

**MINUTES of the ST. CHARLES CITY COUNCIL**  
**For Tuesday, May 27, 2014 held at 7:00 p.m. at**  
**830 Whitewater Avenue**  
**St. Charles, Minnesota**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councilmen:

John Schaber

Dave Braun

Orv Dahl (absent)

Wayne Getz

Mayor Bill Spitzer

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rick Schaber (Park and Rec Director), Keith Zanto (St. Charles Fire 1<sup>st</sup> Asst.), Jeff Hardtke (St. Charles Ambulance), and Nick Koverman (City Administrator).

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Jim Speth, Sharon Speth, Jennefer Klennert, Brian Todd (Post Bulletin), Gary Weiers (David Drown & Associates), Maureen Doffing, Bob Van Doran, Gary Nelson, Pam Tesch, Laura Berndt (St. Charles Press), Dan Hursh, Zach Hursh, Dan White, Fran Schmit, Jan Shaw Wolff, Craig Blommer, Ken Splittstoesser, Harold (Skip) Fort, Deb Fort, Shianne Verness, and Tammy Hester.

**1. ESTABLISH QUOROM/CALL TO ORDER**

Quorum was established with Mayor Spitzer calling the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. APPROVAL of the AGENDA: Addition: 4a. Tulip Tree**

Motion to approve the agenda: **John Schaber**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

**4. Notices and Communications.** Admin. Koverman informed the Council that the 2013 Consumer Confidence Water Report would be released soon. He asked Council to let him know if interested in attending the Project Fine banquet.

**4a. Tulip Tree.** Shianne Verness provided a brief review of the community survey that saw a 9.2 percent return, which she explained that it was planned for a 1 percent return. She highlighted the responses and ways the city could move forward with the information. She summarized that the city does many things well, but that people were not aware of all of the items. In addition, she provided Council with some thoughts about how various pieces could be improved and focused on messaging and branding of the city. She thanked the Council for their time.

**5. DNR Trail Presentation.** Jan Shaw Wolff of the Department of Natural Resources presented the various options for possible trail locations that her staff had been reviewing with the technical assistance of her organization and city staff. She outlined the 6 different proposals and reasons why the proposed routes would not work. She then outlined that in an effort to see a trail from St. Charles to Whitewater State Park realized, they are again exploring a plan that was part of a 1978 Park plan to possibly close a portion of Highway 74 going into the park. Initial discussions with MnDOT have been encouraging regarding the plan, but more details needed to be flushed out. She then discussed the Federal grant that the City received. She said it is up to the City to decide its next move, but stated that if the city can pursue the easements, she thinks it gives the city options. However, the City then transferring the trail to the DNR, she could not provide a timeline as it would be based on funds and other projects being considered at the time. She expressed her support of the city to try and utilize the funds acquired through the 2008 grant process. She answered questions from the Council and general audience present as to the various options and trails down into the park and went through each one outlining why they would not be feasible. She expressed that initial conversations with MnDOT and County representatives would be scheduled in the near future and that they would continue to try and research a viable option for the community. The Council thanked her for her time.

**6. Public Hearing-Capital Improvement Plan.** Gary Weiers was introduced from David Drown & Associates. He outlined the proposed Capital Improvement Plan that would provide the city authority to bond a maximum of \$2.1 million if they chose. However, by adopting the plan it did not commit the city to bonding, he stressed. He reviewed the document and scope of the impact of tax dollars that would be required. He reviewed the petition process for the Council. During the following 30 days after the public hearing, the public would be able to gather 5 percent of the voters that voted in the last General Election and submit to the Council requesting a referendum vote of the project. Should a petition not be received by the voters, it would be at the Council's discretion of whether to hold a referendum vote or not. No questions were asked by the Council.

A motion to open the public hearing at 7:50 p.m. was called: **Dave Braun**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

Mayor Spitzer called for the names signed up to address the Council first.

Sharon Speth - 606 Richland Avenue. She began expressing that she agrees with the need for the new facility, but wanted to ensure that her concerns of drainage in the alley way would be addressed as she feels that most of the water from the alley is shed onto her property. She also questioned the snow storage and/or removal. She highlighted the youth that play in the alley and the concern of the trucks using that for a drive-thru onto Church Avenue. The Council thanked her for her comments.

Dan White – 730 Whitewater Avenue. Mr. White expressed his support of the project highlighting past experiences and need for the services. He urged the Council to support the bonding to provide the proper training space, areas to clean and maintain equipment and to provide for a better community.

Gary Nelson – 349 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street. He asked the Council if they had given consideration to adding the police department at that location. He expressed his support of the project and added that he owned one of the properties on that block asking if consideration had been added to acquiring those for future space.

Keith Zanto – 1<sup>st</sup> Asst. Fire Chief – Mr. Zanto offered that the need for the building was not for today, but for future generations stating the need to provide a facility that will serve for the next 50 years.

Jeff Hardtke – 501 Whitewater Avenue. As the Ambulance Director, he stated that he feels the combined building is the best avenue for both departments. While the ambulance calls grow, the service is located in a building that was designed for one unit. He applauded the many volunteers and number of hours that are given to the services, but sees the need for to make this improvement.

Ken Splittstoesser – 140 Gladiola Drive. Mr. Splittstoesser asked about the costs associated with the needed repairs, expressing that perhaps those repairs were made while a different location be considered as he thought it sounded as though the current location posed expansion problems. Mayor Spitzer said that several of those costs had been looked at and that we would provide those numbers to him. Harold Fort added that as a former volunteer fireman the concrete had been settling for years and they had been repairing the building ongoing, but that it was past repair. He added that even if they fixed those items, the departments are out of space.

Mr. Zanto added that the building was built in 1960. Mr. White questioned if the North Star property had ever been looked at and Mayor Spitzer explained that the City did not own that property, but did in fact own the two properties where the expansion would take place.

Mayor Spitzer called once, twice, three times for more comments. Hearing none, he then called for a motion to close the public hearing at 8:09 p.m.: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

It was questioned whether or not the police department remodeling had been figured into the bond. The bonded amount only included the fire and ambulance building. Clm. Schaber expressed that if this project were to be completed that he would like to see the police department also taken care of due to the lack of space as well. The

Council discussed options that could be available to them with respect to adding the necessary funding in to accommodate the department.

**7. Resolution #14-2014 Preliminary Approval of Capital Improvement Bonds.** Mayor Spitzer highlighted the resolution for the Council briefly. Clm. Braun stressed that he wants the people to be aware that a petition is an option and that he feels it should be a referendum vote. He expressed his concern of the city conducting this type of project and then the school district also requesting dollars for gym space or other needs. Mayor Spitzer stated that he felt the petition was the tool the city was providing to voice that concern and that the 30 day clock would start with the approval of the resolution. He then expressed that the Council directed Admin. Koverman to advertise this meeting and the public hearing, which had been done. Hearing no more discussion, the Mayor called for a motion.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

Seconded: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

**8. Community Garden Request.** Admin. Koverman highlighted a 1.93 acre parcel along 7<sup>th</sup> Street just outside of the fairgrounds that had once been used to grow Gladiolus and other related crops. The Planning and Zoning heard a request to continue with commercial crops and expressed their disinterest at that time. Through discussions with Supt. of Schools Mark Roubinek who also serves on the Statewide Health Improvement Program board with Admin. Koverman, discussions of healthy living and active living solutions have been reviewed over the last several months. Discussions of community gardens have been one of the centers of attention. It was then brought up the need for more space and it was proposed as a potential option to utilize that parcel of land for a community garden space. Through further discussions with Pam Tesch of Community Education she reinforced the need for space closer to town as their 33 plots are filled and she always turns away requests. In speaking with the owner, he was in favor of the idea and did not expect rent, but thought it was a good use of the space as it once had been used in a similar fashion. Mr. Roubinek expressed that there was a need for positive spaces. Mrs. Tesch did state the need for water and Council directed Admin. Koverman to seek some alternative options perhaps with the fairboard as a partner. Driving in the grass alley was also discussed as a concern of the neighbors, Admin. Koverman had spoken with and he felt that it would be reasonable to simply block off access and those users could park on 7<sup>th</sup> and walk to their spots. Clm. Schaber expressed that he liked the idea and bringing options closer to town for elderly or young families to walk to the gardens. Concern was also expressed with respect to the daycare located in the area, but that bringing more awareness to the users of that fact would help alleviate any problems. A motion was made to proceed to create the community garden parcel and aid in the partnership with Community Education.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

**9. Advanced Disposal Contract Extension Request.** Admin. Koverman presented the request from Advanced Disposal for a 5-year extension of the contract per the language within the agreement. The pricing reflected a 4.5 percent increase and as was explained by Jennefer Klennert from Advanced Disposal, the 2014 did not see an increase and thus it was requested for a 4.5 percent. In providing a comparison of a recent contract that was signed, it was noted that the prices reflected with the current structure was still less and did not include several fee additions. By signing the contract, this would hold the language for another 5 years. Mayor Spitzer stated that he had had no complaints about the service provided over the last 5 years, as Clm. Getz and Clm. Braun added that drivers were both courteous and timely. As part of the discussion, Admin. Koverman had asked about how separating the refuse and recycling contract might affect the pricing and Klennert who was present, reinforced that it would not change the structure because they are separate teams of drivers and trucks. When asked about the County recycling contract, Klennert explained that one of the main differences was pick up days after a holiday. For St. Charles the pickup of recycling and trash is simply extended one day after the original pickup. However, with the County's schedule it may push a pick up by up to two weeks. Questions of cost of service for the county was asked. It was estimated that residents could save approximately \$20/year with the county's program, plus be able to take advantage of other future programs if rolled into the county's program. However, Council asked for clarification on the timing of pickup stating that residents prefer their current schedule. Council then discussed that as far as the refuse they are more than satisfied and felt comfortable extending the contract with Advanced Disposal. A motion was made to extend the term 5 years per the agreement until 2019.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.  
Motion carried.

**10. Reflective Sign Policy.** Admin. Koverman presented a required sign policy that was distributed by the League of Minnesota Cities and required. After review of the various methods, Admin. Koverman expressed that staff had selected the blanket coverage process that provides the city flexibility and still meets the requirements outlined. Council agreed after listening to the various methods and a short discussion of the need.

Motion to approve the Reflective Sign Policy as presented.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

**11. Cancer Awareness Week Proclamation.** Mayor Spitzer read the proclamation stating that June 15-21 was Cancer Awareness Week in St. Charles.

Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

**12. Kelly Resignation.** Mayor Spitzer thanked Kelly for her years of service to the department and community and entertained a motion to accept the resignation of Officer Martha Kelly.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

**13. Tim Jones-P&Z Commission.** Tim Jones has submitted his name for consideration for the open position on the Planning & Zoning Commission. A motion was made to accept the nomination for one of the open vacancies.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

#### **UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

-None

Motion to adjourn at 8:51 p.m.

Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**

Motion declared carried.

---

**William J. Spitzer, Mayor**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Nick Koverman, City Administrator**