

CITY OF SYLVAN LAKE
STUDY SESSION
NOVEMBER 29, 2016

A study session of the Sylvan Lake City Council was held on Tuesday, November 29, 2016; opening at 6:03 p.m. Mayor Dzenko presiding. Mayor Dzenko presided over the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Lorenz, Meskin, Zubrzycki (6:06 p.m.), Cassar, Dzenko
Absent: None
Also Present: City Manager Martin and Clerk Dryden

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Cassar, seconded Meskin, to approve the agenda as presented.

Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

Public Comment

Jim Endres shared he is still working on the Pontiac School closure. He provided a copy of the presentation made to the Governor.

At 6:06 Zubrzycki came into the meeting.

Endres thanked Cassar for being on City Council and stated he has always had the utmost respect for him. He has more comments on Cassar which he will save for the regular meeting.

Endres questioned how to get something on the agenda. Martin stated he sets the agenda and it should go through him. It would be for council to decide if they want to discuss or take action. Endres also noted he arranged to have cable record a presentation which John Martin will make regarding the water/sewer rates.

Mayor Dzenko closed the public comment.

Weed Control

L1-007-16

Martin report he has nothing new for council to look at. He suggested setting a dollar amount to pay to the Sylvan-Otter Association. Martin did note there is no other community that does what we do, in collecting money from our residents. The lake is the city's biggest asset and we do want to keep it nice.

Cassar shared Phil Thomas could not be here tonight as he got stuck out of town. Dzenko suggested putting the discussion off until the next study session to have Thomas here.

Jim Smith agrees controlling the weeds in the lake is very important. He is concerned with the prospect of taxing the elderly and feels it should be assigned to the dock holders and park users. Cassar agreed with Smith in assessing a fee for those who use.

Meskin stated the dock holders bring in the biggest amount.

Martin noted if the lake quality declines, paying for with taxes is beneficial to resident so their home values don't go down.

Lorenz added the purpose of the dock and park fees is to help fund the park and lake.

Dzenko stated they need to decide if they want to fund this with park fees or take it out of the general fund. Council will continue this discussion at the next study session.

Water/Sewer Rates and Changing Billing to Monthly

U-007-16

Martin stated he has nothing on rates as they are supposed to discuss this in January. On the billing, if more and more people want to be on a payment plan, they will need to amend the ordinance to regulate payment plans with minimum/maximum requirements. He is not sure if some are doing it just to do, but more are signing up for the payment plan.

Dzenko asked what it would cost to go monthly Martin stated there would be at least printing and mailing cost to go monthly, besides administration time to process the bills.

Meskin suggesting waiting to see what happens after next billing because the bills will be lower with no watering of lawns.

Cassar stated there will be another rate increase coming and residents should know what their budget is.

Lorenz asked how many are on the payment plan already. Martin is not sure how many are on a plan. Lorenz added if residents are already in arrears and have fallen behind, going monthly isn't going to change things. Martin shared currently in our ordinance the bills go out by X date, due on the 20th of that month, shut off notice by a certain date and shut the water off if no payment is received. If the city enters into payment agreement with them then the ordinance isn't good anymore. So a policy or ordinance change needs to be made because of the payment plans.

Zubrzycki stated he has lived in three different cities and they all billed quarterly. He asked if this is the norm. Martin agreed quarterly is the normal way to bill, but with water rates increasing communities are looking at going monthly; Pontiac and Lathrup Village are now billing monthly.

Zubrzycki agrees allowing anyone to setup a payment plan is a burden. It should be a need basis. He feels in six more months residents will be more used to the higher rates and can adjust their budgets accordingly.

Endres stated going monthly would help people get over the shock, but his fear is half the city will go on payment plans if allowed and it will get out of hand.

Meskin stated wait until next billing and see how many are on the payment plan compared to the summer bill. Endres agreed.

Martin noted City Hall is still encouraging residents to install a second meter for irrigation. We will need to watch this with adjusting the rates. Just because we may have collected more money this year in the sewer fund, if we have a lot of residents install a second meter, that amount of money will go down. We have to wait and let that smooth out before we do anything. He is watching this closely.

ROW Policy – parking direction, maintaining gravel spaces and material

S-003-16

Martin reviewed Planning Commission did recommend City Council approve an ordinance restricting vehicles from being parked facing traffic when parked in the ROW. They also recommended amending the policy to “require” property owners to maintain approved gravel parking areas in the ROW. They would like to weigh in on allowing other material in ROW.

Zubrzycki asked what new problems are created with the passage of these changes or what is left unresolved. Martin stated the issue with parking is only going to be education, the gravel being able to maintain it – he is hoping they will start maintaining their area because currently they are not allowed to. Dzenko interjected it is crushed concrete not gravel and it should be stated as such. Martin agreed and that would be in the ordinance. He stated if City Council is willing to move forward with this he will start working with Attorney Schultz on the ordinance.

Zubrzycki asked if there are a lot of people who want to improve the ROW and can't right now. Martin state more would do gravel if allowed, few do brick pavers, and there would be some that would do asphalt. In the policy now if the City has to dig up the ROW we are not going to repair or replace what was there. Zubrzycki asked if the area is paved and there is watermain break the city only puts seed back down. Martin agreed, unless it is a driveway approach then we put back what was there.

Cassar asked the drainage, does policy require drain tile? Martin replied, no, some are required to have a culvert and drain. We look and evaluate each.

Meskin stated the problem is the one car driveway requires the extra parking space.

Martin would still like to discuss parking in ROW period. Only allowing regular parking in approved, improved spaces with exceptions for special events, etc.

Boat Dock Policy

BD-004-16

Martin stated this is the same document he emailed to council a couple weeks ago. The main items changed are not requiring a boat at the dock space and eliminating the required timeframe to have a boat at the dock.

Lakeview is not required to follow these requirements we are discussing here; they only have to pay for the space to maintain it. Martin asked Council to think about these requirements. The application process-emailing and the requirements that go with that verses if they bring in their information. Sharing-you can't share if you don't have a watercraft, because people will try to make money on this.

Zubrzycki stated he is on board with it and agreed to remove time required to have a boat in the water. Zubrzycki asked for permission to leave. At 6:53 p.m. Zubrzycki left the meeting.

Meskin asked if there is any way to change the late fee to \$100 for 1-5 days late and then increase to \$200 for 5-10 days and \$300 10-15 days. Martin reminded him the policy used to be that they lost their space. Lorenz stated he paid it before and he has no sympathy. Meskin also suggested making the ID requirement more clear.

Loan-Sewer from General Fund

F-013-16

Martin reported there is not enough money in the sewer fund to pay the General Fund back for the \$200,000 loan. He stated council can opt to write off or extent the loan. Martin suggested writing it off or a portion of it. The sewer fund may have half the money to pay back. It would be another year to pay back in full.

Dzenko asked if they decided to extend the loan, what are the chances of paying the general fund back? Martin stated he would like to wait until January and see where we are at then.

Meskin doesn't agree with paying back the general fund. He doesn't feel the general fund needs the money.

Martin stated it would be a clean start if they did write it off. Lorenz suggested putting \$11 on each water/sewer bill and it would be paid back within the year.

Endres stated perception is big. Better to pay it off. He disagrees with taking money from the general fund but agrees with Martin it cleans it up.

Adjournment

Moved by Cassar, seconded Meskin to adjourn the study session.

Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Dennise Dryden, City Clerk