

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
JUNE 10, 2020

Charles City city council met in a planning session on June 10, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr, Jerry Joerger, DeLaine Freeseaman, Phoebe Pittman and Phillip Knighten. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city engineer John Fallis and city attorney Brad Sloter.

A street closure request had been submitted by the Rustic Corner to close off the block of Main Street in front of their building on July 11. The parking lot located on the north side of their store would still have access. Tami Vetter, owner, has talked to the businesses on this block and they are all okay with this closure. She has other businesses in town participating in this event and an outdoor service permit application for a mobile wine trailer has been submitted to the state. They will put up barricades around the area and a sketch of the outdoor service area will be submitted once council approves this request. Council member Pittman asked how the 6' social distance protocol be enforced. Response was that the vendors will be monitoring their spaces to be sure this is enforced. This item will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

St. Charles Brewery has submitted a request for an extension of their outdoor service permit. Owner Cort Sanvig commented that they will post "no drinks beyond this point" signs and will have a fence in place a week after this permit is effective. They also plan to close at 9:00 each night. Police Chief Hugh Anderson asked that they get the fence in place as soon as they can. Sanvig noted that the food trucks will be located to the east on the north side and will be outside the fence. This will be on the next regular council agenda for consideration.

A Façade application has been submitted by St. Charles Brewery for new siding, lighting and signage. Total estimated cost of the project is \$12,300 and they have submitted a request for 50% of this total. They are doing some other work which will qualify for a cultural/entertainment grant and that will be done later. **This Façade application is for FY21 since the funding for FY20 has already been depleted.** Council member Pittman commented that the signage on the north side of the building will be very beneficial. Council member Knighten noted that there was inside electrical included in the quote information and wanted to know if that was included in the total. This will be looked into and verified prior to approval at the next regular council meeting.

The annual one day borrowing is ready to be executed. The total to be borrowed is \$189,500 and includes police/fire equipment purchases, tree removal, nuisance abatement funds, Shaw Avenue dump expenses and city hall server. Requests were sent out to all area banks for their fee to complete this transaction and First Citizens was lowest at \$75. This will be on the next regular council agenda for action and the loan will be completed on June 22.

City attorney Sloter has drafted an ordinance that will allow for an increase in the building permit fees when a permit is not obtained prior to the work being started. We have run into quite a few instances where a building permit was not secured prior to the start of work and the only thing we can do is double the permit fee. For a permit of \$17, this is not very punitive to double it to \$37 and does not seem to be much of a deterrent. Sloter has done some research on what other cities charge for this type of thing and found some to be as high as \$250 for a fine for not securing a building permit. City staff is suggesting implementing a \$110 fine for this violation. Council member Starr commented that sometimes it's just that a person doesn't know that a building permit is needed for a certain repair. Staff will try to educate the public on the basic items that require a building permit so there is more awareness. There was agreement that repeat offenders should definitely be fined. Chief Anderson commented that a lot of furnaces have been going in without a permit and several have been inspected later by our code department and found to be installed incorrectly. These incorrect installations are a big safety issue. Question on a possible sliding scale for repeat offenders or giving a first time offender a pass. These could be somewhat tough to track for our code department. Staff will work further on this ordinance and bring it back at a later date for council review.

An ordinance has been drafted to address the dumping of trees and branches by out of town residents at Shaw Avenue tree dump. The city pays a business each year to come in and chip the branches/trees down to mulch for use by our residents. If someone from out of city limits is caught dumping now, we have no fine designated so there is nothing we can do for enforcement. This ordinance would allow for a simple misdemeanor to be done or a civil infraction of up to \$750. Chief Anderson stated that his officers routinely find people from outside the city dumping there and he feels this ordinance is needed. This will be brought to the next regular meeting for a first reading.

City administrator Diers reported that our Foster grandparent director Sarah Merrifield has turned in her resignation. Her last day will be July 1. We will start the search to find her replacement and in the interim, the current volunteer coordinator will fill in. We had set June 15 as the day to reopen city hall to the public. The governor has lifted some restrictions statewide. Mayor Andrews asked if the library will be reopening and Diers replied that they have typically followed the same policy as city hall so he thinks they will open June 15 as well. Discussion on what to do with council meetings going forward and it was thought that a hybrid may be used where some council attend in person and some join remotely via Zoom. It was decided to try June 15 with all attending in person to see how it goes. Diers reported there is still no resolution on McQuillen Place project. Work continues on the ambulance agreement and he hopes to have a draft for council to review at the June 22 workshop with a possible special meeting following for approval. The applicants for the safety coordinator position for our region are being reviewed. The WRRF project is moving along nicely. A public hearing will be set for Gilbert Street lift station. Fox is still in discussions with Portzen on the work stoppage issue with the WRRF. Terry Wegner has inquired about renting the ground that is not included in the WRRF like he has in the past and Brad is working on an agreement for that. The telecom bids were opened and low bid was \$6.38 million, engineer's estimate was \$7.1 million. There will be a second interview with the telecom general manager candidates next week. Will also set initial user rates and discuss possibly sharing some of the transport costs with some other entities. Council member Freeseaman commented that the increase in costs being estimated over the past years, stating that it's common to have a larger amount approved for borrowing to be sure you have enough for funding. Diers also noted that it's time for the annual evaluations for himself, Trudy and Brad. The last couple years these have been done online and we plan on doing that again this year. Evaluations will be done July 6 at a special meeting after the regular meeting that night. Police chief Anderson also reported that he decided the street should be closed for McDonald's Kids' Day activities on July 3 for safety reasons so that item will be on the June 15 regular agenda for council consideration.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, city clerk