

## **MINUTES OF THE BEATRICE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

A work session of the Beatrice City Council was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the BPS Administration Meeting Room, 320 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Beatrice, Nebraska.

Attending: Mayor Wirth, Councilmembers: Billsbach, Clabaugh, Cook, Fairbanks, Kerr, Morgan, Parde.

Absent: Councilmembers: Catlin.

Mayor Wirth announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is available in the meeting room and is accessible to members of the public.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approve agenda as submitted.
- b. Receive and place on file all notices pertaining to this meeting
- c. Receive and place on file all materials having any bearing on this meeting.

Moved by Parde, seconded by Billsbach, that the items listed under the consent agenda be approved, accepted, and/or ratified as presented.

Roll Call: Yea: Billsbach, Clabaugh, Cook, Fairbanks, Kerr, Morgan, Parde

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Adjoining Buildings**

Tobias Tempelmeyer, City Administrator, introduced the draft adjoining building ordinance, previously discussed at the last City Council work session. The City Council was given further opportunity to discuss what elements they liked, did not like, and questions that remained. Councilman Clabaugh asked about "carrots" or "incentives" that were being offered to property owners to fix their structures. The City Council discussed funding mechanisms such as USDA Grant funds, CDBG Downtown Revitalization funds, LB 840 funds, CDBG reuse loan funds, and other funding sources. Tempelmeyer noted the recent Sidewalk Improvement Program and the ease of application and distribution. Councilman Kerr discussed the idea of the City buying, refurbishing, and selling downtown/problem properties. Councilman Parde inquired about the specific inspections, what would be looked at, and if the City had enough staffing to undertake such a program. City Administration had no specific count on the number of adjoining buildings. Councilman Morgan asked if a tiered system of inspection would help with the work load of the Building Inspection Department. Properties that were in compliance would be inspected once every three (3) to five (5) years. Councilman Fairbanks said that he wanted to see the timelines shortened to make the process move quicker. City Administration will draft language for a tiered inspection program, review timeline requirements, and continue to look for program incentives. This matter will return at a future City Council work session or regular meeting.

## **Vacant Buildings**

Tobias Tempelmeyer, City Administrator, introduced the draft vacant building ordinance, previously discussed at the last City Council work session. The City Council was given further opportunity to discuss what elements they liked, did not like, and questions that remained. Councilmember Parde asked how a structure like 407 Court Street would compare to the closed West Court Dairy Queen building. It was noted that under the vacant building ordinance the Dairy Queen would not be in compliance, while 407 Court Street, (prior to its roof collapse in 2014) would be in compliance, as it contained a functioning, albeit limited, business. Councilmember Fairbanks said that he wanted to see the timelines shortened to make the process move quicker. Councilman Fairbanks also noted that the City would be derelict if it ignored these sorts of buildings entirely and allowed them to go into complete disrepair. Councilmember Morgan asked about an exemption for recent purchases of property where the assessed value may be lower. The twenty-five percent (25%) over assessed value sales exemption may not cover recently purchased property. Tempelmeyer asked if the City Council would want to continue moving forward on this item. There was a general interest in moving forward with development of the ordinance. Greg Butcher, City Attorney, also noted the City Council would need to set fees for the vacant building ordinance as the "stick" that encourages property owners to fix, sell, or lease their vacant properties. City Administration will draft language for a sales price exemption, review timeline requirements, and continue to look for program incentives. This matter will return at a future City Council work session or regular meeting.

## **Removal of One-Way Streets**

This matter was brought to the City Council pursuant to the request of Councilman Cook. Councilman Cook noted that a number of studies and recommendations from 1977, 2006, and 2014 encouraged the City to remove one-way streets. Councilman Fairbanks noted that the removal of the one-way traffic requirements on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets would alleviate a number of issues including: speeding, the recent issues with thru traffic in alleyways, greater traffic accessibility, and a number of other reasons outlined in the studies. Councilman Fairbanks noted that the recent removal of one-way traffic from 5<sup>th</sup> Street has been successful and the street seems to carry more traffic. Councilman Fairbanks felt that the strong reason for people's opposition to the matter was the fear of change. Councilman Kerr noted that this is one of the first issues he voted on after returning to the City Council in 2014. At the time he received forty-two (42) calls regarding this matter, all in opposition to removing one-ways. Councilman Kerr noted that while the studies may say to remove the one-ways, none of the people who conducted the study actually live on those streets. Councilman Kerr noted that citizens whom he has spoken to who live on those streets are in opposition to such a change. Councilman Fairbanks noted that he has spoken to citizens who live on one-ways who would like it changed. Mayor Wirth requested the City Traffic Committee review this matter and make a recommendation to the City Council at a future work session or regular meeting.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Moved by Parde, that the Beatrice City Council go into closed session at 7:56 p.m., for the protection of public interest to discuss contract negotiations. Seconded by Billesbach, that the Beatrice City Council go into closed session at 7:56 p.m., for the protection of public interest to discuss contract negotiations.

Mayor Wirth announced that it has been Moved by Parde, seconded by Billesbach, that the Beatrice City Council go into closed session at 7:56 p.m., for the protection of public interest to discuss contract negotiations.

Reconvened at 8:21 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Parde, seconded by Billesbach, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Roll Call: Yea: Billsbach, Clabaugh, Cook, Fairbanks, Kerr, Morgan, Parde

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

**Erin Saathoff, City Clerk**

**Stan Wirth, Mayor**