

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2014
7:00 P.M.**

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Absent

Council Members

Nicole Penrod – Present
Ben Romine – Present
William (Bill) Simpson – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present
Jacie Worrick – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members present, Mayor Daniel presiding.

MINUTES Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to approve an overview of the September 9, 2014 meeting minutes as presented, Jacie Worrick seconded the motion, Penrod, Worrick and Simpson voted aye, Romine and Weigold abstained.

TRICK OR TREAT Mayor Daniel reported the Board of Works approved Trick or Treat hours for Friday, October 31 from 6-8 p.m.

AMENDMENT TO THE 2004 COLUMBIA CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN David Sewell with the Planning and Building Department was present to discuss an amendment the Plan Commission made to the Comprehensive Plan. He explained there were 2 items, both referring to the same property. He stated the first item was an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan; proposed wording for the housing element to be added as well as a change in the land use from industrial to medium density residential on the future land use plan. He advised this comes at the request and input of the developer who was proposing to rehabilitate the Blue Bell building. He stated they were proposing to request tax credit program through the State and one of the requirements was that the Comprehensive Plan match their proposal.

RESOLUTION 2014-18: ADOPTING THE 2014 AMENDMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Motion was made by Dan Weigold to read Resolution 2014-18 by title only, Ben Romine seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Resolution 2014-18 a resolution adopting the 2014 amendment to the Columbia City Comprehensive Plan.

Motion was made by Ben Romine to approve Resolution 2014-18, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye.

REZONE BLUE BELL PROPERTY – 307 S. WHITLEY STREET Regarding the 3.627 acres located on the southeast corner of South Whitley Street and East Ellsworth Street, David Sewell advised it was the recommendation of the Columbia City Plan Commission to rezone the property from I-1 light industrial to R-3 multi-family residential district. He advised the Plan

Commission held a public hearing on this and received favorable comments from the general public and immediate neighborhood. He stated they voted to send favorable recommendation to the Council on this request.

Kevin McDonnell, Vice-President of Development with Commonwealth, was present to give background on their company and to discuss their project. He advised they have completed 31 similar projects throughout Wisconsin; they currently have projects under development in Texas and Oklahoma. He explained they were primarily a tax credit developer with a focus on historic preservation. He advised they were particularly excited about the possibility of rehabbing the Blue Bell factory with the significance it has had in the community. He stated while the structure was significantly blighted they feel the potential was very strong for the rehab. He explained they were proposing to keep the existing shell of the building, preserving all of the brick and some of the wood floors but unfortunately there were some significant leaks in the roof. He reported they just submitted their application but have to get approval on what the State and Federal Government will allow them to do to keep the historic integrity of the building. He explained they were proposing 35 units of parking stalls in the lower level, all of the community space would be down there as well, they will have a property management office that will be staffed full time, fitness center and possibly a movie theater. He stated the top two floors they were proposing 48 two bedroom senior apartments and 4 one bedroom senior apartments; average square footage would be about 1000 sq. ft. with the two bedroom apartment a little bigger. He explained these projects they do, with the historic tax credits they receive, the equity really allows them to build a high quality product which ends up being as nice if not nicer than new construction apartments.

Mayor Daniel asked Mr. McDonnell to discuss how they were going to address parking. Mr. McDonnell explained they would have 35 units in the lower level, much like underground parking; they will have 17 garages (as shown on site plan) and an additional 34 surface parking spaces. He stated there were some potential opportunities in the future to add to that if the Council felt it necessary but they were comfortable with what they have proposed.

Bill Simpson thought there was property on the other side of Whitley Street that belonged with this property. Mr. McDonnell advised there was; technically their offer to purchase did not include that parcel but the current owner expressed that he would like to include it so they need to amend their offer to purchase. He stated it was still questionable on what they might do with that parcel.

ORDINANCE 2014-19: REZONE 307 S. WHITLEY ST. – 1ST READING Motion was made by Jacie Worrick to read Ordinance 2014-19 by title only, Ben Romine seconded the motion, all voted aye. Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2014-19 an ordinance amending the zoning classification of certain property from the “I-1” light industrial district to the “R-3” multi-family residential district.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2014-19 on an emergency basis, Bill Simpson seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2014-20: AMENDMENT TO THE TRAFFIC ORDINANCE – 1ST

READING Kelly Cearbaugh advised he wanted to get the streets in Cambridge Crossing included in the ordinance so they can get the 20 mph speed limit signs posted.

Motion was made by Ben Romine to read Ordinance 2014-20 by title only, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2014-20 an ordinance amending Chapter 75, traffic schedules, of Title VII of the code of ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Motion was made by Jacie Worrick to approve Ordinance 2014-20 as first reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

SEWAGE RATE DISCUSSION Mayor Daniel reviewed the proposal with Council. He advised there were a couple things he and Rosie Coyle were suggesting; eliminating area connection fees, raise sewer tap fees for most sizes and keep the flat rate where it is at.

Mayor Daniel explained the area connection fee. Using Westgate as an example, he shared there had been very little activity regarding area connection fees. He shared one way they felt we could encourage flat rate customers to join our system was to eliminate this fee. Rosie Coyle advised there have been some who have wanted to hook up but could not afford all the fees and still have not hooked up. She listed all of the different fee amounts for the various areas and advised we have pretty much made all of the money back on the expenses we have had.

Mayor Daniel explained right now sewer tap fees were half of the price of the water tap fees and suggested it naturally made sense to raise the sewer tap fees from \$500 to \$1000. He advised based on the meter size some tap fees go up, remain unchanged, or go down.

Mayor Daniel suggested the flat rate payers stay at \$55.55. He stated this rate is really hard to quantify; there were basically three different situations, customer has water but no sewage, customer has neither water nor sewer but are within 300 ft. of our sewer line and have to pay whether they are connected or not whether they are discharging or not or lastly, customer is connected to our sewer but not our water. He noted \$55.55 was more than what we charge the average user for 4,000 gallons.

Ben Romine questioned if there had been any research on whether people could repay like the lakes district have done. Mayor Daniel advised that was on his agenda but has not been able to get to that yet.

Rosie Coyle noted another concern brought up was to have SDI pay more. Mayor Daniel shared that we have an agreement with SDI. He explained the very large users, such as SDI, their rate can increase at the same percentage as the rest of the populations rate but it cannot go more than what the average customer goes up. He advised Rosie did a little calculation and it was projecting thousands of dollars of increase for our large users; it was not going to hit anyone lightly. He felt there was a misnomer that the high end companies were not paying their fair share but did not feel that was the case. Ben Romine noted they just get a bulk rate discount; Mayor Daniel added they do after 1 million gallons.

Nicole Penrod felt they have discussed this and discussed it and would like to move forward with the 7/6/5 as presented.

Bill Simpson questioned how long the flat rate had been \$55.55. Rosie Coyle advised it was changed right before this administration came into office. She explained there were some residents in the Lincolnway East area who were upset with the cost so it was lowered in 2009. Bill Simpson shared that he understood the difficulty in flat rates but it intuitively seemed fair that if they were going to raise the rates for our citizens that the rates be raised to all users whether they are flat rate or metered. Jacie Worrick agreed. Mayor Daniel questioned if they would raise the rate at the same percentage as all of the other customers. Mike Shoda suggested if they would raise that rate and it would upset someone they could put a meter on the well to judge how much water was actually being put down the sewer. Mayor Daniel noted the \$55.55 was higher than the 4,000 gallon rate, which was what they were using as the average customer. Nicole Penrod wondered if we would raise the flat rate if it would encourage people to tap into our system. She stated if they did not want to pay the flat fee they would have the option to tap in. Dan Weigold noted they could also install a meter. Mike Shoda advised in Bourbon they put meters on those who still had wells and found that some were using more water than what they were being billed for.

After additional discussion, Mayor Daniel questioned Council if they wanted the flat rate to go based on the percentage increases going to the other customers or tie it directly to the average customer of 4,000 gallons. Nicole Penrod felt if we were going to use percentages such as for SDI we should use it for this too. Bill Simpson agreed. Ben Romine felt it was a huge increase especially for those not using the system. He questioned how many were actually in that situation. Rosie Coyle was not sure but there were not very many, maybe 10-20 households. Jacie Worrick questioned what mandates those people to pay the fee. Rosie Coyle explained it was because the sewer runs within 300 ft. of their property and it is mandated if you are within 300 ft. you have to connect or pay the fee. Jacie Worrick questioned if that was a State mandate. Mayor Daniel explained having to connect or pay a fee was State mandated but the fee was our decision. Rosie Coyle added if their well or septic goes bad they have to connect to our system. Bill Simpson did not understand why we were charging people that were not using the system. Mayor Daniel guessed it was to encourage people to be a part of the system. Rosie Coyle thought there was law that they be charged. Mayor Daniel was in agreement and asked Rosie to have Attorney McNagny send Council an overview of that law.

Mayor Daniel confirmed everyone was in agreement with eliminating the area connection fee. Council agreed. Mayor Daniel questioned the tap fees. Bill Simpson questioned how it compared to the others. It was unsure and could give a better idea but Mayor Daniel felt, at the very least, 5/8" needed to go up to \$1,000 to match the water tap fee. Rosie Coyle stated the tap fee was not so much about what it costs to put it in but the maintenance of it.

Rosie Coyle noted the flat rate was different for rural versus city users.

Mayor Daniel stated they were down to the tap fees and flat rate; does Council want to lock the flat rate to the 4,000 gallon rate or increase it at the same percentage as the rest of the rates. Rosie Coyle advised she could get a listing of all of the customers on the flat rate. Mayor Daniel

encouraged Council if they wanted to raise the flat rate to tie it to the 4,000; there would at least be justification in regards to considering the average household being 4,000 gallons, plus it would be much cleaner for billing purposes.

Mayor Daniel felt there was still some work to be done on this.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS Department reports were given by Shawn Lickey, Mark Green, Mike Shoda, Tom LaRue, Kelly Cearbaugh, Tim Longenbaugh, Jeff Walker, Terry Wherry and Mike Cook.

YOUTH COUNCIL Chase Emmert reported the Youth Council has been working on the Halloween parade and cleaned up the downtown square.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle