



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

April 9, 2019

Council President Scott Morrissette 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: Mayor Dan Toland

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson; Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom; Police Chief Gordon Young; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; EMS Director Jason Stroud; Civil Engineer Zach Regnier; City Engineer Reid Wronski; Communications Manager Mary Zimmermann; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; Community Development Director Buddy Lucero; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Deputy Chief Jon Aubart; Sergeant Scott Bangert; Sergeant Elizabeth Posel; Officer Christopher Kober; Officer James Walker; Senior Civil Engineer Crystal Raleigh; Operations Director Mike Stifter; others

Others Present: Elizabeth Bowden, Chelsea Richter, Joe Conrad, Lauren Evans, others

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 26, 2019, Meeting Minutes

MSC Watson/Odeen approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

\$1,933,214.13

MSC Gagne/Downing to approve bills subject to the comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Elizabeth Bowden, 317 Clark Street – talked about a tourism meeting she had attended, City meeting notices, an upcoming meeting on commuter rail, and her concerns regarding a housing project off Clark Street near City Hall.

Chelsea Richter, 220 W, Cedar Street – spoke at length about her concerns regarding the housing project off Clark Street. She wanted to see a different use for the site and the public comment period extended for the project.

Joe Conrad, 420 Spring Street – came to speak about the proposed Depot/City Station. He wanted the Council to reconsider the project. He questioned if the project was in the correct location.

Lauren Evans, 317 Clark Street – came to River Falls as student attending the university. She hadn't planned on speaking but hoped the people who spoke about the project would be heard.

Aldersperson Downing wished Mayor Toland and former Councilor Jeff Bjork a healthy recovery. He encouraged attendance at an upcoming meeting on passenger trains.

Recognition of Buddy Lucero

Council President Scott Morrissette recognized and thanked Community Development Director Buddy Lucero for his 20 years of service to the City. Lucero said he came to the City looking for a job and house but found a home. He thanked the Council, staff, and community for the opportunity.

Police Officer of the Year

Police Chief Young recognized Christopher Kober, an eight-year veteran, as the 2018 Officer of the Year, an award voted on by peers. Young talked about Kober and his many qualifications saying he is a leader who quickly answers calls, goes above and beyond expectations, and is willing to assist. Kober embodies the department's mission to protect with courage and serve with compassion. Young talked about Kober's volunteerism outside of work. Kober was presented the award and received a standing ovation.

Report on Emergency Government

Sergeant Scott Bangert provided a presentation on emergency government. He talked about emergency weather awareness week including the siren schedule, when sirens are activated, the types of hazards, tornado information, shelters available in the City, emergency preparedness and supplies, and weather resources.

Council President Morrissette reminded people to pay attention to activated sirens. He thanked Bangert for the presentation.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Resolution No. 6361 to Vacate Right of Way within the City of River Falls (Depot/City Station)

At 7:07 p.m. Council President Morrissette recessed into a Public Hearing. He asked for comments.

Joe Conrad, 420 Spring Street – he didn't have anything new to add; he just wanted to reiterate his previous comments.

Lauren Evans, 317 Clark Street - talked about the importance of affordable housing and asked if the vacation of the apartment building was related to the building project or the flood plain. Morrissette said it was due to the building project. Evans said affordable housing is important to university students. Morrissette asked Evans to stick to the topic of the rezoning. Evans asked the Council to consider zoning in a more productive manner that meets the needs for the citizens.

With no other comments, Council President Morrissette moved back into Open Session at 7:09 p.m. MS Gagne/Page move to approve resolution. Morrissette asked for Council discussion.

Aldersperson Gagne wanted to provide a history of the property. He talked about the property being deemed for potential office space. He talked about the City's transparency and information being posted to the website for the public to view.

Aldersperson Watson was grateful to the public speakers. The comments have been heard; he may disagree, but they have had an impact. Watson spoke about the process and transparency. He talked about attending a Plan Commission workshop and learning about planned urban development which has a compressed time process. He felt the timeline process needs to be broadened allowing for more public

input. Watson shared his thoughts in decision-making saying residents will continue to have access to the river. He would not support any development along the river which wouldn't allow the public to have access. Watson said this project would fund part of the Kinni Corridor Plan up to \$1 million. Area to the south will be freed along the river. He talked about balancing bringing in funds for projects that will benefit the urban river interface. He felt it was a reasonable compromise. Watson encouraged residents to follow the Plan Commission and to offer to serve on City committees.

Aldersperson Downing thanked speakers for their comments. He talked about the importance of affordable housing. He agreed with Watson's comments. He asked about transportation to that area. Council President Morrissette asked Downing to keep questions to the topic of zoning.

City Administrator Simpson said the resolution was about the vacating of right of way. He said it was up to the Chair's discretion on how far discussion could wander.

With no other comments, Morrissette asked for a vote on the motion. The motion passed with all voting in favor.

Ordinance 2019-06 to Amend the Official Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of River Falls (Depot and City Station Development Areas – Second Reading and Disposition

At 7:20 p.m. Council President Morrissette recessed into a Public Hearing. He asked for new comments.

City Administrator Simpson suggested that the public be allowed to reaffirm previous comments. Morrissette agreed.

Joe Conrad, Chelsea Richter, Elizabeth Bowden and Lauren Evan all came to the podium to reaffirm their previous comments.

Jennifer King, 308 N. Fremont Street – she was opposed to rezoning the property.

With no other comments, Council President Morrissette moved back into Open Session at 7:24 p.m. MS Gagne/Page move to approve ordinance. Morrissette asked for discussion.

Gagne thought it was a great use of space. He noted it was slated for commercial use for some time. He appreciated the public comments. Gagne talked about the housing study which shows there are housing needs – some of which is income-based.

With no other comments, Morrissette asked for a vote. All voted in favor of the motion. It passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution No. 6362 - Approving the 2019 Wisconsin DNR Urban Nonpoint Source and Storm Water Program Planning Grant Application → → *pulled by Downing*

Downing asked if any other grants were pursued and what happens if the City doesn't receive the grant. Senior Civil Engineer Crystal Raleigh said no other grants were pursued. Right now, this is a planning study. This is a bad outfall with a lot of erosion. The City could fix the outfall within the current budget but receiving this grant would allow the City to study the area and decide if there are other better design options. If the City doesn't receive the grant, staff can look at other grants or funding sources.

Morrisette had a similar question. This project would have to be added to the CIP budget as it is not currently in it. Assistant City Administrator Bergstrom said it could come out of the existing maintenance funds if it is a small enough amount. Raleigh provided further clarification about the project and funding. She also noted that the City could apply for a construction grant from the DNR.

MSC Downing/Page move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 6363 - Regarding Extension of Highview Meadows Addition Preliminary Plat

Alderperson Downing asked if residents could ask for quicker internet speeds during the five-year extension and how does that apply to other City residents.

Morrisette said this was only a plat – there are no residents or services there. Downing asked about timing. Morrisette said the utilities come in with the preliminary plat. It is a bit premature for an answer to the question.

Utility Director Westhuis talked about joint trenching with the telecoms. He thought the “latest and greatest” would be offered to residents when that happens. Morrisette asked to get back on topic and asked for a motion.

MSC Odeen/Downing move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6364 - Regarding Police Building Design and Construction Management

MSC Gagne/Odeen move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

REPORTS:

Administrator’s Report

Bergstrom reminded the Council of a retreat and organizational meeting. Gagne asked about taking the oath of office. Bergstrom said the oaths were set for April 16 at noon. Staff would let Councilors know if there is a change.

Morrisette asked Westhuis to talk about the upcoming electronics recycling event. Westhuis provided information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor’s Appointments

MSC Watson/Odeen for reappointment of Patrick Richter and Kevin Swanson to the Utility Advisory Board through April 2022. Unanimous.

MSC Bjerstedt/Downing move to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk