion by Council member Hasler, seconded by Council member Wise, the Abrahamson variance was approved.

Council member Hasler then made the motion to deny the alley vacation request. The motion was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

Reid Jensrud then asked the Council about the time frame for free water for the Community Garden. He wondered whether the water would be free for one year after the installation of the water lines was complete. Jensrud was informed that the one year would start when the water lines were installed.

The next item up for discussion was in regard to sidewalks and whether they could be removed by the homeowner. Another question that was posed was whether concrete sidewalks could be replaced with asphalt. Kevin Nephew stated that removal was only permitted if they were not connected to other sidewalks on either side.

This was followed by a discussion on other Cities' policies on sidewalks and potential liability issues. The matter was tabled until further research could be done on the matter.

A complaint petition signed by several citizens was the next item addressed by the Council. Several neighbors had signed a petition asking for the grain elevator storage area to be cleaned up since there was a substantial amount of residue left on the ground and it was now rotting and causing odor in the neighborhood. Council member Wise inquired whether or not the elevator had been informed of the complaint and Administrator Liden stated that a copy of the complaint had been sent to the elevator by one of the neighbors.

After discussion on the matter, Council member Hasler recommended that City Code be followed in regard to the complaint and that a letter be sent to Farmer's Coop. He also requested that Liden notify the complainants about the action that was being taken to solve the problem.

Upon review of the minutes of the June 10, 2013 and June 24, 2013 meetings, Council member Widrig made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Council member Lehmann and was carried.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were then reviewed. Mayor Nephew had a question regarding the number of phone lines in the Sheriff's Office that the City was paying for and was wondering if they were all necessary. Administrator Liden stated that she would get in contact with the Sheriff's Department and see if one or more of the lines could be removed.

The Treasurer's Report and Bills were approved on a motion by Council member Wise that was seconded by Council member Hasler and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Brian Nephew, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator