

CITY OF SYLVAN LAKE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JANUARY 19, 2010

A Special Meeting of the Sylvan Lake City Council was held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010; opening at 6:13 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Maurina presided.

Present: Zubrzycki, Maurina, Meskin, Wiegand  
Absent: Lorenz  
Also Present: City Manager Martin and Clerk Clippert

Yes: All  
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Agenda

Wiegand requested public comment be put before discussion of dock and park fees.

Moved by Wiegand, seconded Meskin, to approve the City Council Agenda for January 19, 2010, as amended.

Yes: All  
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

Public Comment

**BD-002-10**

Brad Conkey commented on the changes made to dock policy. He was disappointed the dock committee had no notification this was going to be discussed and they got to offer no opinion. He feels it was a slap in the face and asked why have a committee if council is not going to discuss issues with them. Maurina apologized to Conkey and stated this meeting is to discuss fees only. She asked him to attend a regular meeting.

Rob Galacz asked Meskin how he came to propose the motion to eliminate the requirement of having to have a boat at a dock space. Meskin reviewed the minutes from the December meeting and informed him of the discussion. Maurina expounded last year all the dock spaces were not filled. People are not taking a space if it is only guaranteed for a year. So this is where the discussion came to eliminate the requirement of having to have a boat.

Zubrzycki asked everyone to stick to the topic and call the council members regarding their concerns from past meetings. Zubrzycki feels communication is important and he is sorry this happened.

Rob Conkey feels this discussion is the same and he is disappointed with the changes and not communicating with them.

Mark Landau asked where the city is with the budget now and in the future. He feels revenues do need to be raised and acknowledged dock fees are always looked at. Martin explained there has been a loss of tax revenue with the declining property values. He stated since the presentation which was made before the election, he has calculated that revenue is going to be less than projected. Even with the two mill increase there will not be surplus funds. Landau asked if it is important to increase the dock fee now. Maurina feels they need to look at it now.

Luke Cassar reported he did a survey on outside marinas and if you take the average cost of those, it would be \$2500. Cut that number in half and it would be \$1250. Right now the city is netting \$250 for a dock. He feels this is a giveaway. A \$100 increase is more than reasonable.

Patty Harrop asked if council is raising the fee to balance the budget or if the funds would go to seawall repairs. She feels it should go toward something specific.

Margo Foster stated the city is not here to make money. It is a quality of life issues and soon residents won't be able to afford it because they are pricing them out. She provided different Associations with lower dock fees. Foster asked council to find a different avenue than docks to raise money. She feels everyone benefits from the seawall. Without it there it would be a shore washing away.

Mark Landau asked what other options there are.

Brad Conkey expressed the value of Sylvan Lake is parks and lake. He agreed everyone benefits from it. He feels it is unfair to saddle a small group of people. It is better to propose another millage. Residents are not going to keep volunteering to help the parks any more if the fee continues to be raised. He also feels the city docks cannot be compared to a marina.

Marlene Toby stated Pine Lake Estates Association assesses a fee to every household. If it is not paid then it put on the tax roll. She asked if there is any way to impose a fee to go to everybody without taxing. Martin explained that the city can't charge a per parcel flat fee to every household. Toby asked council how much it takes to run the parks and how much is taken in. She would like to know where the money goes. Martin stated the revenue brought in from the summer programs doesn't cover the park expenses and that doesn't include seawall and the restroom improvements. The money is put in the general fund. The parks are part of the general fund.

Ray Dahlgren reviewed a proposal he made five years ago to City Council for modular docks. He had offered to lend the city the money. Council liked the idea, then Phil Thomas from the Sylvan Otter Group stopped it. If the city had these, the revenue for them could be \$45,000-

\$55,000. He feels the lake is not crowded except for during the fireworks. He asked City Council to think about it. Maurina informed everyone the DNR already approved the city to keep the number of docks which they already had. She doesn't believe the city would want to go to the DNR again.

Nicole Menuck responded to the statement that the parks are a right and warned to not overprice them. Docks are not a right. The city had to get a marina permit to run them. She feels there is nothing wrong with having vacant docks. It is an incentive for buyers.

Luke Cassar stated city docks can't be compared with an Association. There are dues with an Association which everyone pays.

Art Aspund asked what the current dock fee cost. Maurina told him \$365. He is sure the docks will be filled no matter what, even with the economic situation. He also feels older residents are being pushed aside for new residents.

Rob Conkey suggested making the increase for \$20 every year going forward with a maximum amount or until the year XX.

Luke Cassar noted the last dock increase was in 2006 and before that 2001 and then 1995.

Mitch Black doesn't have a problem with how much the city is charging. He would like to see some tangible evidence of this increase. He doesn't want to see it earmarked for seawall repairs or parks and nothing done that year. He asked council to follow through with what they are saying.

Chuck Toby asked what the park and ramp fees are. Martin informed him they are \$20 a piece.

Marlene Toby feels the sum of the comments tonight are people are in favor of an increase, but to keep it nominal and put toward something and then follow through with improvement.

#### Discussion of Park Fees and Boat Dock Fees

Wiegand feels the fee should be raised by \$100, which would provide around \$17,000. This would get about 100' of seawall repaired.

Meskin doesn't like to be under the gun. He feels they need to map it out first. He agrees the funds need to be designated for seawall.

Wiegand asked how many feet of seawall there are. Martin estimated around 4,000-5,000 feet.

Meskin prefers not to do anything this year. He would like to wait until they know what the tax revenue will be including the additional two mills and that won't be until March. Wiegand is not for postponing it.

Martin explained the seawall wouldn't get repaired until fall. If there is an increase earmarked for seawall the money would be collected by March. Or they can make the repairs in the fall and collect the following March. This would be in the same fiscal year. Meskin likes this. Martin added the way seawall repair was proposed in the presentation, some of the two mills would go toward seawall repair. It would be a perpetual annual expense.

Zubrzycki shared, boat dock fees are 78% of Park & Recreation revenue. If there were no boat fees, the other park fees wouldn't even cover garbage pickup in the parks. It appears over time the boat dock fees are covering most the Park & Recreation expenses. He believes that wasn't the intention, but it is what has happened. He feels the boat docks take away from the beauty of the community. Even if the boat docks were not there, the seawall would still be needed to protect the parks, which everyone benefits from. He feels there have been a lot of great comments tonight. He would like to consider the senior citizen situation. They are important and expectations need to be considered. If he looks at it from a business point of view he would price the docks at market price, but thinking from the public policy side it is a quality of life that brings people to Sylvan Lake and asked City Council to consider this. He added there is an operating procedure report that Lou Schimmel did. He recommended the city get rid of the park fees and make it a tax because everyone benefits from it and has the right to use them. In being perfectly fair everybody at some time should be able to use the docks during their residency here, whether it is a rotating list or some other way. Coming up with a fair value is tough. He likes the suggestion of an annual increase. Zubrzycki doesn't feel it is right to charge more for the RV lot than a dock space. He suggested a \$60 increase which would take the price to \$425 and it would be higher than the RV lot. He would also like to make some kind of consideration for seniors.

Maurina agreed with Zubrzycki that the seawall does protect everyone and their properties. She believes the entire city should have to help fund to whatever it takes to maintain the city. She reviewed their options to address this. She feels it is important to look for other ways to solve the monetary problems besides raising the dock fee.

Zubrzycki discussed the shared spaces and stated there were only nine last year. He suggested considering a share fee as an incentive to share. Meskin said there is limited room to get two boats out. It depends on the type of boat they have.

Maurina is concerned with putting off the inevitable and wants the seawall repaired. She feels the money should go toward seawall and would like to see a gradual increase, but would consider the \$60 increase. She agreed with Zubrzycki regarding senior citizens.

Zubrzycki asked the dock committee if they discussed the share fee. Brad Conkey said it is hard to do sharing because of the space. Patty Harrop reported their use to be 40 sharers. Nicole Menuck suggested decreasing the fee to the dock holder if they share.

Moved by Zubrzycki, seconded Meskin, to raise the boat dock fee by \$60 for a total of \$425 for all dock holders and sharers and to restrict it to seawall, effective this 2010 boat season.

Yes: Maurina, Meskin, Zubrzycki

No: Wiegand

**MOTION CARRIED**

Zubrzycki would like to discuss sharing and a lower fee and a discount for seniors.

Wiegand suggested they do this a study session.

Adjournment

Moved by Wiegand, seconded Zubrzycki, to adjourn the Special Meeting.

Yes: All

No: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

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Dennise Clippert, City Clerk