

CITY OF SYLVAN LAKE
STUDY SESSION
MAY 4, 2005

A Study Session of City Council Meeting was held on Wednesday, May 4, 2005, at Sylvan Lake City Hall, 1820 Inverness, at 7:05 p.m. with Mayor Conkey presiding.

Present: Dzenko, Eriksen, Hunger, Conkey, Lorenz

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Martin and Clerk Clippert

Gate Committee Findings - Judy Shaheen

PR-015-05

Shaheen provided a written summary of the Gate Committees meetings. She reported her goal was to come up with a plan for the gates that everyone could live with, knowing that they could not please everyone. They all agreed safety is the major priority. They recommended the speed limit be enforced and a notice be put in the newsletter to remind residents of the speed limit in the parks and that the police are going to be enforcing it.

They also discussed traffic flow around the big beach and would like the gate at Ferndale and Oakwood to be moved closer to the corner, more toward Telegraph. They further suggested a three way stop at Ferndale and Oakwood. Shaheen provided a letter from the Fire Marshall regarding the gates in Sylvan Lake and access for emergency vehicles.

The committee discussed gate times and voted on three proposals: no gates, gates from 12-9 pm and gates from 12-6 pm. All members agreed gate times need to be consistent regardless of weather. The committee was unable to get a consensus on times so Shaheen went with the majority vote of 12-6 pm. She doesn't believe they ever would get a consensus. The no gate voters did compromise to the 12-6 pm time.

Mayor Conkey stated he would like the three-way stop to help slow traffic at the beach.

Hunger informed Shaheen, she did a great job. He had heard many raves regarding the job she did chairing the committee. He questioned why this became such a hot topic. Shaheen felt closing the gates 24-7 started the issue. Residents couldn't drive along the beach in the morning or evening. Also residents weren't getting their garbage picked up and mail delivered.

Eriksen questioned if a public hearing was needed. Shaheen doesn't believe it would be any different from her committee meetings. There still wouldn't be a consensus.

Shaheen added the committee also discussed closing the gates Monday-Thursday 12-6 pm and closing them Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12-9 pm, but again couldn't get a consensus.

Council discussed the speeding and stop signs. Dzenko suggested putting the speed trailer out on Lakeview and Ferndale.

Council all agreed safety is the issue. They asked Shaheen to attend the Council meeting next Wednesday to hear their recommendation.

C1-002-05

Discussion to Decide What Will Be on Future Study Session Agendas

Martin explained, study sessions can be to discuss whatever council wants and they can have presenters who are working on issues the City is looking at as long as it doesn't turn into a long debate or argument.

Mayor Conkey believes the sessions should be to study major issues only.

Hunger feels they save arguing at the City Council meetings.

Lorenz perceives them to be for informing not debating.

Dzenko thinks it is a grey area and they shouldn't come to an argument at the meeting.

Conkey agreed with not debating an issue.

Eriksen stated they are not to decide anything official, just to know what each is thinking, to get a better understanding of the issues before discussing them with the residents.

Council agreed if the Mayor decides it is turning into a debate then he can move forward with the meeting.

Eriksen asked to amend the agenda to add restrooms, signs for City, Fire and Public Safety Millage.

Lorenz would like to add discussion of public comment at the meetings.

Eriksen questioned if the cat ordinance needed to be added. Martin stated he is working with Linda Wasche on it. The ordinance will probably be as simple as keeping your pet under control. It won't be on the agenda this month. Martin conveyed, Wasche informed him she didn't suggest any ordinance, she just wanted something to control cats/pets from wandering.

Conkey stated Planning Commission talked about signs for the City. They discussed cost, design, size and where to locate the signs. Commissioner Wiegand has a friend he is going to talk to.

DDA Update

ZP-005-05

Martin stated McKenna will be doing a cost benefits analysis for the gains and losses in revenue.

Martin spoke with McGee on moving forward with this and other questions council had. The initial step is adoption of a resolution of intent. Council can back out of the process up until it is spread on the tax roll. The 2-mill levy is levied by the DDA, but only with Council approval. Headlee rollback does apply to the two mills which would be spread to commercial and industrial properties. The DDA board is made up of at least 8 members but no more than 12, plus the Mayor. Members must have an interest in the property.

Martin emphasized the big issue is selling this to the County. They have to show they want to make a downtown, including having the city not opting out of the millage, letting them capture our millage. He also stated it is recommended to remove the commercial and industrial district from the city's debt retirement levy, which would mean the residential would have to pick up that cost. It is something the County will look at to see if the city is serious. We also have to prove declining value of property. Even after this is done the County will probably opt out.

Eriksen commented, the further you work to reality the closer we would be to getting them on board. He would like to move forward and adopt the resolution.

Lorenz added, they have already committed \$15,000 to research the DDA and going ahead with the resolution is just the next step to go forward, knowing they can still back out if they find it won't be worth it. He reviewed what the general fund would lose and asked how to get around this. Martin will make a spreadsheet and show figures so council can have a full understanding.

2005/06 Budget

B-002-05

Martin reviewed how the millage reduction is calculated. They discussed additions and losses, State Equalized Value and Taxable Values. Martin and Eriksen have discussed the additions and losses and if it is being calculated correctly. Martin will speak with equalization for verification on how they calculate them.

Martin explained how revenue in the general fund is being covered by the water/sewer infrastructure and road and drain projects. The year after next it won't be there to help the general fund. Also there is a line item for donations for fund raisers, but that washes out in the expenditures.

Martin discussed benefits and the cost of medical benefits for retirees. These costs are watched closely and changes have been made to reduce the cost. He would be in favor of eliminating medical benefits for retirees, for newly hired employees.

Expenditures didn't have much change from last year except in the Police Department. Their budget increased about \$42,000, due to contract agreements.

Lorenz asked Martin what discovery work he has done on the Police Department. Martin has spoken with West Bloomfield and the County for services. West Bloomfield stated they would use four officers and a sergeant. The City would have to pay for a new car every year. They estimate around \$95,000 per man. They would not keep an office here. The County's cost is also high. They proposed three options: having four patrol officers and one command officer at the cost of \$605,000; 4 officers and one sergeant at \$580,000 or four officers and having the extra shift covered by paying overtime.

Lorenz questioned if it is equivalent coverage to what the city currently has. Martin stated they would have a substation here. They would be exclusively here unless they were called to backup somewhere in the County. They would also use Keego Harbor and Orchard Lake as backup, just as the department is currently doing.

Lorenz questioned if there would be a savings in having a volunteer department such as a neighborhood watch group. Martin stated there would still need to be some entity who is responsible for responding.

Martin discussed having a Tri-City Police Department. He would not be in favor of this. Keego Harbor is having financial hardships and Orchard Lake would have no interest in it. It wouldn't be a savings to the city.

Eriksen stated, what needs to be proposed is addressing a millage for public safety or reducing coverage.

Lorenz questioned how to sell a millage to the public. Martin replied, letting them know just what they discussed tonight. Making sure they know how much is needed exactly so they don't have to go back for another increase two years down the road and holding several public hearings to inform the residents. Council would have to propose language by August. It then goes before the Attorney General for approval. Then it would go on the November ballot.

Conkey suggested having Eriksen explain to seniors how their homestead credit helps them.

Martin has been working on increasing revenues. He explained the transfer out at the end of the expenditures in the general fund. The building department is not self funding so it is being subsidized by the general fund. He will be looking at increasing permit fees.

He noted the sewer department is doing better and another reduction in fees could possibly happen.

The Garbage and Rubbish Fund is funded by taxes, not fees. He explained yard waste and recycling is already included with the contract. The leaf collection which the city provides cost \$58,000 this year. Eriksen verified this expense is so residents don't have to bag their leaves. Martin suggested proposing another ballot question which would cover leaf collection at a cost of \$60 per household, on their water bills in increments of \$15 per quarter. It would be a special assessment. In the meantime Martin would like to eliminate the spring collection. Dzenko suggesting waiting until Fall before deciding that.

Dzenko questioned how they determine how much millage is needed. Martin will have to work on making up a new budget for them to look at. Conkey would like to get a true picture of the budget needs. He is against charges to the water and sewer funds for salaries/benefits and administrative fees. Eriksen explained the cost would have to be picked up somewhere which would then be an increase in water/sewer rates. Conkey will work with Martin for the water and sewer budgets. Eriksen suggested making two projected budgets, one including the administrative costs and one without.

Martin will put on the agenda to approve the millage and appropriation resolution.

C1-003-05

Discussion of Public Comment at the City Council Meetings

Lorenz explained he feels not everyone is understanding the agenda items enough to comment on them and they need to be allowed a few brief minutes to ask questions after council has discussed the item. He suggested using West Bloomfield's meeting guidelines.

Conkey suggested having Martin give a brief update on what the topic is about and letting them discuss it and then giving the residents an opportunity to briefly speak on the issue.

Martin provided copies of the current guidelines and West Bloomfield's guidelines.

Eriksen wouldn't mind modifying the current guidelines but would like to study it first.

Conkey added, keeping the public comment under control and asking everyone to not repeat what has already been said.

Hunger would like to keep it as it is and have the Mayor open it when he feels it is really needed, not every issue is needed.

Conkey will announce to the residents, at the public comment portion, if they have any questions on the agenda items then now would be the time to ask them.

Restrooms

PR-016-05

Eriksen voiced his opinion on saving the current building. He feels the expense will be great and the building is just too small. Getting rid of the concrete floor and running sewer and water through the footings is going to cost too much.

Conkey had a guy from Max Trowbridge look at the pump house to see if a two person handicap restroom could be built in its place and he said it could be.

Hunger feels they can come up with something nicer for the work being put in by the group working on it.

Conkey doesn't believe there is enough money to tear it down and build something new.

Eriksen stated the money to build the building is coming from the fundraising, along with the volunteers it won't cost the city much of anything.

Lorenz's concern is somewhere down the road the city is going to bare the maintenance cost. He would like the parks and recreation committee to submit something for them to look at. He would like something as soon as possible.

Hunger stated the volunteers are still working on what they want. They are still disagreeing with themselves. He doesn't want to hurry them. He asked Lorenz to call Patty Harrop to discuss what they are looking at.

Eriksen stated everyone he has spoken to, says the inefficiency of trying to make that building into what we need is ridiculous.

Conkey didn't agree. He would like to see estimate costs for tearing down and building new. Lorenz would still like to see some kind of a plan.

Eriksen is appalled that Conkey had someone look at the building without talking to the committee first. Hunger added the way Conkey is going about it is offending to the people working on it. He suggested talking with them first.

Conkey said it is just exploring the options.

Adjournment

Moved by Lorenz, support Dzenko, to adjourn the Study Session Meeting.

Yes: Hunger, Conkey, Lorenz, Dzenko

No: Eriksen

MOTION CARRIED

The study session adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Dennise Clippert, City Clerk