



**CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN
COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

March 10, 2020

Mayor Dan Toland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located in City Hall.

City Council Members Present: Todd Bjerstedt, Sean Downing, Christopher Gagne, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page, Hal Watson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; City Attorney Chris Gierhart; Police Chief Gordon Young; Assistant City Administrator Jason Stroud; Operations Director Mike Stifter; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh; Community Development Director Amy Peterson; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; City Clerk Amy White; Communications Manager Mary Zimmermann; Zach Regnier, Civil Engineer; Recreation Manager Cindi Danke; Library Director Tanya Misselt; Management Analyst Dennis Dadashev

Others Present: Patricia LaRue; Melissa Abdouch; Daniel “Shooter” Suffield; Russ Korpela; others

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 25, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes

MSC Watson/Bjerstedt approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Bills \$1,347,318.09

MSC Watson/Downing move to approve bills subject to the comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Melissa Abdouch, 859 Brentwood Circle – she wanted to address concerns the Council may have. She clarified the demographics of the event and said marketing has not changed. It is marketed on Facebook. The bars will still have to ID and abide by the laws. Cups and wristbands have been purchased. Abdouch talked about organizing the event with Daniel Suffield, owner of Shooter’s Pub. They are both contributing money to the event. There is also a fundraising element as patrons are asked to bring food for the food pantry. Abdouch takes the event very seriously and feels the town really enjoys the event.

Daniel Suffield, Shooter’s Pub, Inc. – he wants to run the event the same as it has been done in the past. He is losing money and has contributed his own money. He doesn’t want to see the event lapse. He said the date was moved to Sunday to make it a family friendly event.

Aldersperson Morrissette wanted to talk about the March 9 Plan Commission meeting. He shared his views regarding the request from the Town of Troy as he won’t be at the March 24 Council meeting. Morrissette said the request is asking the City to waive its jurisdiction in the ETZ - the 1 in 35 subdivision ordinance. The Council represents the City and not the Town. He asked the councilors to question what advantage the City would have in waiving this jurisdictional boundary. If the answer is good will, he respectfully disagrees. Morrissette spoke further, talking about the boundary and why it was set where it is. He said the Town of Troy could resolve this by meeting with the City to have a boundary agreement discussion. To waive the City’s

authority, puts the City further from the goal of an agreement. Morrisette said acting under duress of legal action is a terrible way to govern. He thanked the Council for listening.

Assistant City Administrator Jason Stroud provided information about the Coronavirus. Stroud talked about a confirmed case in Pierce County, what the City is doing along with the counties which are taking the lead. Stroud spoke about the importance of getting factual information and where people could find it. He talked about being dedicated to the community.

Park Board and Summer Recreation Presentation

Recreation Manager Cindi Danke and Park and Recreation Advisory Board Chair Patricia LaRue provided a presentation. Danke talked the activity guide, the Glen Park Pavilion, tent camping at Hoffman Park, pickleball courts at Greenwood, swimming lessons, baseball, and camps. LaRue talked about the City's parks and events held there. Alderperson Gagne commented on the Glen Park Pavilion and felt it was a great set up.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Storm Water Permit - 2019 Annual Report and Resolution No. 6451 Authorizing Content of 2019 Annual Report to Discharge Water

Civil Engineer Zach Regnier provided a presentation for the Council. He talked about the history of the permit, its renewal, and the TMDL that was created for Lake St. Croix. Regnier talked about minimum control measures which includes public education and involvement, illicit discharge, construction site pollution control, post construction storm water management, and pollution prevention. Regnier talked about the Lake St. Croix TMDL timeline and the changes that were made. He provided further information. Upon conclusion of the presentation, Regnier stood for questions.

At 7:02 p.m., Mayor Toland recessed into a Public Hearing for comments. There were none. At 7:02 p.m., the Mayor moved into Open Session. MS Morrisette/Page move to approve the resolution. The Mayor asked for questions/comments. Alderperson Watson clarified that TMDL stood for total maximum daily load of phosphorus going into the St. Croix River. With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution Establishing In-Person Absentee Voting Location for the April 7 Spring Election and Presidential Preference and November 3 General Election→→*pulled by Morrisette*

Resolution No. 6452 - Authorizing Participation in a Cooperative Boundary Agreement between the City of River Falls and Town of Clifton

Resolution No. 6453 - Appointing City Representatives for the Cooperative Boundary Committee with the Town of Clifton

MSC Morrisette/Odeen move to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 6454 - Establishing In-Person Absentee Voting Location for the April 7 Spring Election and Presidential Preference and November 3 General Election

Alderperson Morrisette was struggling with having the in-person absentee voting location at the university. He is in favor of having as many people vote as possible, but he felt more people would be captured at a different location – perhaps at one of the grocery stores. He acknowledged that the City does this for the senior citizens because sometimes they are not able bodied. He thought the college students should come to City Hall to vote. He would be opposed to this.

Alderperson Gagne seconded what Alderperson Morrisette said. He asked college students to vote in their own community so they could vote on issues that affect them and their families. Gagne talked about the differences between a local and national election. He wants as many people to vote as possible too.

Aldersperson Odeen disagreed. People can vote where they live. The students who live here; live here. They get to vote because they live here; they don't have to earn it. She is in favor of increasing young people voting – to have students at the university participate. She is in favor of making it easier for them to vote. Odeen noted that it wasn't just for the university students; it would also be helpful for the university staff and nearby residents. She will vote in favor of this.

Aldersperson Downing felt the university offers ample parking and accommodations for everyone. It makes a lot of sense to have voting there.

Gagne seconded what Odeen said. He wants as many people to vote as possible. Gagne also feels there are opportunities for students to vote at home on issues that matter to them.

Morrisette said his opposition is not to exclude college students. He wants to find a place that captures more than just college students. He feels more people would be captured at a grocery store. He thinks having it at the university favors the college students and not the population as a whole.

Aldersperson Watson doesn't agree. He voted it there when it was his polling location, and he never had a problem parking or anything. He doesn't have a problem with it at all.

MS Watson/Page move to approve the resolution. Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked how many elections it applied to. City Clerk Amy White said it addressed the April and November 2020 elections. Morrisette asked the number of in person registrations that happened at the last election at the university. White said at the gubernatorial election, there were 861 election day registrations at the university and 512 at the high school. The university population is split between the two polling locations. **With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. The motion passed 5-2 with all voting in favor except for Morrisette and Gagne.**

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 6455 - Approving Request from the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau for City Assistance with 2020 Events

Chamber Director Russ Korpela provided a presentation for the Council. He talked about his background and the different chambers he has worked for in the past. Korpela thanked the City for its support and participation in the events. Korpela noted that the Chamber would not be participating in a St. Patrick's Day event but talked about the other events planned in 2020. He also talked about "Choose Local" events. Korpela talked about modernizing marketing techniques for the events. He stood for questions.

Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked for clarification on the parade for River Falls Days. Korpela said the parade would remain as is on Friday night. He noted you can't argue with a time-honored tradition.

With no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote. MSC Downing/Watson move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6456 Approving Special Event Application with Ordinance Variance Request for St. Patrick Day Events

MS Page/Gagne move to approve resolution. The Mayor asked for questions/comments. Aldersperson Downing asked to hear from Chief Young regarding why the Police Department wasn't in favor of the event.

Chief Young said this is a family event. He appreciated the efforts of Mimi and Shooter. He has no opposition to the event but wasn't in favor of the open alcohol. There are no bars or restaurants on barricaded street. Young said this is a considerable increase in the space that is being requested compared to the Chamber's previous requests. His decision is also due to the Chamber no longer participating in the event. Because of all these factors, he recommends denying the request.

Aldersperson Morrissette is struggling with the request. He feels Dan is one of the best operators in town. His concern is about other bars which may not be as diligent. He doesn't have the same level of comfort as when the Chamber was monitoring the event. He is probably not going to be in favor of this.

Aldersperson Gagne asked how can we build confidence in having another group facilitate this event without giving them a chance? He wanted to give them an opportunity to prove themselves. He talked about the event bringing people to the City and the tradition of the event. Gagne doesn't think a couple of beers on Main Street will negatively impact us. He is in favor of this.

Aldersperson Page agreed. He talked the event continuing with the new individuals overseeing it. He feels it is a great event – a family event. Page feels it is wrong that the Chamber should be the only one allowed to have open container events. He suggested Council could discuss the boundaries of the event but feels the Council should give them a chance to hold the event.

Aldersperson Odeen is torn. She understands keeping the tradition of St. Patrick's Day but doesn't like open container events out on the street. Odeen doesn't see how it contributes to the type of downtown River Falls that she wants – especially when there's a lot of people here. She doesn't want to set a precedence which one person asks for one event and another person asks for a different event. Odeen would rather the City have no open container events. She spoke further and said she would vote against it.

Gagne reminded Council that they just voted in favor of the Chamber's request. Page added the vote was without discussion. Gagne has historically been against it but feels with certain boundaries, volunteers, monitoring, and the Police Department that they should be given one opportunity. If they are successful, they can come back next year. He thinks it is a great opportunity to bring people downtown.

The Mayor asked for other comments. Dan Suffield asked to speak. Suffield explained the reason for the boundary of his request. He doesn't want to shut down Main Street. Suffield provided further details. They are not trying to expand the area. Gagne asked if the volunteers would be allowed to drink during the event. Suffield said no; he has a no drinking policy. Gagne asked how the volunteers would handle violations. Suffield said if they are unable to correct the situation, they would contact the Police. He said all the licensed bars issue alcohol daily. The Chamber does it twice a year. Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked how the out of towners would know the rules. Suffield said at each location there would be a list of rules. He posts his on the door.

Morrissette asked for a clarification on the boundary. Suffield clarified that he requested Riverwalk Alley from the Maple Street bridge to Lazy River. Suffield talked about possible access points to the alley.

City Administrator Simpson wanted to provide clarification on the area requested for the open container. He and Suffield reviewed the request in detail. Simpson said to the Council that they want to be clear on the open container exemption. Any place that is not included in the request is an enforcement area. Simpson spoke further.

Melissa Abdouch from Mei Mei's Cookies said the request was to mimic the Chamber's previous request. Abdouch spoke further on the area requested for exemption. There was further explanation and discussion between Chief Young, Simpson, and Abdouch. Abdouch said the town was excited about the event and hoped to have the City and Police Department between them.

Page asked a clarifying question about the open container. He felt it was to enable a mode of transportation between the different businesses. Page asked Chief Young if he felt the request area was different than last year. Chief Young said yes, it is wider. He spoke about the difference.

Morrissette asked if a certain area was part of previous requests. Abdouch offered to change the parameters if that would make Council comfortable to approve the request. Page felt Riverwalk was important to this event. Simpson asked if Council felt they understood what they would be approving based upon the motion. They said

yes. Suffield provided more details about the area and why it had changed slightly. Morrissette asked if alcohol could be brought into businesses that don't have a liquor license. Chief Young said yes; they just cannot sell it. Alderperson Bjerstedt concurred with Ms. Odeen and was also struggling with the request. He is willing to let it happen one time. Alderperson Watson agreed.

With no other discussion, the Mayor clarified the vote was for the open container exemption request. The Mayor asked for a roll call vote. The motion passed 4-3 with Page, Watson, Gagne, Bjerstedt voting in favor and Odeen, Morrissette, and Downing voting against.

REPORTS:

Administrator's Report

City Administrator Simpson provided event updates. Page asked about battery recycling at City Hall. Simpson said smaller batteries can be brought to City Hall but would prefer people take their batteries to the recycling event.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor's Appointments

Utility Advisory Board

Reappointment of Mark Spafford through May 2023

Appointment of Robert Lillo through April 2023

MSC Morrissette/Odeen move to approve the Mayor's Appointments. Unanimous.

MSC Bjerstedt/Watson move to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk