

CITY OF SYLVAN LAKE
STUDY SESSION
JANUARY 24, 2006

A Study Session of City Council was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2006, at Sylvan Lutheran Church, 2399 Figa, West Bloomfield, at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Lorenz presiding.

Present: Hungerman, Conkey, Eriksen, Lorenz
Absent: Hunger
Also Present: City Manager Martin and Clerk Clippert

Approve Meeting Limit of 2 hours with one-hour extension by vote

Moved Eriksen, seconded Conkey, approve the meeting limit of 2 hours with a one hour extension by vote.

Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

Police Department Issues

P1-001-06

Chief Silver invited council to share their expectations to help him formulate a plan. He has been looking at the budget, staff, and addressing service issues. His department is working collectively. He explained the change in staff with full time and part time employees, replaced the full time midnight shift with part timers. This is a trial basis. If it doesn't work out he will change it back to a full time position. It has been cost effective and shifts are getting filled. He wants to keep the staff interested in working for the city. He has a good supply of part-time officers. There isn't a conflict with the union contract. He may be able to do this on another shift with a possible early retirement of a full-time officer. He may even like to try having two officers on Friday and Saturday during the busier times.

He conveyed Officer Hentes is now splitting his duties between officer and code enforcement.

Eriksen recalled a comment from the prior Chief stating our officers are at risk when there are not two officers in each car. Chief Silver stated it depends on how the department is run. He agreed it would be safer, but doesn't believe it is necessary. There is no liability to the city in only having one officer. He explained they are backed up from other departments within minutes. The officers work together and help each other out.

He addressed the canine unit, stating it is working out great. Officer Rehme and his dog are certified. There is no cost to the City to have this program. Officer Rehme owns and houses

the dog. His food and veterinarian costs are provided for free. Chief Silver will be handling the authorization to deploy the dog for other units requests.

Lorenz asked the Chief on his take on the gates, parks, tags and ordinance violations. Silver replied, it has always been a task for all the officers to enforce the ordinances. Conkey asked if a code enforcement officer is needed then. Silver explained it is important to have someone who can focus only on this when they are on the road, he can screen calls and go on calls and educate the residents. Hentes has trained himself on the City code, where the other officers only have general knowledge. Hungerman questioned what exactly the other officers do about ordinance enforcement. Silver explained they have come up with a receipt the officer can give to the code enforcer on problems they see. Chief Silver stated he understands the city's wishes on enforcing the ordinances and will motivate his officer to keep to this.

Eriksen addressed dogs in the city. They are being walked without leashes, waste isn't being picked up and they are swimming in the lake. Silver responded, if an officer is in proximity they can enforce this. They have to prioritize, not knowing what to prioritize now. He doesn't believe he has any officer who wouldn't stop them if they see it. Conkey relayed dogs are loose in the park and how dangerous that is. He has seen officers drive by residents letting their dogs run loose and not saying anything. He would like to see the police walk through the park.

Eriksen expressed he has been hearing great stuff on the police and they are doing wonderful things for the city. Chief Silver thanked him and stated they are here at the pleasure of the everyone.

Conkey would like to eliminate the park ranger job. He doesn't believe they really do much. Chief Silver reminded him there is only one officer on duty and they wouldn't be able to handle this also. He would be more inclined to put a part-time officer down there if cost is not an issue. Eriksen suggested parking a car down at the park. He believes the presence of the Park Ranger is important and they offer more than just a medial task. Eriksen did recall having an officer in the park on weekends, years ago. Eriksen stated there should be consequences if the Park Ranger has to call a Police Officer. Silver reminded them the officer may also be on a call and not able to respond right away. Eriksen suggested embellishing the Park Ranger duties.

Dave MacGillis, 1746 Woodland, brought up permits not being posted in the windows and work being completed without a permit on the weekends. Martin informed him, he and the Chief have been discussing things that need immediate action that they are to handle. Silver

added he has learned it is nothing personal, just business. It is how to do the job effectively. They are focusing on different things now.

Lorenz questioned if there is a policy for calling in other departments when there is a certain level of crime. Silver stated there is no policy for processing crime scenes. Every officer is trained on how to enter a crime scene. They have called in the County and State in the past as needed. They haven't had any problems so far.

Conkey shared he knows there are prosecutors who are willing to show officers how to write a warrant. Chief Silver stated, we would gladly take the training if they willing to provide it.

Lorenz wanted to hear the Chief's take on the gates and the ramp. Martin would like to discuss with the Chief, the Park Ranger structure, which would address these items. They will get ideas together and let council know.

Eriksen addressed the hear say issue, of tickets issued are thanks to city council. Silver explained officers had heard they weren't doing their job and took it personally and expressed this when stopping someone. He apologized and asked that they move forward. He wants to service the city in the best way possible.

Council thanked Chief Silver for taking the time to come to the meeting.

Benefit Breakdown

B-001-06

Martin provided a handout on the benefits and explained them. Council felt better knowing retirement benefits didn't cost \$13,000 a month, as stated on the check register description. They would still like to see the breakdown cost for dental, vision, prescription drug etc. They discussed the retirement benefit. Martin reminded them in the last year of police contract their retirement benefit will increase.

Lorenz stated Lou Schimmel is going to be doing a budget analysis. Martin will be providing a copy of this benefit breakdown to him. Also the city is currently having a company looking at all the expenses and determining if the city is getting a good deal or if we should look elsewhere.

Road Right-of-Way Policy

S-001-06

Eriksen asked if anyone can park on the grass in the road right-of-way without getting a ticket. Martin stated as of now they can.

Lorenz would like to change the ROW policy to require green space to the road with no improvements in the right-of-way. If someone wants to put in a parking area, they need to come to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Martin added, if they want to do that they need to come up with some criteria. The problem with using the normal course, because it is the city's property, is that it is not a zoning ordinance and it is not really a variance. They can follow the same guidelines. Lorenz would like to implement the process later and just get the policy down now. Eriksen suggested giving it to Planning Commission.

Martin clarified the only change council wants to make in the policy is parking. He still wants standards such as landscaping left in the policy. Just remove improvements for parking. Council agreed to this.

Martin asked them if they want to discuss what they are going to do with what is there. Eriksen stated they are starting over. Lorenz clarified parking areas, which were put in without a permit should be made to get a permit and have the drainage inspected. They were already notified they are in violation. Eriksen doesn't have a problem with the drainage permit. They should be made to fix it if it affects the drainage. He would like to leave it up to the City Manager's discretion. He doesn't want written violation notices, which could lead to a lawsuit.

Hungerman verified, essentially they are agreeing to grandfather everything out there, unless there is a problem with drainage. Council agreed this is correct.

Community Center

CC-001-06

Eriksen shared a conversation he and Lorenz had. Lorenz has two people willing to be on a committee. They are looking for a third. They will do a cost analysis of remodeling versus new. It will lend credibility to what council decides when they come back with that information. Lorenz provided the two people who have already agreed to do this; Mary Dawson is a cost analysis for General Motors and also Rob Gallos, a commercial builder. Lorenz would like council to think of a qualified third person for the committee. He stressed, Council needs to agree on a direction. This committee will look at three options, new, renovated or how much just to get back in the building with the least cost.

Hungerman questioned the time frame for this committee. Lorenz was thinking it would be a 4-6 week process.

Eriksen suggested using Jim Cassar for the third person. He will talk with him.

Mayor Lorenz recessed the meeting at 9:00 for a break. At 9:04 the meeting resumed.

Moved by Eriksen, seconded Conkey, to continue the meeting for another 15 minutes.

Yes: All

No: None

MOTION CARRIED

Citgo Gas Station

ZP-001-06

Martin informed council of a new plan and new features, which he has discussed with Larry. The square footage would be 3280 for the building.

Eriksen would like a pump taken out and the building at 2500 square feet, unless they want to do a traffic study showing any adverse affects.

Martin will relay councils thoughts to the Yaladoo s.

City Finances/Millage and Ad-Hoc Committee

F-001-06

Council was provided with a budget comparison with 10 neighboring committees. It showed population, taxable values, millage rates, revenues and expenditures.

Lorenz reviewed Lou Schimmel is reviewing everything and is an excellent outside advisor with this kind of knowledge.

Council agreed to put something in the newsletter that we are looking for interested residents for an ad hoc committee. Eriksen would like it to be, come one, come all. He stated part of the process is forming converts. They learn the problem and they are part of the solution and then they will help in passing the information onto the residents. Council all agreed this would be good.

Advertising in the Electronic Newsletter

Martin stated this item could wait until the next study session.

Participation in NOHAZ

CA-001-06

Eriksen suggested getting out of it for a year and then looking at it again next year. Martin will put it on the agenda.

Service Fees

B-002-06

A copy of the current fees was provided. Martin is working on getting comparison from other communities. The difficulty is that everyone has a different way to calculate fees.

Eriksen brought up a permit which was taken out. The builder stated it was going to cost \$300,000 and Martin stated it had to be at least \$500,000. Now it comes out that it is costing \$1.2 million. The city was cheated out of \$3500 in fees. Eriksen asked Martin if there is a way to protect the city against that kind of fraud. Martin replied, the permit is still open. He doesn't have a certificate of occupancy. He has spoken with Bibeau on this. They are going to look at the ordinance which permits are written under and he will do a little background on it.

Martin will be looking to increase all the fees provided here. They will be coming before City Council for their approval.

Discussion of City Manager's Evaluation

A-001-06

Martin provided sample evaluations from other committees. Lorenz suggested they all review them and each council member will fill out an evaluation and the results will be at a public meeting.

Lakeview Consent Agreement

L1-001-06

Martin stated he has spoken with Bibeau on this. They are both on the same page. He told them to look at Bibeau's letter from two years ago; it is still the same, nothing has changed. Eriksen added his understanding is they are bound by that law to follow the ordinance and its amendments.

There is a meeting with the residents, here, Thursday 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission Issues City Sign and Rental Ordinance **ZP-002-06**

Eriksen would like to get the rental ordinance back on the table. He would like to move along with the City sign purchase. Lorenz stated they can put this back on the agenda and in the future when they send something to Planning Commission maybe they should set a benchmark for them to work with. The blight ordinance is more important to Lorenz than the rental. He suggested adding to the blight ordinance that renters have the right to file a complaint with City Hall to have their rental unit inspected. Eriksen wants the rental ordinance for registration, inspection and enforcement. Eriksen stressed, the city needs to know where the owner lives.

Adjournment

Moved by Eriksen, support Hungerman, to adjourn the Study Session Meeting.

Yes: All

No: None

MOTION CARRIED

The study session adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Dennise Clippert, City Clerk