

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
NOVEMBER 13, 2019

Charles City city council met at the public library at 5:30 p.m. on November 13, 2019. A tour of the library was conducted until 6:00 when the meeting moved to council chambers for the business portion. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following members were present: Keith Starr, Jerry Joerger, DeLaine Freeseaman, Michael Hammond and Dan Mallaro. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city engineer John Fallis and city attorney Brad Sloter (arrived at 6:00 p.m.)

Housing director Heidi Nielsen presented information on the housing rehab project bids for two homes. Bids spreadsheets were distributed and Koenigs Construction was low bid on both projects with a bid of \$26,915 at 704 B Street and a bid of \$26,839.00 at 313 7th Street. Estimate of cost for these was \$28,715 and \$24,430 respectively. Our portion of these costs is a maximum of \$24,999. Homeowners must live in the house for 5 years before the loan can be forgiven. If they move out before, the amount owed will be prorated. This will be on the next regular agenda for action.

Broadband commission members were present to make a recommendation on the fiber to the home project. City administrator Steve Diers commented that this project has been in the works for awhile and a lot of research and discussion has been held. We are in the path of a regional project for fiber so we were approached to see if we are interested in joining them. We would be the first in the state to do a broadband utility without having a municipal electrical utility in place. The commission members who spoke stressed the need to have high speed internet available to bring new residents and businesses to town. A feasibility study has been completed for this project and a survey of residents has shown high interest for this. The commission is recommending proceeding with this project. The goal is to provide reliable reasonably priced internet, not to be in competition with the local providers. We would also have redundancy so that if a line is cut, we can still operate. This project will be funded through user rates, not by the taxpayers. And subscription is not required, citizens can keep their current provider if they choose. It was stated that more education in the community on this project and the details is very important. Commission member Josh Mack stated that with jobs that allow working from home becoming more popular, having a reliable high speed connection will be very important. City administrator Diers stated that there will more than likely be other users of this fiber network, such as 5G phone providers. This will bring in more revenue from their rent of our fiber. Council member Freeseaman stated that the commission put a lot of time and effort into researching this endeavor and we are as ready as we can be to proceed. And they are hopeful that people will put in the connection to their homes even if they won't be using the service since this would be an asset when the home would get sold. Another plus to this utility is that we would have control over what channels are broadcast. This item will be on Monday's agenda for council to approve going forward with the project and purchasing property for this utility.

An agreement with CWG for the reed beds for the wastewater plant project was discussed. This firm would set up the reed beds, put them in place, train personnel to operate and make sure they are operating properly for the next two years. The cost of the agreement is \$150,000. This will be on the next regular agenda for council action.

TIF certification is not quite ready for council to approve so it will be on a special meeting for November 25.

Planning and zoning commission met earlier tonight and are recommending approval of a garage accessory structure amendment to the zoning ordinance. This would allow an accessory structure to be built on an empty lot in town as long as the owner lives in the city limits. The empty lot does not have to be adjacent to the principal residence lot but the two lots will be "tied together" through a non conveyance agreement and cannot be sold independently of each other. However, if another city resident would like to purchase one of the lots, that could come before city council for permission. Planning and zoning held a public hearing on this with no comments either oral or written. This whole process will need to go before the board of adjustment for a special use. Mayor Andrews left at this time and Mayor Pro Tem Joerger took over presiding of the meeting.

The final version of the development agreement with Shawn Foutch for 500 N. Grand was presented for review. This is unchanged from the last review but now includes the site plan. This will be a 10 year 100% tax abatement. Project must be completed by 2023. Council member Freeseaman stated that it appears the parking on the south side is angled out to the street, not against the building. Since this is in city right of way, he will not be able to put signage that this is for private parking only. This agreement will be on the next regular meeting for action.

RCPD partnership with IAWA and the city of Cedar Rapids was discussed. This is a project that Cedar Rapids is spearheading and would involve the entire Cedar River watershed. It is a ten million dollar project and they want to bring in industries to partner with. They are requesting that Charles City to an in kind match with staff time and utilizing our sponsored project dollars that we were awarded. This would be the rural portion of our award which is \$500,000. They need to know by November 21 if we would be willing to participate. The only downside to our participation is more workload for staff.

City administrator Diers reported that water quality initiative best practices project we applied for had originally involved water issues along Hwy 14 and at Wildwood golf course. The other possible area for this project was Sunset Addition. Since these two didn't work well, we are now looking at the drainage issues in the Southwest Bypass park for this project. We have monies from the city, Winnebago Industries and the SW TIF funds to go toward this project. Met with EPA today as part of our 5 year review.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, city clerk