

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF ROCK FALLS

January 21st, 2014

The regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council of Rock Falls, Illinois was called to order at 6:30 p.m. January 21st, 2014 in the Council Chambers of Rock Falls by Mayor William B. Wescott.

City Clerk Eric Arduini called the roll following the pledge of allegiance. A quorum was present including Mayor William B. Wescott, Aldermen Vandersnick, Reitzel, Snow, Kuhlemier, Schuneman, Hand, Folsom, and Watts. In addition City Attorney Jim Reese, and City Administrator Blackert were also present.

Informational Public Meeting USEPA Assessment Grant - Limestone Building

Administrator Blackert informed everyone in attendance, as well as the residents watching at home on the Channel 5 Government Access Channel, the City's need for assessment of the Limestone Building. Adm. Blackert displayed a slideshow of the property, and presented a history of its life from 1867 until its abandonment in 1961, and the how the city acquired it presently. She explained that the City is applying for a \$200,000 USEPA Assessment Grant to determine the property's re-use options. Adm. Blackert explained that this grant will require a \$40,000 investment from the city, and this could be an in-kind match.

Administrator Blackert outlined 5 tasks for redeveloping this site along the Rock River. The tasks ahead are 1. Phase two Assessment 2. Cleanup planning 3. Identify Assets, and Identify Risks 4. Community Outreach (3 years) 5. Program Implementation, and Final Report.

Sandra Ramirez, a concerned citizen approached the Council and asked about the re-use of the limestone from the building, and if residents would be able to purchase the limestone blocks. Adm. Blackert explained that recycling is included in the grant, and she stated that people have also been interested in the steel stars on the sides of the building which are the actual ends of the support beams.

Alderman Kuhlemier took the microphone as a citizen, and as someone who had worked in all of the buildings of the former Parrish Alford, and International Harvester, including this limestone building. He recalls the usage of paints, solvents, lubricates, and other chemicals, some of which are no longer appropriate, at the site. He speaks in favor of this grant, and he feels this grant is of community concern.

Alderman Hand inquired about the structural shape of the building, and if it could be made secure for assessment. City Engineer Brian Frickenstein added that the assessment crews are well trained, and if they need to make parts of the site more secure to do the assessment, they have experience with that. He recalled the timber floors being too dangerous to walk on. It was also explained that one reason for the front of the building being missing is that a very heavy crosswalk was removed, and the unreinforced limestone crumbled under its weight.

Administrator Blackert added that the former paint room is of particular concern, and this ground needs to be cleaned up. Mayor Wescott explained that the water tower was removed along with other demolition work a few years ago because it had become unsafe. Alderman Watts asked when we would know if we had received the grant or not, and Adm. Blackert stated that with the help of Terracon, we hope to know in March. Our riverfront cleanup has a lot of investment by Terracon, the USEPA, and Illinois EPA already, but this is a difficult grant with many applicants. Alderman Kuhlemier added that Steve Colentino from the Illinois EPA has been a great help to the city in the past.

The Informational Public Meeting Ended at 6:55p.m.

Audience Request

Sandra Ramirez inquired if the city has taken any action on the recently passed Illinois Medical Marijuana bill. Mayor Wescott explained that the city was proactive about this item, and has already passed an ordinance concerning this. He also stated that the final legislation by the state has not been done, and it may be a year before the new laws will take effect.

Community Affairs

Bethany Bland from the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce informed the Council on the events that the Chamber of Commerce has hosted or promoted over the past year. She stated that a new wedding venue is going to open in Rock Falls. She also gave a list of upcoming opportunities, for business owners, non-profits, and leaders to attend.

Tim Wilson from the Rock Falls Tourism Office presented a PowerPoint slideshow explaining that the office was created in 1991 when the hotel tax was instituted. He stated that the office has a comfortable nest egg built, and the tourism office is going to work on the infrastructure of tourism activities. This year the Tourism Office will install free library kiosks around town, construct an informational kiosk at the Arduini Boat Launch, fund the installation of an EZ launch canoe and kayak system, and begin streetscape projects at the corner of 1st Ave. and 2nd Street. This is an investment of \$52,000 for this initial phase.

Ordinance Second Reading / Adoption

A motion was made by Alderman Vandernick, and second by Alderman Folsom to adopt Ordinance 2013-2136 amending Rock Falls Municipal Code Section 16-360 for a technical change in the zoning ordinance.

Vote 8 Aye, motion carried

Consent Agenda

1. Approve the Minutes of the January 7, 2014 Council Meeting
2. Approve the bills as presented.
3. Proclamation for Catholic Schools Week - St. Andrew Elementary Catholic School
4. Proclamation for Catholic Schools Week - Newman Central Catholic High School

A motion to accept the consent agenda was made by Alderman Hand, and second by Reitzel.

8 Aye, motion carried by omnibus vote

City Administrator Report

City Administrator Robbin Blackert presented the council with a map of a proposed zoning change. This change will expand the MU-1 Zoning for the riverfront to west 2nd Street, and part of 1st Avenue, along with the southern part of the RBW District. Attorney Reese asked for clarification on the Reliant Sub 2 parcels immediately west of the former IFH building on the map. A motion to accept with the proper clarification was made by Alderman Reitzel, and second by Kuhlemier.

Viva Voce Vote, motion carried

Information / Correspondence

Clerk Arduini read a letter from Amber Wood, Executive Director of The American Red Cross. She thanked the city, and specifically Mayor Wescott, Adm. Blackert, and Insp. Searing for being a community partner, and helping with shelter, food and coffee during the evacuation of the Civic Plaza II.

Department Heads

Rock Falls Electrical Director Dick Simon presented a Memorandum of Agreement for general retainer services in the amount of \$1,250.00 per month with BHMG Engineering Inc. 630 Jeffco Blvd. Arnold, MO. He explained that this is for emission controls and reports. Attorney Reese is waiting to hear back from the company, to change some language, and allow for this to be a 1 year contract. A motion was made by Alderman Hand and second by Folsom to approve this pending approval by the city attorney.

Vote 8 aye motion carried

Mr. Simon also informed the Council that Unit #2 at the Rock Falls hydroelectric plant may be back up and running by tomorrow. Divers worked over the weekend in freezing water to remove the stop blocks. Alderman Kuhlemier stated that all of the work that has been done there should be commended. Mayor Wescott thanks Bill Stickel from Aims Mechanical, Inc. and his crew for all of their hard work on the hydro.

Building Inspector Searing informed the Council that the CDAC Grant for improvements at city hall is underway. He also reported that the single family grant may be 100% funded this year, and it may be able to help rehab 6 homes this year in an amount of \$240,000.

Ward Reports

Alderman Daehle Reitzel wanted to thank everyone for their great work doing the snow removal lately.

Alderman Glen Kuhlemier reminded the Council that on January 24th 2014 from 9am to 11am The Whiteside County Comprehensive Plan work session will be held in the Rock Falls Council Chambers.

Alderman Brian Snow commented on the great job the city workers have done with snow removal, and he urges business owners to keep the sidewalks clear for pedestrians.

Alderman Dave Hand was glad to see that the residents were back in their homes at Civic Plaza II, and he stated that he has heard many positive comments about the snow removal.

Alderman Jim Schuneman urged residents to check on the elderly, and pets during this cold weather. He also reminded everyone that the Committee of the Whole meeting is next Monday, and the Hennepin Canal Committee will be presenting the results of the survey.

Alderman Lee Folsom said thanks to the people working on the streets, and that the roads looked better here than other communities.

Alderman Watts reported that he witnessed a wheelchair resident having to drive down the center of the road. He urges business owners to remove snow from sidewalks, and think about accessibility of people when removing snow. He also reported that the Firehouse Museum held a breakfast fund raiser Saturday morning. Alderman Watts thanked the chamber for opening the Community Building as a warming center, and stated that it will be posted on Facebook.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Bill Wescott reported that along with the Whiteside County Planning meeting to be held in the Rock Falls Council Chambers on Friday, there will also be a meeting about land use at the Odell Library in Morrison on Thursday from 7pm to 9pm. He commented that the volume of calls go up 1 or 2 hours into these snowstorms asking why the streets are not yet plowed. He explained that the snow routes, which are listed on the city's website are cleaned

first, and then the crews begin to do the other side streets, and alleys. He informed the Council that there will be an employee appreciation luncheon Wednesday from 11:30 to 12:30 at the community building to say thanks to all of the city employees working so hard and with so much overtime. Mayor Wescott also reminds everyone that there will be a Committee of the Whole meeting at 6:00 on Monday January 27th.

Adjournment

With nothing else for the good of the council a motion was made by Alderman Folsom, and second by Alderman Reitzel to adjourn at 7:21 p.m.

Viva Voce Vote motion carried

Eric Arduini, City Clerk