

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
AUGUST 10, 2022

Charles City city council met for a planning session on August 10, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr, Patrick Lumley, DeLaine Freeseaman and Phillip Knighten. Absent was Phoebe Pittman. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city engineer John Fallis and city attorney Brad Sloter.

Mayor Comments - none

Discussion held on a re-zoning request for the Hartwood Inn located on Gilbert Street to go from business to residential to accommodate apartments. City engineer Fallis reviewed the re-zoning process and stated that the council does not have to send this to planning and zoning for review since the required number of signatures on the petition were not secured. Staff has some concerns about this request, namely that Gilbert Street is very busy, there have been a higher number of police service calls to this business and the lack of required parking spaces that an apartment complex would need. The state department of inspections has discovered that this hotel has been operating without a valid hotel license for several months now. The state won't file an injunction for this violation but would work together with the city to file. City attorney Sloter also commented that this zoning change would go against what our comprehensive plan has designated for this area. The business owner, Gilbert Starble, commented that he would like to make this hotel into apartments for disabled and the elderly so they would be handicapped accessible. He stated that there is a housing shortage here, especially for handicapped accessible units. He also commented that he did not renew his hotel/motel license because he wanted to pursue this apartment option. Council would like to see a long term business plan before they would consider this request.

Bob Moen, representing the American Passenger Train museum, addressed the council to see what their thoughts were on sharing the cost of public restrooms in the museum that would serve the proposed bike trail extension by the depot. There is a state grant available that requires 60% match and if the city would share in the cost of those bathrooms, it would go a long way toward that match.

At this time, Kip Hauser, a neighbor to the Hartwood Inn, wanted to voice his objection, and his neighbor's objection, to the re-zoning request for the Hartwood Inn property.

Council member Freeseaman asked if a price to construct a totally separate bathroom had ever been calculated. Mr. Moen replied back that a rough estimate he had gotten from the DOT was around \$300,000. Freeseaman also commented that he would like to see a public restroom closer to the whitewater course. The depot already has inside rest rooms in their plans but if the city wanted to partner, they would add some at ground level on the other side of the building so they would be handicap accessible. They would also probably them on a timer so that the doors would lock at a specified time for overnight. Estimate of cost to add these public restrooms to the plans is \$50,000. Park and rec department would be willing to take on the maintenance and cleaning of these restrooms if they are built. Council asked if city engineer Fallis could calculate some costs of building a separate bathroom, possibly closer to the whitewater. This grant is first come first serve and some projects have already been awarded. The railroad depot committee would like to submit an application soon. For this particular grant program, only one application is allowed per city. Council member Freeseaman stated that he would like more information before he would decide which route to go.

The ordinance to implement a penalty for non registering mobile food vendors had been presented for a first reading at the last regular council meeting. At that time, council was asking if the penalty amount could be increased. Staff have consulted with city attorney Sloter and have determined that this penalty can be set at whatever amount the council wants. Council asked if we can just shut down a vendor if they don't have the proper permit and reply was this is not included in the ordinance. After much discussion, consensus was to consult with our local food vendors on what our fees are and bring this ordinance back to council.

The possible sale of the section of N. Main Street in front of Pure Prairie Farms was discussed. This originally was to be leased to them but they have now asked us to consider selling it. Owning it would make it easier to secure financing. City administrator Diers commented that in all reality, if this business closes, it would not be feasible to reopen this as a street. Councilmember Freeseeman stated that he is still concerned with how this reconfigured intersection will operate. Can we wait and see how this flows before we permanently change N. Main Street? George Pichel, representing Pure Prairie Farms, commented that the expansion would come right out to the sidewalk and they need permanent access to the loading docks to secure the financing. A long term lease would be okay but they would prefer to just purchase this section of street. After more discussion, council members Freeseeman and Knighten agreed that a lease with a purchase option would give us time to see how this planned reconfiguration of Main Street flows and we could possibly make changes to the design if needed. Council stated concerns over the right only turn lane on N. Grand, signage maybe needs to be put further ahead to give people more warning. It was also suggested that putting in reflective sticks on the dividing lane lines may help as well to guide people into the new turn lane.

City administrator Diers reported that the EMS discussion is ongoing. We have discussed the option of operating this in house with the ambulance commission. The amount of this levy will be recommended by the EMS advisory board to the board of supervisors and the city council soon. We will be advertising soon for the city engineer position since current engineer John Fallis is retiring in December.

Councilmember Starr reported that with or without the EMS levy, we need to cover the cost of the ambulance service. If the levy doesn't pass, this will be a large cost to the city.

Council member Lumley reported that the EMS advisory board continues to meet and that this levy is being looked at by many counties.

Being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk