

Mayor Charles "Skip" Lee called a meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, March 3, 2014. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Barry Cox, Retha Elston, Joe Martin, Christopher Schuchard, Lou Sotelo, and John Stauter. Absent: None.

Also present were City Attorney Ron Coplan, City Manager Scott Shumard, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Finance Director Cindy Von Holten, Fire Chief Gary Cook, Deputy Fire Chief Mike Dettman, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

There was no communication from Visitors.

Alderman Cox made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as follows:

- A) City Council minutes of February 18, 2014
- B) Bills and Payroll totaling \$344,352.61
- C) Plan Commission minutes from the January 16, 2014 meeting
- D) **Ordinance No. 2014-03-04 Amending the Zoning Ordinance Regarding Community Residence Facilities (Section 102-314)**
- E) Petition from American Red Cross to hold a bucket brigade Saturday, May 3 at the intersections of Second Avenue/Second Street, Second Avenue/Fourth Street, and First Avenue/Third Street from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- F) Sale of Surplus Fire Department Equipment
- G) Petition from Sterling Kiwanis to solicit donations for peanuts on Saturday, April 12 at the intersections of Second Avenue/Second Street, Second Avenue/Fourth Street and First Avenue/Third Street from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

The motion was seconded by Alderman Elston.

Alderman Elston asked for clarification on Item D, Ordinance Amending Community Residences in the Zoning Code. Planner Wolff explained this zoning change came about when a petitioner had purchased property to build a community residence for eight residents. The City's regulations were written over 15 years ago and are outdated. These residences are indistinguishable from single-family homes and are regulated by the state. This code section reflects state requirements and outlines the sizes of facilities per district. Communication tower guidelines have been removed from the community residence section. It was unclear why the two were combined. Along with restructured language, guidelines were brought into this section.

Alderman Martin noted the company that was looking to build a new community residence already has several homes located in Sterling. These homes were built to integrate into neighborhoods and have been assets to our community.

Voting on the Consent Agenda: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chief Cook was excited to introduce Firefighter Clark Leidberg. Leidberg is from Bensenville, Illinois and has his Firefighter 2 Certification. Mayor Lee noted the Fire-Police Commission should be preparing a new hiring list.

Chief Cook introduced Firefighter Jeremy Billeb. Billeb has 12½ years of service and is being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. Billeb was pinned by his father, Bill Billeb, a retired Fire Captain from Dixon Rural.

Chief Cook introduced Fire Lieutenant Jason Williamson. Williamson has 20 years of service and is being promoted to the rank of Captain. Williamson was pinned by his father, Jerry Williamson, a retired Fire Captain from Sterling.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve the appointments to the Boards and Commissions as recommended by Mayor Lee:

- Marie Rombouts to Fire Pension Fund Board of Trustees until 4/18/2018
- Marilyn Anderson to Historic Preservation Commission until 6/30/2016

The motion was seconded by Alderman Stauter. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to proclaim March as American Red Cross Month; seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried. Mayor Lee read the Proclamation into the record.

Manager Shumard asked Planner Wolff to summarize the upcoming zoning code update. Planner Wolff stated that the zoning code is antiquated. It has been amended through the years as needed. A schedule was distributed. The Plan Commission plans to review one chapter per month. When a consensus is reached, the chapter will be sent to the Council for review. We are looking for input from residents and the business community. Wolff encourages participation from the Council, specifically Alderman Martin as liaison and Alderman Stauter because of his previous service on the Plan Commission. This is an important undertaking. The schedule is flexible.

Mayor Lee state that he was not Mayor when the sign code was done. He is concerned that a simple code becomes complex, such as the ordinance this evening. Mayor Lee understands that we need to be proactive but doesn't believe we need to find problems, such as regulating outdoor storage of firewood. The code needs to reflect Sterling's values and concerns. We want to encourage improvement but the code should reflect our values not the values of a western suburb. We need to use common sense.

Planner Wolff stated the Plan Commission is a good cross section of the community, with small business owners to look at government from their perspective. Wolff stated that everyone may not agree but a consensus needs to be reached. A lengthier code does not mean more difficult.

Mayor Lee stressed that small business owners need it simple because they do not have attorneys on staff.

Planner Wolff stated that the sign code is not on this agenda. Once the Plan Commission approves a section, the Council will have two to three weeks to review before action is taken. Wolff and staff have kept what works in the zoning code, threw out what didn't work, and worked on the rest.

Alderman Cox suggested that the whole Council have readings and study sessions to review the code sections.

Alderman Stauter emphasized that the code has to be equitable across the board for all citizens and business owners.

Alderman Sotelo asked that Planner Wolff share with the public how to see the current code and proposed changes.

Planner Wolff explained the code is available on the City's website or they can come to City Hall for a hard copy. Changes to the zoning code are what you think is best for the community. The zoning code is simply a tool using the Comprehensive Plan as a guide.

Alderman Schuchard noted that phone books are being delivered again and asked what can be done to have them from being littered across your lawn. Mayor Lee stated that you can opt out of receiving phone books. Manager Shumard stated he had researched this issue and found that it was not advisable to handle it by ordinance.

Alderman Elston applauded the Fire Department for receiving a grant. Chief Cook explained that Deputy Chief Dettman chased the Small Equipment Grant and they plan to purchase portable radios.

Alderman Cox stated that a lot of families need our prayers, especially after the accidental shooting over the weekend.

Manager Shumard thanked Superintendent Schmidt and her staff for laying out the rental program and working with Rock Falls.

Mayor Lee recognized Linda Pennell in the audience after serving on the City Council for a few years.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned to a Study Session at 7:13 pm.

Manager Shumard presented the following funds for review:

- Lynn Boulevard Project Fund Bond Issue – Manager Shumard explained this stretch of Lynn Boulevard was completed and we have a few years left on the repayment of bonds.
- McFalls Landfill Project Fund – repayments are almost complete.
- NWSW Redevelopment Fund
- Motor Fuel Tax
- Band Commission – Manager Shumard stated a long-term plan for Grandon should be determined, such as a crack in the band shell, benches, a permanent restroom, trees, and lawn sprinklers.
- Sterling Industrial Development Commission – property being sold to Illinois American Water Company. They currently lease the building on Second Avenue and are looking to build where all their equipment can be housed. Modular rent also decreased because some of the long-term tenants were paying more to encourage them to build on their own. There are no empty modules, but new tenants are paying less. Mayor Lee asked if rental income declined because of the kitchen unit not being used daily.
- Civil Defense Fund – expenses may be reduced because the small equipment grant will purchase radios.
- TIF Lincolnway-Lynn Fund – EAV has increased from \$470,548 to \$2,136,090 and the TIF will expire in 2032.
- CBD Tax Increment Allocation Fund – bonds retired in 2013. Increment will be split between Sterling Today and the City. The portions are being determined through the agreement. After several questions, Manager Shumard explained the Knie sales tax refund runs to 2020.
- Police Pension Fund
- Fire Pension Fund – Manager Shumard warned the Council that the numbers will look worse next year because this does not reflect pensions that began after May 1, 2013.
- Trust Committee Fund
- NSP2 Grant Fund – one final house is being built. The empty lots cannot be sold for less than 80% of their appraised value. Alderman Cox asked if we can get mortgage assistance for surrounding properties to purchase these lots.
- Manager Shumard did not present spread sheets for the Special Services areas of Greenridge and Tori Pines but explained that Tori Pines special assessment is paid. The City is working with Sterling Federal Bank on the assessment for Greenridge because the loan is in default.

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk