

CITY OF FENTON COUNCIL WORK SESSION PROCEEDINGS
Monday, April 6, 2015
City Hall Conference Room
301 South LeRoy Street
7:30 PM

Mayor Sue Osborn called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

Present: Bland, Grossmeyer, Jacob, King (via telephone), Lockwood, Osborn.
Absent: McDermott (excused).
Others Present: Lynn Markland, City Manager; Mike Burns, Assistant City Manager;
Stephen Schultz and Chuck Barbieri, Legal Counsel.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – Cherie Smith and Amy Freeman-Rosa asked to speak on the Solid Waste contract.

LOCAL TRAILS PRESENTATION

Michael Crane, a 5th grade student at State Road Elementary gave Council an update on his International Baccalaureate (IB) project regarding local trails proposed in the area. As part of his project, he wrote a letter that was sent home to the parents of State Road Elementary students. He stated approximately 230 letters were sent out and provided Council with a copy of the letter. He also helped at the LAF Trails Coalition expo booth. Between the Expo and response to the letter sent home with students, approximately 730 signatures were gathered in support of trails. He stated the Tri-County Times recently ran an article about the trails and the trails will also be featured in a piece from the Michigan Trails Greenway Alliance (MTGA). The MTGA website featured information about the Detroit River walk stating the River walk led to a new bicycle shop, cafes and festivals. The website also noted more businesses are looking to locate in cities where employees and clients can bike to work. He provided Council with signatures that were gathered in support of the trails.

Council thanked Michael for his presentation.

Markland stated both Genesee County and Southern Lakes Parks and Recreation have placed the trails in their plan and funding is being looked at.

Osborn stated there are federal grants available for bike trails. Markland stated funds are available through the Transportation Alternative Program and the City received money from that program for the Streetscape project.

Bland stated if money is being asked for, this needs to be looked at during the budget session and suggested something be budgeted in case the project moves forward to avoid having to amend the budget at a later date.

Markland stated the project is not to that point yet and there is no estimate of what trail installation will cost.

Jacob asked if a resolution of support would help with any grant opportunities. Markland stated it depends on what entity applies for the grant and a resolution can be addressed closer to the time of the grant application.

SOLID WASTE CONTRACT

Markland stated the Solid Waste Committee spent many hours studying options for solid waste collection. A new program that would provide each residence separate carts for recyclables and trash was presented to the committee by Republic Services. At the recent MML Capital Conference, several speakers from the MDEQ presented information related to this kind of program and indicated this type of collection system results in doubling the collection of recyclables.

Markland stated the committee recommends the City switch to the two cart method of collection. Each customer would be charged the same rate and invoiced on their quarterly utility bill. He discussed implementation of the new system with Gary Hicks from Republic Services who suggested starting the new system on October 1, 2015. This would give enough lead time for education and allow customers time to use their existing bags and tags.

Markland further stated he is looking for a consensus from the Council to change the system and to start the new system on October 1, 2015. Administration will then work out the details with Republic Services and present a new contract at a future Council meeting.

Osborn stated she would like to see the program start earlier than October, especially with the recent rodent problem.

Markland stated anyone that has purchased bags and tags cannot be refunded their money and the program needs to be implemented in line with utility billing cycle.

Lockwood stated it's important to properly educate residents on the new system because it is a major switch. She stated there are residents not participating in the current program which has caused the price of bags and tags to increase over the years. The committee worked on coming up with an option that is fair to all residents that will encourage recycling and is comparable in cost to the existing program.

Osborn asked how the billing cycle is set up. Markland stated the billing is set up to coincide with the fiscal year, which starts July 1st and stated the implementation timeline also takes Republic Services schedule into account as well.

King commented the Committee looked at the contracts with Fenton Township and the City of Linden. She stated every household needs to be participating in the solid waste program and that is not happening now and trash from within the City is going to other communities, which is not fair. She supports a program where everyone pays the same amount.

Lockwood stated a communication strategy about the proposed new program needs to be in place. She stated there have been concerns that certain condo developments do not have room to store the large carts.

Gary Hicks of Republic Services recapped what will be involved with the new solid waste program:

- Unlimited trash and recycling. Trash or recyclables that don't fit in the cart can be placed next to it for pick-up.
- Republic will work closely with Administration to put together a program to educate residents.
- Residents will be given larger carts to begin with. If after 90 days they would like a smaller one, the larger cart can be returned and a smaller one delivered.
- Certain areas where large containers pose a storage issue, smaller containers will be delivered to begin with.

Hicks stated the new program is also safer for drivers as some have suffered injuries while loading bags into the trucks.

King asked if in areas the carts cannot be properly stored, can residents keep their existing trash and recycling containers. Hicks responded if there are certain neighborhoods where the smaller carts cannot be stored, then a separate truck will run in those neighborhoods for manual collection of trash and recyclables. He noted that those neighborhoods will be handled as a whole, they will either have carts or have manual pick up, not a combination of systems.

Bland stated he supports the change in systems. He stated the City really needs to get the word out so that people have time to use any bags and tags they have already purchased. He asked if the City will have bags and tags leftover. He also commented he doesn't think the change in systems will impact the recent rodent issue because the City just spent money to take care of the problem.

Markland stated Administration is keeping close track of the number of bags and tags on hand and have been ordering smaller amounts and doesn't think there will be many leftover.

Jacob stated some people are under the impression that recycling is going away and it needs to be made clear to residents that recycling is part of the new program.

Bland suggested holding public meetings to disseminate information and answer any questions residents may have.

Markland stated how far in advance carts will be delivered before the new program starts. Hicks stated if the program starts October 1st, carts will be delivered the last two weeks of September.

Grossmeyer stated he supports the change. He thinks the pay as you throw is a great program but needs to be done by more than one community. He would like to see the new program start sooner than October.

Osborn asked if the City would be able to use the bags and tags on hand by the end of June and start the new program July 1st.

Markland responded Administration will do whatever City Council decides but stated residents need time to use the bags and tags on hand and noted the City will not be able to refund residents for bags and tags they have already purchased.

King stated she thinks October 1st is a good date to start the new program. It allows time to educate residents and work out any problems that may arise during the transition.

After discussion, consensus was to have the new program begin on October 1st.

Cherie Smith, 200 Union Street, stated she is against the new program and commented it will quadruple what she pays compared to the current solid waste program. She stated 60% of the people on her road only put out trash every 2-3 weeks and she does not think the new program will encourage more recycling because there's no incentive to save money on trash costs. She also stated she has communicated with John and Jill Gadola at 304 E. Rockwell who conveyed they are also opposed to the change.

Amy Freeman-Rosa, 809 Williams Street, opposes changing from the pay as you throw system. She agrees that people will use recycling if it's provided and suggested a graduated cart system for trash collection with different sized carts and charge accordingly. She doesn't mind paying more for a program that encourages more recycling but does not think the proposed plan does that. She thinks ongoing education is needed and information meetings need to take place and recommended Republic Services update their recycling information to correctly reflect the materials that are accepted for recycling.

Item will be brought forward to a City Council meeting for action.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Lockwood stated the sculpture committee recently met and chose the next sculptures for the City. One of them is to be placed on the pedestal (originally donated by the State Bank) behind City Hall. John Strayer sent an email indicating the sculpture will be delivered and installed next week and the pillar in the center of the pedestal needs to be removed. His email also indicated the State Bank was contacted and they are okay with a sculpture being placed there. After discussion, consensus was to remove the pillar.

Jacob gave an update on work at the disc golf course at Silver Lake Park and stated a tournament was held on April 4th and had a great turnout.

King thanked Council and the community for their prayers for her sister.

CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Cherie Smith, 200 Union Street, commented it was nice to see people at Silver Lake Park for the disc golf tournament. She stated there were over 100 cars in the parking lot and she spoke to some of the people there who indicated they would be willing to pay for a season pass to be able to play the course.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Osborn and seconded by Lockwood to enter into Closed Session to discuss communications with the Attorney.

YEAS: Bland, Grossmeyer, Jacob, King, Lockwood, Osborn.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: McDermott. Motion carried by a roll call vote.

Council recessed to Closed Session at 8:23 PM.

Council reconvened to Open Session at 9:00 PM.

Markland stated it was recently discovered that a sewer line to a house in the area of Adelaide Street and South Holly Road was severed. The City is in the process of fixing the issue but the cost will be above what he is authorized to spend.

A motion was made by Osborn and seconded by Lockwood to give the City Manager the right to expend the funds necessary to fix the sewer problem at South Holly Road and Adelaide Street. Motion carried by a voice vote.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:04 P.M.

Mayor Sue Osborn

City Clerk, Renee Wilson

Date approved: April 27, 2015