

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – July 6, 2009

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, July 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Lehmann, Waldhausen, Johnson, Hellquist, Negard. Absent: Meuers, Downs.

Staff Present: City Manager John Chattin, City Attorney Alan Felix, City Engineer Craig Gray, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Clerk Kay Murphy

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Mayor Lehmann called for any amendments to the agenda. **Motion by Johnson, seconded by Negard, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

MINUTES

Minutes of the June 15, 2009 regular meeting, BEDA Meeting June 15, 2009 and June 22, 2009 work session were presented for approval. **Motion by Johnson, seconded by Waldhausen, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

CONSENT AGENDA

The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Waldhausen, seconded by Johnson, to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims submitted by the Finance Officer in the total amount of \$1,274,929.66
2. Miscellaneous 2009 Business License
3. Budget Change Request #3
4. Amendment #1 to Grant Agreement – BREC Site
5. Reapportionment of Special Assessments – 1900 Division Street SW (Chock)
6. Roof Replacement - Fire Hall
7. **RESOLUTION NO. 5568:** Granting Consent to Midcontinent Communications Conveyance
8. Accept Conveyance and Fee Title for Fenske Avenue and Three Storm Ponds in the Bemidji Industrial Park
9. **RESOLUTION NO. 5569:** Supporting the Prioritization of the Paul Bunyan Trail Bridge Over Hwy 197 for the 2010 State Legislation
10. Council Travel – CGMC Summer Conference – July 29-31 – Lehmann, Hellquist

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Bemidji Youth Advisory Commission – Jade Hovet, BYA representative, reported that the BYAC retreat is set for August 19 at Diamond Point Park and the Council is welcome to join them for dinner at 5 p.m. The BYAC is in the process of interviewing next year's council members. Ms. Hovet stated that the BYAC supports the striping of Irvine Avenue NW per the City Engineer's recommendation.

NEW BUSINESS

Irvine Avenue Traffic Lane Striping Options

City Engineer Gray stated that with the reconstruction of Irvine Avenue there has been renewed discussion about how to stripe the new road once it is completed. He reviewed the pros and cons of both options. He recommended that the existing striping be re-installed on Irvine Avenue upon completion of the project. He stated that he sent a letter to the residents along Irvine Avenue and received only five phone calls – four in favor of current striping and one in favor of a center lane. He noted that the Active Living group is in support of the existing striping. In addition, Gray noted that the turn lane onto 15th Street will be lengthened to allow for more cars that are turning left.

Negard stated that he would like to see a turn lane at 7th and Irvine Avenue. Gray stated that he has looked at a left turn lane at 7th Street and does not recommend that one be placed there as it has been his experience that traffic moves pretty well along this area.

Johnson commented that passing on the right side is illegal and a concern.

Gray stated that the center lane moves the traffic along faster, however, there are many other modes of travel, i.e., walking and biking that the City needs to consider.

Chattin stated that if Bemidji wants a walkable, bikeable community, having parked cars does not make it safe for those biking.

Gray has been watching the parked vehicles and stated that no parking could be possible between 6th and 15th on one side of Irvine. The downside would be bikes traveling in the wrong direction.

Hellquist stated that he rides Irvine Avenue on a regular basis and recommended that the striping and parking remain as it is currently. Hellquist stated that the calls from residents in his ward are in favor of leaving the striping as is.

Mayor Lehmann asked for comments from those present at the meeting. The following comments were heard:

- Ryan Eggert, 907 Irvine Avenue NW, stated he is in favor of the striping remaining the same.
- Mathew Dyrdaahl, Active Living Group, stated that he is working with the Active Living initiative in Bemidji with BC/BS as part of a five year program. The first year included planning and it is a unique opportunity for Bemidji. It is about providing accessible facilities for everyone to use. Promotion and education making people aware of why physical activity is important. Over the next four years they will be implementing the plan.
- Warren Larson, MeritCare and B-Well President, stated that they are working hard at developing strategies to make our community more walkable and bikeable. They support the City Engineer's recommendation for striping Irvine.
- Muriel Gillman, 11535 East Movil Lake Road and member of Active Living Planning Committee, stated that she supports the proposal to stripe Irvine Avenue as proposed by the City Engineer. She commented that it provides opportunities for community members to participate in walking and biking. Ms. Gillman stated that if we allow more people to bike or walk, it will reduce the carbon footprint in our community.
- Diane Pittman, Turtle River Township, stated that she commutes regularly to Bemidji on Irvine and is in favor of the current striping of Irvine Avenue. Bemidji has the opportunity to be a destination for biking and this is a good economic tool for promoting Bemidji.

