

August 17, 2015

The regular meeting of the Decorah City Council was called to order by Mayor Don Arendt at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Randy Schissel, Jody Niess, Gary Rustad, Chuck Lore, Tade Kerndt. Absent: Andy Carlson, Bill Wagner

Motion by Lore, second by Niess to approve the agenda as presented. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Brian Huinker, Midwest Group Benefits, gave a presentation to the Council regarding the city's health insurance benefit and requested TPA services be transferred to their company. Sent to Finance Committee for further discussion.

Motion by Schissel, second by Rustad, to approve items on the consent agenda as follows:

- a. Minutes of the August 3, 2015 meeting
- b. Claims
- c. Renewal Class C Liquor License for Happy Joes including Sunday sales
- d. Class C Liquor License for Rubaiyat including Sunday Sales
- e. C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 418 West Water Street, Northeast Iowa Montessori School – façade paint and mural

Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

This being the time and place for a public hearing on a proposed urban revitalization plan for the Decorah Commercial Urban Revitalization Area the hearing was opened.

Chad Bird, City Manager, stated the plan will authorize a 5-year tax abatement request for Toppling Goliath. He also clarified the proposed plan affects only the lots for the brewery.

Tom Hansen, 3469 Locust Rd, spoke against the plan saying tax abatement gives an unfair, competitive business advantage to the recipient. He believes it is disrespectful to other business owners especially Pulpit Rock Brewery.

Steve Luce, 508 Iowa Ave., spoke in favor of the abatement saying he appreciates the business park and new business coming in.

Ben Grimstad, 303 Upper Broadway, representing Decorah Jobs Board, spoke about the desire to have growth in a controlled manner in the business park. Tax abatement is a great way to help business grow. This development is a major investment in our community and would only cost the city money if Toppling Goliath were to go elsewhere. He encouraged support of the tax abatement request as purchase of the property is contingent upon the tax abatement being granted.

Brian Huinker, 115 Sunset, stated this business brings an incredible amount of business to town and is not competing with Pulpit Rock Brewery.

The hearing was closed.

Councilperson Kerndt stated the property has been undeveloped for 15 years. The city will receive more revenue with the tax abatement than it is getting now.

Motion by Niess, second by Lore, to approve Resolution 2667 adopting the proposed plan for the Decorah Commercial Urban Revitalization Area. Roll call vote. All voting aye.

Ordinance 1176 designating an area of Decorah, Iowa as the Decorah Commercial Urban Revitalization Area was introduced and read for the first time. Motion by Rustad, second by Niess, to approve the first reading. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

This being the time and place for a public hearing on the 2015 Decorah Street Improvement Project the hearing was opened.

Chris Redenius, 1701 Pleasant Ave., encouraged the council to consider long range and to follow through with asphaltting Pleasant Ave. There being no other comments the hearing was closed.

Motion by Rustad, second by Lore to adopt Resolution 2668 approving the plans, specifications, form of contract and the bid from Skyline Construction for Divisions I & II totaling \$339,141.94. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Stephanie Fromm, Director, Winneshiek Co. Development Inc., presented an overview of the work of the development corporation and requested approval of the annual \$6,500 contribution from the City.

Motion by Kerndt, second by Rustad, to approve the \$6,500 contribution as requested. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Kerndt, second by Lore, to adopt Resolution 2669 approving the final plat for the Decorah Business Park Second Subdivision. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Kerndt, second by Niess, to approve Resolution 2670 endorsing the submission of a RISE application to the Iowa DOT for a new road extension in the Decorah Business Park. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Resolution 2671 calling for a special election to be held in conjunction with the regular city election on November 3, 2015 on the establishment of a Municipally-Owned cable communication or television system (including video, voice, telephone, data and all other forms of telephone, telecommunications and cable communications) utility and providing for the management and control of such a system as opened for discussion.

Jim Fritz, representing Decorah Fast Fiber, presented the Council with a petition calling for the question on the ballot. He stated passage of the measure would give the city authority to create and maintain a locally controlled utility and would be an economic stimulus for the city.

Councilperson Schissel questioned the cost of starting this type of facility. Fritz responded saying the cost would be established by a feasibility study that would need to be done if the measure passes.

Schissel questioned if there was private sector support for donations to pay for the feasibility study. He doesn't believe the city should be responsible for those costs.

Fritz responded by saying those discussions had not been had.

Motion by Rustad, second by Lore, to approve Resolution 2671 calling for a special election to be held in conjunction with the regular city election on November 3, 2015 on the establishment of a Municipally-Owned cable communication or television system (including video, voice, telephone, data and all other forms of telephone, telecommunications and cable communications) utility and providing for the management and control of such a system. Roll call vote. Voting aye: Rustad, Lore, Niess, Kerndt. Voting nay: Schissel

Motion by Niess, second by Lore, to entering into a retainer agreement of engagement with outside legal counsel regarding formation of a municipal telecommunications utility in an amount not to exceed \$4,000. Roll call vote. Voting aye: Niess, Lore, Schissel, Rustad. Voting nay: Kerndt

Ordinance 1175 approving the proposed zoning code amendments was introduced and read for the third time. Motion by Schissel, second by Lore, to approve the third and final reading placing the ordinance on its final adoption. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Discussion on a sidewalk inspection project was referred to the Street Committee for review and recommendation.

Meeting adjourned on motion.

  
Wanda Hemesath, MMC, ICMC  
City Clerk, TR.