

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEXINGTON CITY COUNCIL**December 13, 2021****7:00 P. M.**

The regular meeting of the Lexington City Council was called to order at 7:00 P. M. by Mayor Spencer Johansen in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mayor Johansen led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call was taken to find the following physically present: Mayor Johansen, Alderman Stover, Alderman Richard, Alderman Mattingly, Alderman Franklin and Alderwoman Wilson with Alderman Little absent. Members of the staff and public present were: Kenneth Sours, Mike Cotter and Officer Jimmie Scott.

It was moved by Alderwoman Wilson and seconded by Alderman Mattingly to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2021 regular city council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Alderman Stover and seconded by Alderman Franklin to approve the Treasurer's Report and paying of the bills in the amount of \$97,740.22. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Input: None

Old Business:**DISCUSSION/VOTE ORDINANCE 2021-20: VACATING OF THE ALLEY CONNECTING WEST CHESTNUT AND SOUTH BENSON STREETS**

This discussion has been going on for a while and Mayor Johansen took the opportunity to thank Alderman Franklin and Bill Elias for working out the details on this ordinance.

Alderman Franklin stated that Bill met with Mike Cotter of the Fire District and reached an agreement. We have access to the easements that we need to clean up the alley for future councils so they do not have issues come up. By vacating the entire alley we retain the easements, we cannot own parts of an alley.

The easement area extends from the survey pin on the north end of the Alley at South Benson Street, and thence proceeding SW for 182 feet, the easement area shall extend across the West 14 feet of the Alley.

Extending from said 182-foot mark and then proceeding SW to Chestnut Street, the easement area shall extend across the West 10 feet of the Alley.

We would retain the West portion of the alley.

The question that was asked about what was meant by maintaining the easement. Alderman Franklin answered that we are giving up the alley and keeping the easement so utilities are able to get in.

There was also a question about the surface drainage to which Mike Cotter replied that they plan to take down the retaining wall and open up the area for more room for access. There will be a water way through there and they will continue to mow it.

Motion was made by Alderman Franklin and seconded by Alderwoman Wilson to approve Ordinance 2021-20: Vacating of the Alley Connecting West Chestnut and South Benson Streets. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

REVIEW/DISCUSSION - PROPOSALS FOR 110 NORTH WEST STREET (FORMER BRANDT'S LOT)

This request for proposals has been put in the paper and we have had two proposals returned.

One is for a car dealership wholesale business. With this type of business the sales tax is not collected until the point of sale. If the car is sent to another dealer in another city, that city gets the sales tax. They do not have a dealer's license. It may be better to have other retail businesses at this site. We have been showing them other sites in town such as Linda Benedict's corner and Karen Wingo's corner which they felt might be too small.

There was some concern about semis going into the area for loading and unloading although there would be a loading dock in the back.

The other proposal was for a retail hardware store with the remaining open parking.

The car dealership has asked the city for 50% help with the paving while the retail store has asked the city for nothing.

The car dealership would like to know sooner rather than later.

The sales tax arrangement on any retail is 1%. The real key is in the property tax.

The question was asked if the Cheney property might not be a good location or is the price too high?

This item was tabled till January.

REVIEW/DISCUSSION - PROPOSALS FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDS

Mayor Johansen spoke about the fact that we needed to have a game plan for the funds we would be receiving from the American Rescue Plan.

He felt we needed to get some skin in the game on a new subdivision. The growth of Rivian will bring people to town and we need to move forward with offering infrastructure funds for a subdivision. We could also use it to supplement salaries for those who worked through COVID.

We need to make a plan for it. It needs to be used by 2024. We have already gotten one check and we will be getting another next year.

Alderman Franklin thought infrastructure, water, sewer, etc. would really make a difference to existing and new subdivisions.

It was noted that they cannot take money out of the Water Fund but could use it for the \$425,000 maintenance on the Water Tower.

Alderman Stover commented that you have the Water Tower loan and you can apply the excess to that loan and that would free up money.

Alderman Stover wanted to make sure it was understood that the appropriated money would not increase salaries but replaces what we are spending over a two year period.

This was tabled until the next meeting.

DISCUSSION/VOTE - LEVY & ABATEMENT

Alderman Stover led this discussion by stating that there is an increase of \$624,000 in the rate setting EAV. This equates to \$3,540.00 which does not cover much in the way of expenses. Our income does not cover our expenses and we are going to have to slowly start to increase our levy and propose to raise it to \$185,500.

Motion was made by Alderman Stover and seconded by Alderman Franklin to approve Ordinance 2021-21 and Ordinance 2021-22 the Levy and Abatement of Interest. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Johansen reported on the following items:

He has been approached by Jan Proeber who's church owns the Blacksmith Shop. They thought they owned the property behind the Blacksmith Shop but it is owned by the City. They would like for the city to give the property to the church. He feels that it will result in too much being spent in legal fees and the city is using this area at the present time.

They also asked for two handicap parking spaces in front of the building. He will leave that up to Bill Elias to work that out.

He wants to look into combining the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals. A lot of small communities are doing that. There is a hearing on December 27th with the Planning Commission for the rezoning of the Leake property and it will be on that night's council agenda. It is a struggle to get residents to serve on the committees. Attorney Shields had told him he should not go to the Planning Commission meetings so as to not influence the decision of the commission, but the current attorney says it is a good idea that we do attend in case there are any questions that arise as long as we do not tell them how to vote.

December 27th the Firemen’s Association is donating an AED to the city. Everyone needs to be trained. We can do it at the meeting. We will go on with our regular meeting and do it after. City employees will do it another day.

The retired eye doctor that he has been meeting with has bought some property next to Barker’s and plans to start building in June. He will put up an art studio and art gallery.

The Planning Commission will meet December 27th to consider the rezoning of Evan Leake’s property.

Police: Alderman Richard reported that the new hire police officer resigned after three days. His previous place of employment lifted their hiring ban and offered him a better salary, better hours and he will not need to move.

Alderman Richard will be reviewing past candidates' applications.

Dan McDaniels is quitting as Animal Control Officer.

Building/Insurance None

Finance /TIF None

Water/Sewer/Sanitation None

Street/Alley: None

The question was asked as to when Pine Street would be marked for parking. Alderman Mattingly will check on that.

Mayor Johansen feels that the Mayor’s of McLean County and Chamber of Commerce of McLean County should reach out to the smaller communities to bring in manufacturing. We have good space next to 55 that could be used for manufacturing and we have the capability to bring that in. They don’t reach out to the small communities like LeRoy and Heyworth that have property on the interstate.

When he took over as mayor they did not rejoin the McLean County Chamber of Commerce because they don’t do anything for anyone outside Bloomington/Normal. The small communities have to work together.

We have not raised property taxes in quite a while but we are going to need to look at options someday.

Everyone is looking for police officers. He feels we are compatible with the salaries. Not everyone wants to be a cop any more. He doesn’t know what the answer is. How do we attract them and how do we pay them?

There being no further business, motion was made by Alderman Franklin to adjourn at 7:55 P.M. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Pati Pease

City Clerk

Approved:

Approved December 27, 2021