

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
AUGUST 24, 2020

Charles City city council met in a planning session on August 24, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Dean 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 Slotter.

This meeting started with a joint meeting with the Charles City Telecommunications board of trustees to discuss the fiber project. Board chair Cheryl Erb called their meeting to order and board members present were Jeff Marty, Danny Wilson, Lydia Johnson and Dick Herbrechtsmeyer. Board consultants present were Todd Kielkopf, Eric Lampland and Michael Maloney.

The financing for the broadband project is taking longer than planned to get into place. The city had previously approved a one million dollar loan to the telecom to get the utility up and running. With the delay in financing, the telecom board is requesting an additional amount of \$200,000 be added to the original loan. When the telecom bonds get issued, the city will be reimbursed for the amount of the loan. Board chair Erb expressed her appreciation for the partnership with the city and their continued support of this project. Council member Pittman asked what the major hurdle has been to securing the financing. City administrator Diers replied that since this utility is being formed on a stand alone basis without the backing of an existing electrical utility, there may possibly be some uncertainty in the financial market. Since the rates are coming down in the bond market, that avenue has become a more attractive option. The board is still hopeful that financing can be secured and construction can still start in the spring. The winning bidder for the project continues to hold on yet. Bond counsel Dorsey Whitney has been consulted to get the bond process started and council will take action on this at the next regular meeting. Council member Freeseaman, who is the council's liaison to the telecom, stated that many people have been working very hard to bring this project to fruition. The telecom board then recessed to reconvene on with their own separate Zoom meeting.

Representatives from Crown Point and Stewart Realty were present to continue discussion on the Parkside development. This firm proposes to build twin homes and single homes in the remaining bare lots in the Parkside Development. They have completed some very successful developments in other cities and would like to do something similar here in Charles City. They are asking the city to consider helping to fund this project through a housing TIF. A TIF would have to be established for this area and since it would be a housing TIF, there would need to be some set aside for low to moderate income residents. This district would have an 11 year life with the ability to get a 5 year extension. Crown Point would like a \$20,000 investment per house from the city, which would amount to an estimated \$480,000 total. Some concern on what would happen if these houses get built but not sold. Response was that the developer would still own the homes and pay the taxes due on them until they sell. Council member Freeseaman asked if we could put milestones in place to offer some protection for the city if the houses don't get built as planned and response was yes. Dean Stewart commented that the developer wants to get started on this in 3-4 weeks and the paperwork to establish the TIF won't be done by then. So it is hopeful that they will commence work with a letter of intent approved from the city. The feedback from the council at the last planning session was that they preferred the larger floor plan, so that will be taken in to consideration. The proposed plan is to have some of the units be rental units, which will get some cash flow going. Discussion on what the need is for more rental units in the city. It was commented that new people coming to work here might prefer to rent at first until they can find suitable housing to own. Council member Starr asked if these would be fair market value rentals and response was yes. It was also asked if the developer would be willing work commence with just a letter of intent from the city until all of the necessary paperwork can be executed. Jeff Sagen from Parkside Developers stated he had reviewed the letter of intent with his partners and they are willing to work with that. Approval of the letter of intent will be on the September 8 regular council meeting for consideration.

Mark Wicks, Community Revitalization director, reported that there are different local groups collaborating to save the old train depot. The railroad has given them until the end of September to come up with a plan to move the depot or they will demolish it. The plan is to move the depot approximately one block south to property owned by Bob Moen and establish it as a train museum. It has also been mentioned that it could serve as trailhead for the Charley Western bike trail if that trail gets connected to this site. Two rather large donations totalling \$70,000, along with many other donations, have been received to date. The immediate goal is to raise enough funds to move the building and more fundraising will need to be done to renovate the building. Bob Moen is donating the land to put the depot on and the rail road

museum will own, and be responsible for, the building itself and ongoing maintenance. This group would like the city to support this project by encouraging people to donate funds toward it and if possible, give some monetary support as well. Mark Wicks commented that this is one of the few remaining historical structures in town and once it's gone, we can't get it back.

A facade application has been submitted from North Main Car Wash to replace old wood shake siding on their building at 803 N. Main Street. Total estimated cost of the project is \$8375.70 and they are requesting \$4187.85 which is half of the total estimate. The design committee has reviewed this request and is recommending council approval. This will be on the next regular council agenda for consideration.

The local Lions Club is requesting some street closures for a drive thru pancake breakfast they are doing on September 13. They are asking that Blunt Street between Main and Jackson be closed from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The traffic would flow from the south on Jackson street and turn on to Blunt Street and would be two lanes wide. They will be allowing walk up service but people can't stay and eat in the park. This will be on the next regular agenda for council approval.

The Floyd/Mitchell/Chickasaw landfill would like to enter into an agreement with the city to dispose of the leachate from their site. They have been taking this product to Osage but their facility is close to reaching their limit. It would be an average of 12,000 gallons per day. The initial draft of this agreement stated that testing would be done monthly but city staff feel that quarterly testing would be sufficient, so that will be changed. FMC would pay \$.04/gallon for this service. This would be for a three year period with a termination clause included if circumstances change and we would need the room at the plant for ourselves. Council member Starr asked if a business like Simply Essentials were to start operations again, would that overwhelm our plant capacity? Wastewater superintendent Dan Rimrod replied that he thinks we will have plenty of capacity if that happened. He also stated that he would like to see the loads spaced out rather than dump all at once so it's easier to handle it. Staff hopes to have this item ready for council consideration at the next regular meeting.

City administrator Diers reported that the first group of residents that are part of our sidewalk inspection program have already been notified about needed repairs to their sidewalks. Due to COVID, staff is considering allowing an extra year to complete the repairs. Staff has been looking at a time and attendance module for payroll and also an online program for building permits. Office space has been found both temporary and permanent for the ambulance office in the fire station.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk