
SYCAMORE CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2004

ROLL CALL

Mayor John Swedberg called the meeting to order and Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Alderpersons present were: Alan Bauer, Barbara Leach, Terry Kessler, Andrew Larson, Cheryl Maness, Pete Paulsen, and Janice Tripp. Alderperson Chuck Stowe was absent.

INVOCATION

Father Frank Timar of St. Mary's Church gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Manager Nicklas said Ideal Industries has requested that Ordinances 2004.56 and 2004.57 be removed from the agenda.

Motion

Alderperson Larson moved to approve the agenda with the changes and Alderperson Leach seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

John Garmen, Grant Street, praised the boys' soccer team for finishing second in state and praised the girls' volleyball for finishing 2nd in the Super Sectional.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes for the City Council Meeting of November 1, 2004;
- B. Payment of the Bills for November 15, 2004 in the amount of \$1,149,715.10;
- C. Plan Commission Minutes for the Meeting of October 11, 2004.

Motion

Alderperson Bauer moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Alderperson Paulsen seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderpersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND BILLS.

- A. Recognition of the Sycamore Varsity Boys Soccer Team and Coaches, and the Sycamore Varsity Girls Volleyball Team and Coaches.

Mayor Swedberg congratulated the Varsity Boys Soccer Team for finishing 2nd at State and recognized each player and coach in the audience by name. Mayor Swedberg also congratulated the Girls Volleyball Team and Coaches for placing 2nd at Super Sectionals.

- B. Consideration of a Presentation by the Sycamore Economic Development Commission.
Commissioner Bill Nicklas will introduce Mike Weckerly of MorningStar Media Group at 240 Edward Street in Sycamore. Mr. Weckerly will give a brief overview of the products and services of his firm.

Mike Weckerly said in the past year he has rehabbed the building on Edward Street. He said they are a classic ad agency that does a lot of ads for local, regional, and national companies. He said clients include 155 Floor-to-Ceiling stores, 140 golf stores, Kishwaukee Health Systems, Hauser Ross, Brian Bemis. He said they created new websites for United Way and the Sycamore and DeKalb Chambers of Commerce. His graphic designers have created over 500 brochures in 2004 and a number of different direct mail pieces, newspaper and magazine ads, etc. He said they do a pro-bono website, sycamorespartans.com where the high school students provide the stories and pictures and his group posts them to the website. He is working on a DVD mailer to newcomers in the area. He said the documentary "One Room One People" a one-room school project is hitting the festival circuit and gave copies to Council.

Mayor Swedberg read correspondence from Nicor explaining their request for a rate increase which would amount to about \$26 per year to an average bill. He said the request would be reviewed by the ICC over the next few months and if approved would take affect about October 2005.

Aldersperson Kessler said she would present a power point presentation about incentives and abatements and how they bring business to Sycamore. She said that she would partner with Aldersperson Maness to put something together for the 4th & 1st Wards.

Aldersperson Maness said she has received two requests for street lighting at the entrance to McLaren on South Locust and on Home Street between Terrace & Kishwaukee Streets. Mayor Swedberg asked Manager Nicklas and Engineer Brady to review the requests.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Manager – Bill Nicklas reported that the annual street maintenance has not yet begun and will not get done this fall. He said it will get done in the spring and not affect next year's maintenance project. Mr. Nicklas highlighted the groundbreaking for Upstaging, a new company in the old Cooper-Tool site. He said the company will build a 3-story building to provide staging and warehousing for their stage lighting inventory as well as for a resource to local and school theater groups.

Engineer – John Brady said some of the street maintenance will occur this fall at the Alley in Turner Addition and at the intersection of Fox and Hillcrest. He said the Bethany project work will be east of Peace the next 2 weeks and there may be some closures and a lot of activity at Peace Road over the next 10 days.

Aldersperson Maness asked the status of Somonauk and Borden and Mr. Brady said there was some curb problem and should be opened up by Thanksgiving.

Aldersperson Bauer asked if the sidewalks would be installed and Mr. Brady said that would wait until spring.

Building & Zoning –Lyle Doty said he is researching the zoning of the St. John’s Church site on Main Street. He said he is looking for old zoning maps to see what the zoning of that parcel should revert back to and so far it appears like it might be a multiple-family lot.

Mayor Swedberg asked if he would keep Ward 1 and he updated.

Fire Chief – Bill Riddle said Prime Media, a company doing training videos, brought in cameras and sound equipment to film St. John’s Church site on Main Street. He said the chassis for the new fire truck drove through Sycamore enroute from Michigan to South Dakota. He said the unit is under construction and can be viewed at ftillinois.com.

Treasurer – Ken Mundy said the October financials track revenue 5% ahead of the 50% benchmark and expenditures behind at 36%.

Public Works Supt. – Fred Busse said the leaf pickup program is down to 1 machine and he hopes to see it finished by Thanksgiving. Superintendent Busse said the decorations are going up downtown.

Water Supt. – Ebe Smith said the water meter readers are encountering a lot of dogs and they have noticed a lot of underground dog fences. He said the problem is they go all the way out to the sidewalk and the readers are not sure if the dog is going to stop charging or how to react. Mayor Swedberg asked him to discuss this further with Manager Nicklas and bring back a recommendation to the Ordinance Committee.

Acting Police Chief – Darrell Johnson - no report.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – no report

Ordinance – no report

Police & Fire – no report

Sewer & Water – no report

Streets & Walks – no report

PUBLIC HEARING

None

ORDINANCES

A. Ordinance No. 2004.55—An Ordinance Concerning the Recommendation of the Plan Commission With Regard to the Petition of Roncon Development for a Final Plat for the Camden Crossing Planned Unit Development in the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

Manager Nicklas said Council approved a revised preliminary plan for this development February 2004. He said the revised plan had the following features:

- a. A reduced total of 183 housing units of all types, including 43 single-family detached units, 48 duplex units, and 92 townhomes.
- b. A density of 4.45 dwelling units per gross acre (6 units per acre is permitted).
- c. A total of 74 guest parking spaces in the townhouse area, or .8 guest spaces per townhouse.
- d. A public park dedication toward the north end of the plan, comprising 2.56 acres.

- e. A 10-foot wide pedestrian and bike path linking residents to the commercial frontage and future growth to the west.
- f. Privately-owned and maintained roadways and parking areas within the townhouse area.

Mr. Nicklas said the Plan Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote of 8-0 and he recommended Council approval.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to hear Ordinance 2004.55 on first and second reading and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to approve Ordinance 2004.55 and Aldersperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

B. Ordinance No. 2004.56--An Ordinance Concerning the Recommendation of the Plan Commission With Regard to the Petition of Ideal Industries for Annexation and of a 63.06-Acre Parcel Adjacent to the Southeast Boundary of the Sycamore Prairie Business Park and Rezoning of Said Parcel to "M-1" Light Manufacturing District and "M-2" Heavy Manufacturing District" in the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

Ideal Industries requested this ordinance be removed from the agenda.

C. Ordinance No. 2004.57—An Ordinance of the Annexation of a 63.06-Acre Parcel Approximately 0.40 Miles West of Somonauk Street and Adjacent to the Southeast Boundary of the Sycamore Prairie Business Park in the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

Ideal Industries requested this ordinance be removed from the agenda.

D. Ordinance No. 2004.58—An Ordinance Adding Chapter 3, Section 19, "Hospital Hospitality Homes," to the City Code of the City of Sycamore, Illinois. First and Second Reading.

Manager Nicklas said there would need to be two steps taken to allow this type of residence. He said zoning revisions would be necessary to establish this type of use and the city code would need to define this type of housing. Mr. Nicklas said in the days ahead, public notice will be given that a hearing will be held at the Plan Commission level on the necessary zoning changes on December 13. Specifically, sections 8.02 (R-2 Two Family District), 8.03 (R-3 Multiple Family District) and 9.01 (Neighborhood Commercial District) of the Zoning Code will need to be revised to allow a "hospital hospitality house" as a special use. Section 12.04, "Schedule of Parking Requirements," would have to be changed to specify "hospital hospitality houses" and to require the same number of parking spaces as would apply to a bed and breakfast guest home.

Mayor Swedberg said he thought it looked like the building aspects were covered and asked who would do the annual building inspections and Building Commissioner/Zoning Officer Doty said the Building Department and the Fire Department.

Aldersperson Kessler asked if the house would be ADA compliant.

Mr. Nicklas said the provisions before Council tonight set out a general case and the request for a special use permit will come back in January. He said at that time Council will speak to the specific residence. He said in the case of an older building staff has applied the same approach to bed and breakfasts that reasonable accommodations can be made. He said in this specific case, and he is getting ahead of himself, Kindred Hospital will commit a room for families with physical disabilities.

Motion

Aldersperson Bauer moved to hear Ordinance 2004.58 on first and second reading and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Motion

Aldersperson Maness moved to approve Ordinance 2004.58 and Aldersperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Aldersperson Bauer said he thought this ordinance was well written and seems to cover all the points necessary to provide safe accommodations.

Aldersperson Paulsen said he visited Mike Weckerly's office across from Kindred Hospital and watched all the coming and going across the street and said this type of housing is needed.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

RESOLUTIONS

None

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of a Presentation by MPO Director Ray Keller and Transportation Planner Laurie Hooegeven Regarding the DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Area Study (DSATS).

Ray Keller said the primary functions of the MPO program are programming and planning for transportation in the area. He said they have been working on getting their foundation documents in place as the first long-range transportation plan. He said they are working with transit services in the area transitioning from rural to urban transportation. Mr. Keller said they will continue to track legislation relating to federal funding.

Mayor Swedberg asked Mr. Keller to expand on the projects currently being worked on.

Mr. Keller said they are working with the Illinois Convenience and Safety Corporation that provides free bus shelters for advertising rights. He said they will work at improving the coordination between the Huskie bus line and VAC. Mr. Keller said that some of the federal transportation dollars are funding the Bethany Road project.

Aldersperson Kessler asked if the federal funds were match funds or grants and Mr. Keller said that much of the funding is 80%-20% and specifically, VAC is funded 50%-50%.

Mr. Keller said the transportation includes roads, buses, bike paths and walkways.

B. Consideration of the City of Sycamore's Financial Statements for FY2003-2004, Including the Independent Auditor's Report.

Manager Nicklas said representatives from Clifton Gunderson will present the statements. He said the City has a substantial reserve that is built into the General Fund.

Carla Paschal, Clifton Gunderson, briefly reviewed the financial statement. She said last year GASB 34 was implemented. She said the independent auditor's report is unqualified which is the highest opinion able to attain. She said the statement of assets on Page 14 of the report is a picture of the City as a whole. She said the net assets increased because of the cost of infrastructure that is included. Ms. Paschal pointed out that the General Fund operated with an excess of revenues over expenses which these days is not as usual as in the past. She said Council could be proud of their staff for that. Ms. Paschal said the Note 11 on Page 63 details the retroactive restatement of the infrastructure assets.

Mayor Swedberg asked Ms. Paschal to comment on the financial highlights on page 3 because he felt it reflected revenue to the City due to Council action.

Ms. Paschal said those are management analysis and discussion prepared by Manager Nicklas.

Mr. Nicklas said the City has been prudent on the spending side and on the revenue side there are greater revenues from developer fees and Council enacted Restaurant & Bar Tax and Telecommunication Tax that have been important in stabilizing revenues.

Ms. Paschal thanked the Finance Office for their help during the audit and said they have made significant improvements to the accounting system over the past few years.

Mr. Nicklas thanked Brian Gregory, Supervisor in the Finance Office, specifically for doing an extraordinary job in pulling together the documents required for the audit.

C. Consideration of the Annual City Property Tax Levy.

Manager Nicklas said in recent years Council has tried hard to lessen the City's reliance on property tax as the major source of operating funds. He said it was reflected in the audit and in the history of the City's levy. Mr. Nicklas said the rate in 2004 was \$0.91223 which represented about 10.5% of the overall rate charge against the EAV of our residences and businesses. He said the City's rate has not been lower since 1970. Mr. Nicklas said the pension obligations borne by the City's General Fund in FY04 constituted about 32% of the City's property tax receipts, up from 21% in FY01. He said he adjusted the estimated \$258,959,696 EAV to \$259,500,000 for the City's calculations. Mr. Nicklas said he proposed five different rates and recommended Option #3 the 3% increase. He said that will result in little or no change in actual tax paid by average homeowners in Sycamore. The overall impact of a 3% increase is as follows:

- Should result in a City tax rate decrease of 3.64%.
- Should result in little or no change in actual City taxes paid by the average homeowner who makes no substantial home improvements.
- Property taxes (minus the portion going directly to the Fire and Police Pension funds) would represent 20.76% of all budgeted FY2004-2005 General Fund expenditures (\$8,846,342). They presently represent 19.93%.
- Increase the monies available for general operations by \$37,883 (2.6%).

Mr. Nicklas said the City levy when joined with the Library levy form the Corporate levy. He said the recommendation of the Library levy is \$612,204. Mr. Nicklas said he will hold a public hearing on the corporate levy proposal on December 6 along with a first reading on the levy ordinances.

Aldersperson Tripp asked Library Director Sarah Tobias about the cost of a new server and how it was itemized in their budget. Director Tobias said they would transfer funds from their Capital Fund to their technology fund.

Aldersperson Kessler asked how many employees the Library has and Ms. Tobias said 7 full-time and 13 part-time. Ms. Tobias said they would be hiring a temporary employee to help with the processing of the collection of the County law library.

Aldersperson Bauer said he participated in weekend meetings and they have made progress toward a long-range plan.

Ms. Tobias said the long-range plan was completed and approved by the Board in October 2004. She said they have agreed upon a mission statement we well. She said some of the specific goals are rearranging the adult services to better meet the needs of the public and make it more visual and to conduct a community survey to help meet their needs.

Mayor Swedberg asked Council for comments on Mr. Nicklas' recommendation of Option #3.

Aldersperson Bauer said since the operating surplus is almost back up to \$4,000,000 level this may be an opportunity to hold the levy flat or even reduce the total levy.

Manager Nicklas said that is certainly an option, but he said debt weighs heavily on property tax payers because they will be paying extra for debt service. He said there is one more substantial building project in the foreseeable future and that is a second fire station. He said they can either register a hit here with the tax payers in the short run by lowering taxes or down the road increase the taxes substantially for debt service to pay for the station.

Mayor Swedberg said he agreed with Mr. Nicklas' reasoning. He said last year he had two people tell him the actual dollars to the City on their tax bill was down about \$6.

Mr. Nicklas said if they commit to the second fire station at \$1,500,000 then the reserve will be down about 25% and about \$1,500,000 is needed for restricted reserve for accrual leave balances.

Mayor Swedberg said it looked like Option #3 for 3% increase was the option to return with and Council agreed.

D. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Architectural Review Committee for a \$3,500 Façade Grant to Jesus Romero and a \$710 Façade Grant to Rich Para.

Manager Nicklas said the two requests have been reviewed by the Committee over that past few months. He said Rich Para of Ben Franklin turned in a bill for the City's portion of the lighting he installed above the front awning at 341 W. State Street for \$979.15. Mr. Nicklas said Jesus Romero recently purchased the buildings at 223 and 229 W. State Street and would like \$3500 to help with the removal of the wooden awning and any necessary wall repair that might require. Mr. Nicklas said the Committee may consider further assistance yet this year as a more detailed plan is developed. Mr. Nicklas said the Committee recommended approval of both requests.

Motion

Aldersperson Bauer moved to approve Rich Para’s request for \$979.15 and Jesus Romero’s request for \$3500 and Aldersperson Tripp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Mr. Nicklas said a meeting was held in the City’s Community Room with representatives from the Lt. Governor’s office, State Treasurer’s office, Illinois Bureau of Tourism, State Preservation Agency, and Illinois Department of Agriculture. He said they were looking at what Sycamore does to promote its downtown with façade grants and beautification.

E. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Authorize the Hiring of a Replacement Police Officer.

Mr. Nicklas said he is anticipating the retirement of a senior officer May 2005. He said the Police Department would like to have a new officer ready for “solo” patrol by early May.

Mayor Swedberg said he supported this.

Aldersperson Kessler asked if there is a retirement agreement and Mr. Nicklas said there is.

Motion

Aldersperson Bauer moved to authorize the hiring of a replacement police officer and Aldersperson Kessler seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

F. Consideration of an Administration Request for a Closed Session to Discuss Personnel Matters and Collective Bargaining.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to go into Closed Session at 8:40 p.m. and Aldersperson Leach seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Motion

Aldersperson Larson moved to return to Open Session at 9:40 p.m. and Aldersperson Maness seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Alderspersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Swedberg appointed Rose Treml, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce to the Sycamore Economic Development Commission.

Motion

Alderson Bauer moved to approve the appointment and Alderson Tripp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Aldersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Alderson Paulsen asked if everybody knew why Ideal pulled their annexation. He said they decided to keep their options open since an incentive package does not exist.

Mayor Swedberg said he talked with the School Board president and he said they were going back to the drawing board.

Mr. Nicklas said he was going to ask Roger Dahlstrom to incorporate abatements into the impact study as a neutral party.

Alderson Maness said it would be good to get that unbiased opinion.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Alderson Larson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. and Alderson Tripp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Mayor Swedberg called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Aldersons voted aye. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Approve:

Mayor – John L. Swedberg

Attest:

City Clerk – Candy Smith