Motion by Hellquist, seconded Negard, to accept the recommendation of the City Engineer that the existing striping be re-installed on Irvine Avenue upon the completion of the project. Motion carried unanimously.

Rental Density/Moratorium Ordinance

Chattin stated that at the last regular meeting, the Council asked that a rental moratorium ordinance be drafted for presentation. Staff has prepared two ordinances for the Council to consider adopting: 1) an interim ordinance establishing a temporary moratorium on the issuance of new rental registration licenses for single family homes; or 2) an ordinance amending Chapter 10 of the City Code relating to density of rental licenses in certain areas.

Felix stated that attached to the ordinance, staff has prepared maps showing the number of rentals per block in the city by ward.

Waldhausen stated that in light of the data that staff has prepared, density in certain areas of the City is excessive and he supported the density ordinance.

Johnson stated that he was under the impression that a moratorium would help address other rental problems, i.e., parking and occupancy limits. He stated that he felt that density is only one piece of the problem.

Waldhausen stated that perhaps more enforcement of the ordinances already in place is needed, i.e., parking, occupancy.

Felix stated that a moratorium would stop any new rental registrations for one year and allow Council and staff time to look at a number of things, including rental density, parking associated with rentals and the property maintenance code.

Chattin stated the real issue is the density of rentals and time is of the essence in affected neighborhoods and adopting a density ordinance could impact the problem sooner.

Hellquist commented that over the years the Council has tried to create good neighbor ordinances. He stated that rental property changes things as there can be a lack of pride in ownership.

Johnson stated that a moratorium will stop the “bleeding” for one year. He further commented that there is interest by the HRDC to revitalize some of the neighborhoods and would like the City to considering developing a partnership with them.

Lehmann stated that the Council is not anti-rental but there have been an increasing number of single family homes being turned into rentals. The Council needs to do a stronger job with gap financing, encourage lower density of rentals and explore what help is available.

Negard stated there are a lot of people in Bemidji that cannot afford a home and that rentals are very important, therefore, he was reluctant to make a decision.

Waldhausen commented that in the past ten years that his family has lived on their block it has changed from approximately 10% rentals to 60% rentals. He noted that the surrounding blocks have a high number of rentals also.

Motion by Waldhausen, seconded by Johnson, to proceed with the interim ordinance establishing a temporary moratorium on the issuance of new rental registration licenses for single family homes within the City. Motion carried unanimously.

ORDINANCES

Mayor Lehmann reopened the Public Hearing of an Ordinance Amending an Uncoded Section of the Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Alley Vacation (North Country Hospital/Ours to Serve House of Hospitality) at 7:55 p.m. and closed the public hearing with no comments.

- **Second Reading of an Ordinance** Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Alley Vacation (North Country Hospital/Ours to Serve House of Hospitality)

Felix stated that North Country Hospital Board had their meeting regarding access to their property and they have an understanding with the City that they will be able to get a driveway off of 6th Street.

AN ORDINANCE Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Street and Alley Vacation (Bemidji State University) was given a first reading.

AN ORDINANCE Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Street and Utility Easement Vacations (Halper-Amundson) was given a first reading.

AN ORDINANCE Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Street Vacation (Nymore Beach Road) was given a first reading.

AN INTERIM ORDINANCE Establishing a Temporary Moratorium on the Issuance of New Rental Registration Licenses for Single Family Homes within the City of Bemidji was given a first reading.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Paul Ericsson, Librarian, reported that the Library is very busy this summer and they are seeing an increased circulation of reading materials. The summer reading program has approximately 360 children participating which is an increase from last year. He highlighted summer programs available at the library stating that there are plenty of things available for both children and adults at the Library. The summer book sale will be on August 12 and 13 with an early bird special for Friends of the Library on August 11.

CITIZEN NOT ON AGENDA

No one appeared.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| • Monday, July 13 | 5:30 p.m. | Work Session – Audit Presentation |
| • Monday, July 13 | 6:15 p.m. | RDG Presentation on Central Plan |
| • Monday, July 20 | 7:00 p.m. | Council Meeting |
| • Monday, July 27 | 5:30 p.m. | Work Session – TBD |

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT

- Mayor Lehmann commended the Bemidji Jaycees for the 65th Annual Water Carnival.
- Event Center virtual tour will be available on the City's website soon.
- Johnson and Hellquist reported on the League of Minnesota Cities conference that they recently attended in St. Paul.
- Waldhausen commented that the Diamond Point Park was heavily used for the 4th of July and everyone was sharing the amenities. He further congratulated BSU's acceptance in the WCHA.
- Gray stated that road construction on Irvine Avenue has begun.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Johnson, seconded by Hellquist, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk