

ELYSIAN CITY COUNCIL

OCTOBER 12, 2009

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

6:00 P.M.

The Elysian City Council met in regular session on Monday, October 12, 2009, at City Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Members present were: Mayor David Rager; Councilmembers Tiffani Atherton, Roger Hanson, Clinton Stoen; Clerk Administrator Patricia Nusbaum; City Attorney Jason Moran, Public Works Director John Roessler, and Administrative Assistant Lorri Kopischke. Absent: Councilmember Mary Opsahl.

Meeting was opened with the Pledge to the US Flag.

On motion by Stoen, seconded by Atherton, all voting in favor, minutes of September 14, 2009 regular council meeting were approved as presented.

On motion by Atherton, seconded by Hanson, all voting in favor, the agenda was approved as presented.

John Roessler report:

1. Hydrants are all repaired.
2. Roessler presented the question and concern of property owner Elde Kretlow, 128 Willow Point Drive, as to the fire hydrant that was placed on his property on a private drive and not on the property line when the water and sanitary sewer project was placed in 1998, and as to whether the city would be responsible for the moving of it due to it being located in the middle of his driveway in front of a proposed garage. Attorney Moran indicated that it was the property owners responsibility.
3. Discharging of ponds is not going really well. More testing is needed.
4. Brought to the attention of Council that a new roof will be needed on the city shop next year. A temporary fix has been made.

Clerk Administrator updates:

1. Sound system in the council chamber is in place.
2. Update on Chesnut #3 project. Developers' request that the City crew be on site whenever possible to lower the costs of the City Engineer's time. Administrator will consult with the Engineer as to what areas the city crew could inspect.
3. Regional League of Cities meeting – October 28th.

4. Administrative Assistant Kopischke passed out to the Council a paper she had worked up regarding vacation and sick leave for city employees which had been requested by Mayor Rager. Kopischke indicated that the request may be of interest to the entire Council.

Steve Moline, Pettipiece & Associates, was present to review with the Council the amendments to the Elysian Zoning Ordinance which the Planning and Zoning Commission had been working on for the past two years. The amendments included the following:

1. A developer may be required to provide to the City a copy of a boundary survey for the property under consideration for improvements being made.
2. A new type of permit has been added to the City's land use regulation tools, an Interim Use Permit, that can be applied for in those cases when a use is not permitted in a zoning district. The Interim Use Permit will have a specific sunset time attached to its provisions.
3. Provisions added requiring all structures to display its street address on its exterior.
4. Corrugated S type metal is prohibited to be used as a roofing medium. All other metal roofing types are permitted.
5. Additional standards for accessory structures, including height restrictions (20'), number of accessory structures allowed per lot (2), and area of accessory structures (1,800 sq. ft.) were included in the amendments.
6. External solid fuel fired heating devices are prohibited.

On motion by Hanson, seconded by Stoen, all voting in favor, amendments to the Elysian City Zoning Ordinance was approved as presented.

WEM School Board representatives Jay Schneider and Pat Nusbaum presented to the Council the proposed operating referendum which citizens are asked to vote on November 3rd. The present referendum will expire at the end of the present school year. The District will have a \$1.4 million dollar deficit for year 2010-2011. The vote would be to continue the present programs that are now being taught. A \$1,200 per pupil unit for six years is being asked which, if approved, will allow programs to continue for the 2010-2011 school year.

Megan James and Kris Miller, Elysian Horizons Group, were present to finalize the Elysian Holiday Parade to be held on Saturday, December 5th. at 6:30 p.m. some of the expectations of the parade event will include: keeping people off the Main Street, keeping County Road #11 open to thru traffic, and allowing traffic to get to the businesses on Main Street. Streets will be blocked off starting at 5:30 p.m. Bingo sponsored by the Fire Department will be held at the Elysian Fire Hall after the parade. The America Legion Club will host their monthly bullhead feed beginning at 4:00 p.m. Earlier in the day the Lake Area Women will be sponsoring the annual Shopping with Mrs. Claus at the Elysian Area Learning Center, starting at 8:30 with the Fire Fighters serving breakfast for the children in attendance and their parents or grandparents. Proceeds from the parade will be given to the Food Shelf, the Library, and Sharing Tree. For more information

refer to the Horizon Web site, elysianhorizonsgroup.com.

Jason James, Elysian Fire Chief, was present to ask the Council for approval for an on site bingo permit to allow bingo to be played in the fire hall on the 5th. following the Elysian Holiday Parade. Resolution was presented by Councilmember Stoen and seconded by Councilmember Atherton, to allow off site bingo permit for the Elysian Fire Department Relief Association to be held on Saturday, December 5, 2009 at the Elysian Fire Hall as follows:

RESOLUTION 340/09

REQUEST FOR OFF SITE LAWFUL GAMBLING

WHEREAS: the Elysian City Council was presented with a request from the Elysian Fire Department Relief Association for one day off site lawful gambling.

WHEREAS: State Laws of Minnesota require approval be granted by the local governing body, thus the City of Elysian.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Elysian City Council grants approval for a one day off site lawful gambling license to the Elysian Fire Department Relief Association.

The resolution was presented by Stoen, seconded by Atherton, to approve one day off site lawful gambling for December 5, 2009.

Voting Yes: Stoen, Atherton, Hanson, Rager

Voting No: None

Dated this 12th. day of October, 2009

Attest:

Patricia Nusbaum, Clerk Administrator

David Rager, Mayor

On motion by Hanson, seconded by Atherton, to allow the request of Jason James, Fire Chief to purchase lockers for Fire Fighters turn out gear at a cost not to exceed \$6,500 with funds coming from savings.

Clerk Administrator Nusbaum addressed items for the Elysian Horizons Group which included the discussion on the city again having a city skating rink. Councilmember Stoen will get costs to do the rink for the next meeting and will investigate a location for the rink.

Another concern of the Horizons Group and local citizens as to the updating of the Sakatah Singing Hills Trail. On motion by Stoen, seconded by Hanson, to approve the request from Horizons for a letter from the City Council to the area legislators in support of funding for the trail to be resurfaced was approved.

On the request of the Elysian Area Chamber of Commerce a motion was made by Atherton, seconded by Stoen, all voting in favor, to approve the closing of Third Street SW from Main Street to past entry to Wayside Rest on October 31st. during the Halloween Spook Trail.

On motion by Atherton, seconded by Stoen, all voting in favor, to accept the following donations and approve the resolutions as presented in block.

1. Resolution #336/09 - Mankato Eagles FOE – Wade Becker - \$1,000 to the Fire Department to be placed toward debt on the Kabota.
2. Resolution #337/09 - Wal-Mart Foundation – American Legion Post #311 - \$1,000 to the Elysian Library
3. Resolution #338/09 - Helen Wanous – 405 First Street N. - \$200 to the Elysian Fire Department
4. Resolution #339/09 - Dale Gandrud –706 Lake Side Drive - \$200 toward the sound system.

Discussion on the participation of the two members of the council to attend an equalization board seminar to allow the City Council to be the decision makers on the requests on land value for the annual Board of Review was held. Consensus of the Council was to continue with the County Assessor delivering an open book review.

On motion by Hanson, seconded by Stoen, all voting in favor, to approve of bills, payroll, and transfers in the amount of \$69,687.84.

Attorney Moran Comments:

1. Still waiting on the judge regarding the annexation hearing held in September.

Mayor Comments:

First, let me say that we are moving toward getting the Sakatah Trail resurfaced. The plans are in the initial stages and are quite tentative. These plans may include new bridges and parking lot resurfacing also.

Completion may be done in three stages as the whole 39 miles is an extensive project. I have been told that it will be approximately two months before we know much more, but it sure looks like funding is in a favorable position.

Second, Pat, Clint, Roger & I hosted the Minnesota Valley Council of Governments last week at the Bears Den. I have not been involved long enough to understand the full value of this organization to our City, but I do understand its cost. I will soon give the Council a full report on my concerns in this area.

Third, the EDA is constantly looking at ways to improve and promote our City. The City Council joined the EDA board at its last meeting. Both groups fully agreed to add meeting dates and approved minutes to our City web page along with many other new features in the near future. I have made ElysianMn.com my home page on my personal computer. It is easy to navigate and very useful.

Finally I wish to address the issues raised by citizens at our last Council meeting. I welcome citizen comments and will address your questions as best I can.

One person asked if there is a list of employee responsibilities and when employees were last given performance reviews. I don't believe there have been any job reviews in 6 or 7 years or maybe longer. Our personnel handbook is outdated, and I am hoping the

Personnel Committee set up earlier this year will submit a revised handbook at our next Council meeting that will include job descriptions and much needed suggestions.

The first summary of wages that I provided the public earlier this year reflected actual W2 wages which were verified by Lorri before distribution at the Council meeting. At our budget workshop I distributed a spreadsheet showing how Elysian compares with other cities in wages, population, raises and tax levies. The information was obtained by calling every city in Minnesota with populations between 550 and 650. Elysian's population is 580.

All who responded are included. Elysian salaries were projected with the information I had at the time. These projections change from week to week because overtime varies between pay periods. The spreadsheet now shows the projected wages that Lorri handed out at our last meeting. Total 2009 wages will be known in January, and the public is entitled to that information. I believe it is the Council's responsibility to constantly monitor how we are spending city tax dollars, and this includes wages and benefits. If I had found that we were severely lower than other cities our size, that would also have justified change.

In my opinion, we are quite generous in our benefits and salaries to employees. I am not aware of any employees being treated negatively. Issues concerning money can become emotionally charged, and sometimes labels like "dysfunctional" and "unproductive" are used to describe what may be the normal process of change. Cost control is not being negative; it is what the voters elected us to do. That being said, everybody needs to conduct their discussions with courtesy and respect.

I can not answer the question of why we have or need 8 employees as I was not mayor when these changes took place. I do know that we have 4 full time City employees, two part-time who primarily mow and two part time who work the leaf and branch pile at the sanitary ponds.

The subject of the State Audit has been raised several times. Although these findings came before my election to City office, I am taking them very seriously. We would be remiss if we did not address the State Auditor's findings. The mishandling of cash payments for health benefits has been corrected by contributing to a qualified plan from which employees can be reimbursed for health care costs. The EDA is diligently working on amending the way EDA loans are made and bringing all files up to date. These are two of the areas that were noted in the State audit and were addressed by the City Council.

Finally, we are all concerned about vandalism in our city. If anybody has any idea who is responsible for this, please help us stop it now. Let's be observant and immediately report questionable behavior to the Sheriff's office. Let's watch our neighbor's property and let's watch our parks and public areas as if they belonged to us-because they do!

David

Visitors Comments:

Wayne Unke – 124 Willow Point Drive – provided the Council with his version of statistics as to comparisons to letters previously circulated in the community. His

material was researched regarding full time salaries in comparison to other communities. He also presented his thoughts on what should be removed from the 2010 budget.

Bruce Childs – 203 Park Avenue NE – letter read by Clerk Administrator Nusbaum regarding his concern as to the process and cost of building permits and inspections in the City.

Jeff Stephens – 307 Third Street NW – Thanked the Council for the nice sound system in the council chambers. He also started to ask the Mayor why he had a personal vendetta against the city employees. Mayor Rager gaveled Stephens at this point and told him to sit down.

On motion by Hanson, seconded by Atherton, all voting in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Attest:

Patricia Nusbaum, Clerk Administrator

David Rager, Mayor