

Fertile City Council Minutes

May 14, 2018

The Fertile City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, May 14, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Daniel Wilkens, and Council members Reid Jensrud, Linda Widrig, Stanton Wang, and Todd Wise. Also present were City Administrator Lisa Liden, Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting, Michelle Cote, Brad Erickson, DJ Tadych, and Twylla Altepeter from the Fertile Journal. Other visitors were Kris Carlson and Alex Ranz from Ulteig Engineers.

Additions to the agenda were a building permit submitted by DJ Tadych and water billing for rental properties. The amended agenda was approved on a motion made by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wang and carried.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the April 9, 2018 meeting were approved on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

City Administrator Lisa Liden then gave a brief overview of the financial statements and also the bills paid in April. The Treasurer's Report and Bills were approved on a motion by Council member Widrig that was seconded by Council member Wise and carried.

Alex Ranz and Kris Carlson then gave the City Engineer Report. It was reported that the MN Department of Health had approved the plans submitted for the water and sewer project. There would still be an opportunity, however, to edit those plans to add some fire hydrants in the area of the school. Public Works Director Kevin Nephew then questioned whether or not the plan could be changed to include a mill and overlay on a couple of streets in town. Ulteig estimated that those streets would cost about \$60,000 per block and with curb and gutter on four of the five blocks the total cost would be about \$270,000. They explained also that those costs would have to be paid out of the City's general fund since they were not eligible for the bonding that would be done for the water and sewer project. Kris Carlson did explain, however, that if the mill and overlay projects were done in conjunction with the paving directly related to the water project that the City would save money on mobilization costs.

Mayor Wilkens then asked about the storm sewer issue at the golf course and whether that was included in the project. Alex Ranz explained that those costs would also not be eligible as part of the project since they were not water related. Kevin Nephew then explained that the breaks in the line were repaired with filter cloth at the joints as they occurred but Mayor Wilkens questioned whether it would be better to replace the whole line in the near future. Kris Carlson said that he would look into the matter further and come up with some cost estimates and options.

Discussion then focused on the funding for the project and the timelines on the bonding bill and potential bidding schedule. Ranz reported that there could be funds left over from this year to cover part of the project but that we would still have to bid the project in its entirety. Carlson explained that the project should go out on bids in June and that we could put a 60 day hold on the bids until we learned whether it was funded or not. The bids would also establish the as-built costs to submit to PFA for estimated funding.

Alex Ranz then reported on his progress with the Safe Routes to School grant. He began by explaining that the plan was basically on hold until we learn about the funding for the water project. If the water project progressed before the SRTS grant process was complete, the City could be paid retroactively for any sidewalk work already completed in the project areas.

Kevin Nephew began his Public Works report by explaining about the building permit request submitted by DJ Tadych. Tadych would like to put up a fence on the north side of his lot and given how narrow his lot is, he would like to put the fence on the north edge of the alley right of way located north of the house. Nephew explained that there is a utility easement through that alley but that the alley is already blocked on the east end by a couple of trees so it wasn't an alley that was used as such any more. He explained further that a fence wasn't considered a permanent structure and that he didn't see a problem with locating the fence on the right of way if there was an agreement in place that the fence would be removed if needed. Tadych said that he did not intend to sink the posts in concrete and that he would be willing to sign an agreement about moving the fence if necessary.

Tadych then explained that his building permit also involved an addition of a lean-to on both sides of his shop located across the street from his house. Kevin Nephew reported that the lean-to would be in compliance with the setback requirements so there was no issue with that part of the permit.

After further discussion, Council member Jensrud made a motion to approve Tadych's permit for a fence on the north side of the right of way located to the north of his house with the stipulation that an agreement be signed that the fence would be moved if necessary. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud to approve Tadych's permit for adding lean-tos to his shed across the street from his home. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

The regular meeting was then closed and the Public Hearing for a zoning variance was opened. Kevin Nephew explained that Nick Pederson would like to tear down an existing garage and build a new attached garage in its place. The new garage would be nine feet from the alley and that although he would prefer a ten foot setback that he didn't see an issue since there were already two other garages in the same block that were even closer to the alley.

The Public Hearing was then closed and the regular meeting was reconvened. A motion was made by Council member Wise to approve the Pederson variance. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Mayor Wilkens then brought up the subject of the equipment inventory that Council had asked Kevin Nephew to make up a few months ago. He stated that he expected the list to be much longer and that the list that was submitted only included the big equipment items. Wilkens went on to state that he would like to see a complete inventory done on all items in both shops and if it would be possible to have that finished by next month's meeting. Nephew replied that he could try to get it done and that he would start with a list he had made a few years ago and then add to it and delete items as necessary.

Council member Jensrud then asked that he would also like a list made of Nephew's personal items that are located in the shop and after further discussion of the matter it was determined that it would be best if Nephew just removed all personal items from both shops. Nephew then asked if he could leave his items in to shop until his new shop, which was under construction, was completed in the fall. Nephew then asked about the request to move his personal and business equipment off of City property and why the request was being made since there had never been a problem with it before. Mayor Wilkens then explained that it just doesn't look good to have his equipment like the stump grinder sitting in front of the shop.

The regular meeting was then closed and the Public Hearing for a zoning variance was opened. Mayor Wilkens explained that Reid and Shanna Jensrud had applied for a variance to build a 12 X 12 addition on to the front of their home. Administrator Liden explained that City Code required a 25 foot front yard setback but that the neighbors on both sides of the Jensrud house were much closer than 25 feet also.

After a brief discussion, the Public Hearing was closed and the regular meeting reconvened. A motion was made by Council member Wang to approve the Jensrud variance request. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried. Council member Jensrud abstained.

Discussion then returned to Public Works matters and Mayor Wilkens asked Kevin Nephew about the parking area in front of the new park building. He commented that he would like it to look nice for the open house in June and wondered whether it should be paved now or would it be better to wait. Nephew recommended waiting until next summer to pave it so that everything had a chance to settle.

Mayor Wilkens then turned the discussion to some concerns he had regarding some of the gravel roads. He stated that he knew the road grader was down for awhile but that he had gotten a few complaints about washboards on the Old Mill Road. Nephew explained that the road really needs to be rebuilt. It's currently 30 feet wide now and it should only be 24 feet wide. The ditches need to be dug out and the road rebuilt to its proper width since you can't scrape down very far before you hit black dirt. He also explained that the City didn't have the equipment necessary to rebuild the road and that the City should work with Garfield Township on getting that done. Nephew explained further that the grader was out of commission for about a week but that the road had been bladed right before and right after the grader was being repaired.

The next item up for discussion was the field crossing on Old Mill Road located half way down the hill right before the bridge. Mayor Wilkens reported that Dean Johnson currently holds the lease to hay the property right before the bridge and was concerned since the crossing was in a bad location. When he's moving equipment in and out of the field, the whole road is blocked and he was concerned that a car would come down the hill and be unable to stop. Johnson would like to see the crossing moved more to the bottom of the hill so it wasn't such a hazard. Johnson was willing to do the work on moving the crossing if the City had the materials to do so and also if he could get his haying lease extended by the Learning Center.

Wilkens then asked Kevin Nephew if the City had the dirt and gravel needed to move the crossing. Nephew stated that it could take up to 30 truck loads and that the City didn't have that much. The discussion then turned to what was available at the airport and also in the horse loading prairie at the Learning Center. Nephew stated that the clay at the Learning Center was needed for Industrial Park road work. After further discussion it was decided that it would make more sense to use the Learning Center clay for the crossing.

This led to a discussion on the work that was needed on the Industrial Park road since Allen Larson was building his shop there. After discussing the work that had been done out there previously and who had done that work, Council member Wang made the motion to call Engelstads and Chisholms to see if either one was interested in doing more work out there. If neither was interested or available then the work should be advertised. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Kevin Nephew then requested that a part-time worker be hired to take care of mowing and trimming during the summer. The position would be for only one or two days per week. A motion was made by Council member Jensrud to advertise the summer position. The motion was seconded by Council member Wang and was carried.

Nephew then reported that Electric Pump had looked at the force main out to the ponds and there were five air release valves that all needed to be replaced. Nephew estimated that the valves would cost \$700 each so replacing them would be \$3,500 plus that same amount for labor. He would contact Electric Pump to get the replacements scheduled.

Nephew ended his report by commenting that everyone on Council and all City staff work together for the betterment of the City but that we need to work on trust. He asked that if Council got a complaint about staff that they should get it in writing so that it could be properly addressed. Nephew then stated that everyone needed to start working together on things.

Council member Wang then asked Nephew if there would be any room in the Garfield shop for the new fire department trailer. Nephew said that he thought there would be room if some of the equipment were moved around.

A motion was then made by Council member Jensrud to move the Fair Meadow report to earlier on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

Fair Meadow Administrator Angie Leiting then gave her report to Council. The home began the month of April with 40 residents and ended with 41, operating at 94.76% capacity. They had also served 338 home delivered meals. She reported also that both the home and the assisted living had shown a profit for the month of April and that the nursing home profit was better than the assisted living. The year to date profit and loss still showed a loss for the year but it was much smaller now. Angie ended by reporting that there was currently one empty apartment in the assisted living and three nursing home beds open.

After discussion of available dates, a Finance Committee meeting was set for 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 6th.

Administrator Liden then gave the Administrator's Report. She reported that a great deal of time had been spent on preparation for the annual audit and that the onsite work with Eide Bailly had been completed. She had also worked with the City Attorney on development and purchase agreements for the Industrial Park lots that had been sold. She ended by explaining that the water meter audit process had been completed for the May water billing and that getting pictures of the water meters from customers would hopefully reduce the number of meters that staff would have to physically read to confirm.

Under the Agassiz Environmental Learning Center it was reported that the Minnesota Parks of Regional Significance application had ranked high at the State level and that the Master Plan was being worked on. A series of meetings would soon be scheduled to gather community input on the Master Plan. Mayor Wilkens stated that the meeting notifications would be much quicker and easier if there was a list of AELC member emails so that notices could go out by email. Liden commented that she would work on getting letters out to members and would include a request for email addresses.

Council member Wang gave the fire department report. The department responded to two calls in April and they had also gotten their new truck and ranger and were working on getting them outfitted.

Under the Airport Committee, Liden reported that the zoning grant had been approved at the State level and that the next step would be to get a letter out to the County, and Garfield and Liberty Townships to invite them to be involved in the Joint Airport Zoning Committee.

The Personnel Committee had nothing to report.

The next agenda item to be addressed was the gravel bids. Mayor Wilkens began by opening the sealed bids that had been received by Lindberg Enterprises and DR Gravel. Lindberg had bid \$9.10 per ton and DR Gravel had bid \$12.15.

A motion was made by Council member Wise to accept the bid submitted by Lindberg Enterprises. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The 5K and 1K Color Fun Run permit application was approved on a motion by Council member Jensrud that was seconded by Council member Wise and was carried.

The next item addressed was a request by The Other Place to close off a portion of Washington Ave. NW on June 9th for a street dance. After a brief discussion, Council member Wang made a motion to approve the street closure. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried. Setting a rental rate for the new building in JD Mason Park was the next item on the agenda. A discussion was held comparing that building and the amenities available there to what was available and the Learning Center. Administrator Liden explained that the Learning Center rental rate was \$65 and that the space there was a little larger and also more private.

A motion was made by Council member Widrig to set the rental rate at \$50. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

Council member Jensrud then started a discussion on water bill policy for rental properties. Liden explained that currently water is billed out in the tenant's name and that the landlord gets a copy of the bill. Jensrud explained that he would like to see the City Code changed so that the property owners are billed for water and sewer rather than the tenants. Liden explained that a Public Hearing would need to be called since it would involve amending the City Code and also that she would inform all the landlords by letter of the hearing.

Council member Wang then made a motion to call for a Public Hearing at the June meeting to amend the City Code in regard to water billing for rental properties. The motion was seconded by Council member Jensrud and was carried.

The final item up for discussion was arrangements for an open house to be held for the splash park and new building. Liden said that she had been discussing the open house with Marjie Broden and that the open house would be scheduled in June and that it would be good to have food and refreshments available. Since the Early Childhood Initiative was still holding fundraisers to cover their costs on the splash park, Liden would like for the City to provide the food for the event. She estimated that it would cost in the neighborhood of \$400 for everything.

A motion was then made by Council member Wang for the City to provide the food and refreshments for the open house. The motion was seconded by Council member Widrig and was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Council member Wang.

Daniel Wilkens, Mayor

Lisa J. Liden, City Administrator