

CITY OF MUSCATINE
IN-DEPTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – March 14, 2019

Mayor Diana Broderson called the City Council In-Depth meeting for Thursday, March 14, 2019, to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Spread, Harvey, Brockert, Saucedo, Brackett. Councilmembers Malcolm and Fitzgerald arrived at 7:42 p.m.

Public Hearing

Mayor Broderson stated this public hearing concerns the acquisition or condemnation of all or a portion of property for street improvements included in the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project.

There was a question regarding the location of the property that was answered by Councilmember Brackett.

Councilmember Brackett motioned to close the public hearing and there was a second by Councilmember Spread.

Vote – 5 ayes – 2 absent (Malcolm & Fitzgerald) Motion Carried.

Councilmember Saucedo moved to approve request #2019-0074 approving the contract with the Blue/White Bargaining Units. Seconded by Councilmember Brockert.

Vote- 5 ayes – 2 absent (Malcolm & Fitzgerald) Motion Carried.

Councilmember Brackett moved to approve request # 2019-0075 approving the contract with the Police Department. Seconded by Councilmember Brockert.

Vote – 5 ayes, 2 absent (Malcolm, Fitzgerald) Motion Carried.

Councilmember Spread moved to approve request #2019-0076 approving the contract with the Fire Department. Seconded by Councilmember Harvey.

Vote – 5 ayes, 2 absent (Malcolm, Fitzgerald) Motion Carried.

Next on the agenda was a discussion regarding the removal of parking from one side of West Acre Drive.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman brought a proposal for parking changes on West Acre Drive. Mr. Stineman states that public works and public safety vehicles are having trouble making the turn in the circle. Mr. Stineman suggests that the parking on the inside of the circle be removed to allow more room for vehicles traveling. He stated he has sent letters to all residents that would be affected inviting them to come speak at Council Meeting.

Delmer Kuhlert, 1501 West Acre Drive, came forward to discuss his concerns with the reduction in parking on West Acre Drive. He stated he would suggest alternate parking on different days of the week. Mr. Kuhlert stated where he lived in Marshalltown, they did alternate parking and it worked out great.

Councilmember Brackett stated he agreed with the benefits of alternate parking. He states it would also eliminate vehicles sitting in one spot for extended periods of time without moving.

There were questions from council regarding why this street is hard to drive and why this has never come up before.

Mr. Stineman stated that with the two turns so close it makes it hard for large vehicles to make both turns and he feels the reason it has come up now is because of the extreme winter and snow plowing the City has had to do this year.

Mr. Stineman stated this was just a time for discussion and he would take the alternate parking back to the traffic safety committee.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion regarding the removal of parking from one side of Smalley Street. He stated it is the same situation with Public Works and Public Safety vehicles having trouble driving down the streets.

Mr. Stineman stated he had received a letter from one resident stating their disapproval of the proposed change.

John Jindrich, 1314 Smalley Street, came forward with a petition from the residents on Smalley Street stating they would like to maintain dual side parking. He stated they feel they need to maintain as much parking as they can for friends and family.

Mr. Jindrich stated that Smalley Street residents are also concerned about Public Safety vehicles having access. He states the problems lies with a "few" people who choose to not follow the parking rules. He stated the complaints that the residents have made are because of the few not following the rules and they feel that if they could address those not following the rules it would resolve the issues.

Councilmember Brackett stated that he liked that the neighborhood came together to discuss the situation.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman stated once again he would take this information into consideration.

Next on the agenda was a discussion regarding the restructure of the Community Development/Housing Department.

Jodi Royal Goodwin, Community Development Director gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the proposed changes within the Community Works and Housing Departments. Ms. Royal-Goodwin explained how the proposed changes would save a great deal of money for the departments and would better utilize the employees in their positions.

There were questions from City Council regarding the new positions and pay scales that were answered by Ms. Royal-Goodwin.

There were questions from City Council regarding why it is beneficial to combine the two departments that were addressed by Finance Director Nancy Lueck and Human Resources Manager Stephanie Romagnoli.

There were questions from City Council regarding Ms. Royal-Goodwin being able to take over both departments that were address by Ms. Royal-Goodwin by stating with the restructure, some of the duties are being reassigned allowing her to have more time to work with each department.

Councilmember Saucedo stated he would like to have an update in six months as to how things are going with the changes.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation by City Planner Andrew Fangman regarding revisions to the non-conforming use codes also known as grandfathering.

Mr. Fangman explained that these are things that upon original construction were in code but with code changes they are no longer in compliance. He gave several examples of these situations.

Mr. Fangman stated that the nonconforming situations are allowed as long as they are not abandoned, enlarged or expanded, destroyed or changed to conform. If a property is brought to current standards it must continue to meet those standards.

Mr. Fangman stated that the current regulations are written in a very archaic way and are very hard to interpret. Mr. Fangman stated the proposal is to rewrite the entire section that is more user friendly. He stated once changes are made, they will be brought back to City Council for approval.

The final discussion on the agenda was a presentation by Community Development Director Jodi Royal-Goodwin and staff regarding the Building Permit Process.

Ms. Royal-Goodwin gave an introduction to the permitting process and the establishment of, and different types of building codes. She stated these codes are not created to increase the cost but rather for safety.

City Planner Andrew Fangman discussed the process of the site plan review that is required for all new non-residential buildings, multi-family buildings containing more than four dwelling units and any expansion of said properties by more than 50%, prior to the issuance of a permit. He stated the site plan review consists of location, sidewalks, site access, drainage, driveways, utilities and other things not pertaining to the actual structure. Mr. Fangman discussed the process for the approval of the site plan and stated that it is one stop stopping for contractors with all individuals that need to approve site plan present at site plan review meeting.

Ms. Royal-Goodwin gave an overview of the permit process including who needs to apply, how to apply and requirements needed to obtain building permits.

City Administrator, Gregg Mandsager asked for Ms. Royal-Goodwin to explain how the customer review process works.

Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated they are working on several processes for feedback including on line as well as paper processes.

Councilmember Brackett stated he would like to see feedback from different times during the building process.

Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated that is something they are looking at. She stated they want to obtain emails for sending out final surveys. She also stated if any Councilmember receives feedback she would like to have that information as soon as possible.

Mayor Broderson stated there was confusion after the tornado with citizens regarding what repairs needed permits.

Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated they would work on getting information out to the public following any events through social media, city website etc.

There was discussion regarding the timeline for getting inspections performed and the number of inspections that are performed by each inspector in a given day. It was stated that critical and priority inspections would be done first, but most inspections will be performed within 24 hours of being called in.

There was discussion regarding the time each inspection takes that was addressed by Inspector Nick Morgan. He stated most inspections can be done in 30 minutes or less, but some more detailed ones can take longer.

Councilmember Saucedo stated he would like an update on the customer feedback process when it is created and what parts of the process are being surveyed. He stated he would also like to see feedback on rental inspection as well.

Communication from City Council

Councilmember Brockert stated the Riverbend Neighbors Meeting would be held Monday at 7 p.m.

Councilmember Brockert wanted to give a shout out to the Public Works Crews for their hard work plowing snow, filling pot holes and now working on sandbags for flood preparations.

Councilmember Saucedo asked Public Works Director Brian Stineman for an update on the flood status.

Mr. Stineman stated the forecast is for the water level to reach 20 feet. At 18 feet the riverfront parking area and park will be closed. He stated updated flood information will be posted on City Website as it is available.

Councilmember Fitzgerald stated downtown businesses were unaware of what help they would receive for flood preparations.

Mr. Stineman stated that Public Works would provide them with empty bags but did not have the manpower to fill them.

Councilmember Brackett stated he has been receiving complaints about the trains blocking crossings.

There was discussing between council regarding the issues involved with crossings being blocked and ideas of ways that could be discussed in the future to solve this issue. Citizens were encouraged to call Canadian and Pacific with their complaints and issues.

Mayor Broderson stated she will be out of the country for the next meeting and Mayor Pro Tem Brackett will be sitting in for her.

Council meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator