

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

Charles City city council met in a planning session on September 23, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr, Jerry Joerger, Michael Hammond and Dan Mallaro. Absent was DeLaine Freeseaman. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city engineer John Fallis and city attorney Brad Slotter.

Mayor Andrews stated that he had attended a reunion of former Solvay employees this past weekend and he spoke on what has been happening in Charles City over the past few years.

Discussion was held on hunting deer at Wildwood and several residents spoke against this policy for various reasons. Mayor Andrews stated that this item has already been voted on and approved by the council but he wanted to give citizens a chance to speak on the matter. All who wanted to speak were given the chance to do so and much discussion was held. After all were done, Mayor Andrews stated that unless a council member wants to put this item back on a regular agenda, the policy will stand.

Jerry Hegvedt was present to discuss correspondence from the city regarding the lot next to his auction business on Gilbert Street. It stated that the lot needed to be paved if he continued to park vehicles and machinery on it. There had previously been a house on this lot and Hegvedt purchased it and demolished the house, leaving the empty lot. He commented that it is only his private auction equipment parked there and he has a sign posted that no public parking is allowed. The city letter stated that complaints had been received about this lot. He would like to come to a compromise or if he has to put it back to grass, he will continue to park his equipment there or he may also consider putting up a fence if that helps. City administrator Diers commented that the zoning code doesn't specify between public or private parking, so either way, it would have to be paved if items were parked on it. We recently made some changes to the code pertaining to paving of parking lots and loosened the requirements to make it more feasible for owners to comply with this code. A waiver can be requested from the planning and zoning commission to not pave the lot, this item was left in when the changes were made. Council member Hammond stated that he would not like to see this lot graveled since we already have issues around town with gravel washing into the street. City attorney Slotter commented that a couple of years ago, there was public use of this lot so the city asked Hegvedt to stop that practice. It appears the amount of equipment parked there has increased recently. Right now, it's not to code whether it is for private or public parking. The city had waited to further pursue this issue until the changes were made to the parking lot ordinance by the council and we knew exactly what needed to be done at that point to be in compliance. Those changes were approved this summer and Hegvedt was again notified of the need to comply. His only option at this point is to request a waiver from the planning and zoning commission to not pave his lot. If it is denied, he will either have to pave the lot or discontinue parking any items there.

There has been ongoing staff discussions on a disputed alley located in the Bartz Addition. There is an alley that was previously platted and later vacated. When the original plat was done, the developer did not own six of the platted lots. So the claim now is that the alley abutting these six original lots was actually never platted and properly dedicated to the city. Therefore, it could not be vacated and the abutting property owner still owns it. The county records show the city still owning this section of the vacated alley. A quit claim deed could be issued for the rest of the alley but the owner abutting the alley portion in question won't accept that. City attorney Slotter stated that it isn't worth it to the city to legally pursue this disputed section but that we could quit claim deed the rest of the undisputed alley, which is what we plan to do.

Water superintendent Cory Spieker was present to discuss painting the city water tower on Corporate Drive. City staff have corresponded with Dixon Engineering about contracting with them to prepare bid package, performing on site project observation, project administration, final inspection and one year warranty. The proposed cost for these services is \$26,676.80. Some discussion on what would be painted on the tower, we could add the city logo if desired. Superintendent Spieker would like to see this work done this spring, so we need to get started on RFPs and getting bids back.

Also discussed was adding some meter sizes to our list of meter charges. We currently have no charge designated for 10" or 12" meters, it stops at 8". Valero has a 10" meter and up until now, the agreement with them has the city covering the replacement of their meter. This agreement ends soon, so we need to add this charge to our ordinance so that cost can be charged to Valero when the meter needs replacing.

The city recently joined a regional safety group to help conduct monthly safety training sessions for our employees. The cost is approximately \$7,000 per year for this service. This consortium has been discussing adding a safety coordinator position that would schedule, conduct and perform record keeping for all safety meetings for the region. If all of the consortium entities would participate in this endeavor, the yearly cost to the city would be approximately \$25,000 since we are the largest entity in this regional group. This would replace the current \$7,000 we are paying. The consortium would like an answer back from us on our participation by November 1.

Staff has been discussing accessory structures without a principal structure on the property. Several years ago, a special use was added to allow a garage on a lot without a principal structure as long as the principal structure was on an abutting lot. An agreement for this situation needs to be signed by the owner stating that the lots will be, in effect, tied together and one can't be sold without the other. This does not allow for non adjoining lots to be able to do this. Staff has recently been contacted by a property owner on Clark Street who wants to purchase a dilapidated building two lots down from his residence, tear the house down and leave the garage there with improvements to be done to the garage. This property is in a flood plain so any work done to the house can not exceed over 50% of the value without bringing it up to flood plain requirements. City attorney Slotter stated that we could tie those properties together and could allow the water and sewer to be routed to the garage rather than capped at the main. Council member Starr asked if we could allow the conveyance to another abutting property owner in the future and city attorney Slotter replied yes, as long as it was an abutting property owner and not another non-adjacent property owner. Staff will pursue this and bring it back to council for approval at a regular meeting. It will require a zoning change.

Heidi Nielsen, housing director, presented a proposed change in the housing procurement policy that is being required by HUD. Council oversight would still be in effect for any purchases over \$10,000. These changes are necessary since Federal housing authorities aren't subject to state bidding requirements. This item will be on a future council agenda for action.

The preliminary plans are done for the Charley Western Trail Bridge. Calhoun Burns has the design contract and since Federal funds are involved, we need to have DOT involvement. Council needs to approve the plans and set letting and hearing dates, but the DOT will handle the whole process. The total estimate for this project is still around 1.2 million. We have \$329,000 of TAP grants secured for this project already. A more detailed estimate will be ready for the October 7 council meeting. It is a 12' wide concrete beam bridge with 2 bump outs in the middle on either side.

City administrator Diers commented that the shared CVTC facility has some roof issues and the state prepared specs and went out for bids on this project. Nine bids were received with \$320,000 being the lowest bid. Our share of this project will come from RUT and be around \$88,000. The new entry signs are being installed. Tourist info signs are also up. A building in the 100 block of North Main has some issues, the parapet is pulling off the side of the building. This will be getting repaired soon. Steve will be down at the League of Cities annual conference this week in Dubuque Wednesday through Friday.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk

