



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

**October 8, 2019**

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 Dan Gustafson; Police Chief Gordon Young; Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; City Clerk Amy White; EMS Director Jason Stroud; Finance Director Sarah Karlsson; Operations Director Mike Stifter; Development Services Director Amy Peterson; City Forester Nate Croes; Communications Manager Mary Zimmermann; City Engineer Crystal Raleigh

**Others Present:** Nalene Sanford, Brian Young, others

**The Pledge of Allegiance was said.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

September 24, 2019, Regular Meeting Minutes

**MSC Morrissette/Odeen approve minutes. Unanimous.**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

Bills \$2,002,336.45

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

There were no public comments.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Ordinance 2019-11 – an Ordinance to Rezone and Amend Future Land Use Map for 1300 S. Main Street – Second Reading and Disposition

**At 6:31 p.m., the Mayor recessed into a Public Hearing and asked for public comment. As there were no public comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 6:32 p.m. and moved into Open Session. MS Morrissette/Downing move to approve ordinance. The Mayor asked for Council comments.**

Aldersperson Gagne lives in this district. He hasn't heard anything significant against the rezoning. He talked about the building plans saying it wouldn't be much different than what was done in the past in regard to height. Gagne is in favor of the rezoning. He asked the Plan Commission to look at the three adjacent properties (95 E. Johnson over to the corner house) regarding future land use.

Aldersperson Downing talked about focusing on high density land use.

Aldersperson Watson would like to see the Council spend time on the Comprehensive Plan. When we do rezone, we need to look at broader picture as the properties are a part of matrix of other land uses in and around them. He doesn't feel it is appropriate to make decisions one property at a time. He feels the process for this is a revision of the Comprehensive Plan. He hopes that when the planning staff is up to capacity, we will be able to

take this on. Watson believes this change is generally in line with the existing land use so he will be supporting it. **The no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote on the motion. All voted in favor.**

Ordinance 2019-12 – an Ordinance to Rezone and Amend the Future Land Use Map for 805 E. Division Street (Bakken Young) – Second Reading and Disposition

**At 6:35 p.m., the Mayor recessed into a Public Hearing and asked for public comment.**

Nalene Sanford, 524 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street – expressed concerns about the addition and rezoning. She felt that the addition could be done in a different way and made suggestions. Sanford was concerned about rezoning and didn't want to see any other businesses added in that area.

**As there were no public comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 6:37 p.m. and moved into Open Session. MS Odeen/Page move to approve ordinance. The Mayor asked for Council comments.**

Aldersperson Morrissette noted that he had a conflict of interest and would not be taking part in discussion and would abstain from the vote.

Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked how the decision was made to add onto the west side as mentioned by Sanford and also the difference between having a special use permit versus rezoning.

Brian Young, from Bakken Young Funeral and Cremation Services, said the expansion project will allow them to adequately serve families from River Falls. The building is being expanded in all directions except for the east due to the parking lot. Young explained the duplex is a separate parcel and is not part of the rezoning. Young talked about the need for ease of access, inadequate bathrooms, and a need for an elevator. The building would be updated and made more efficient. This is a substantial investment and they will be there for some time. Young provided some history and fielded questions about parking from Council.

Watson asked Development Services Director Peterson to explain the rationale from going from a special use permit to rezoning. Peterson provided some background. When the site plan was received, it was clear they weren't going to be able to meet the residential zoning setbacks. Peterson explained it a high use area and this classification was the best fit. Uses for this zoning are primarily office use.

Downing asked about future traffic and the number of cars parked on the street. Peterson said from what the owner has said, parking would not change. From the parking code standpoint, they are covered. Downing asked if it was more about the setback to accommodate the business. Peterson said yes.

**As there were no other comments, the Mayor asked for a vote on the motion. All councilors with the exception of Aldersperson Morrissette, who abstained, voted unanimously in favor of the ordinance.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Resolution Regarding Extension of Tax Increment District #5→→*pulled by Downing*

Resolution No. 6402 Regarding Purchase of 716 North Main Street, River Falls

Resolution No.6403 Regarding Purchase of 1347 East Division Street, River Falls

Resolution No.6404 Regarding Purchase of 1369 East Division Street, River Falls

Resolution No. 6405 Approving Prudent Man Advisors (PMA) as Investment Agent for the City of River Falls

Resolution No.6406 Adopting the Pierce County All Hazards Mitigation Plan for the City of River Falls

Resolution No. 6407 Adopting the St. Croix County All Hazards Mitigation Plan for the City of River Falls

Joint Resolution Between the City of River Falls and the River Falls Board of Education to Advocate

Prohibition of the Sale and Use of Vaping Materials to Persons Under 21→→*pulled by Gagne*

**MSC Odeen/Morrissette move to approve remainder of the Consent Agenda. Unanimous.**

Resolution No. 6408 Regarding Extension of Tax Increment District #5

Downing asked City Administrator Simpson if he could provide history on how Act 145 hurt the TID district.

Finance Director Karlsson provided an answer. She said the Act didn't cause the TID to underperform. The Act is referenced in the memo is because in order to extend the life of a TID, a qualified event must have occurred. Under this act, we were able to show there was a qualifying event - meaning the City has been impacted – and it is about allocating funds to a technical college. It was a qualifying event during the time the TID was in place. Simpson provided further clarifying details. He explained if the TID wasn't extended funds advanced from the general fund would not be recovered. **MSC Downing/Morrisette move to approve resolution. Unanimous.**

Joint Resolution No. 6409 Between the City of River Falls and the River Falls Board of Education to Advocate Prohibition of the Sale and Use of Vaping Materials to Persons Under 21

Gagne feels age 21 is sufficient to purchase vaping materials. He talked about other materials being put into vaping materials. He supports the resolution and appreciates the School Board approaching the City about this. Gagne feels that the City could do a ban and raise to the age of 21. He talked further and then move for approval. **MSC Gagne/Bjerstedt move to approve resolution. Unanimous.**

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

Ordinance 2019-13 – an Ordinance Repealing and Replacing Municipal Code § 8.12 – Dutch Elm Disease – First Reading

The Mayor asked City Forester Nate Croes to provide his presentation. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has been discovered in to the City. There are approximately 8,000 public trees; of which, 50 trees are removed annually. Tree removal costs the City \$285 per tree. City staff does stump grinding and pruning.

Croes talked about EAB. Discovered in 2002, it was discovered in Detroit and has moved into 35 states. EAB was confirmed in the City in July 2019. We have about 2,000 Ash trees. Croes talked about three options for trees infected with EAB: 1) reactive removal; 2) preemptive removal; and 3) treatment (insecticide injection). Treatment is expensive and only prolongs tree life for a couple of years. He talked about wood waste and hauling and replacing trees. Croes talked about updating the ordinance. He talked about the City's gravel tree bed and its success. He stood for questions.

Downing asked about the definition of tree ownership. Croes said it is where the tree originates.

Bjerstedt asked about the bare root trees. Croes said the trees are 8-14'. He also talked about the tree power program.

Aldersperson Odeen said Croes was a great resource for the City. She asked if the public can contact him. Croes said yes, it happens all the time.

Gagne asked about regulations regarding firewood. Croes said there are no current regulations. He referred to the new ordinance which says a person who has Ash wood or public nuisance trees, can't move it across the City. Downing asked about a timeline for infestation. Croes said 4-5 years. Gagne asked about the cost of treating the tree versus removal. Croes said it is cheaper to remove the tree.

Watson despite the doom and gloom, the City can recover from this. Having a strong forestry program is a great asset. He asked about the ordinance and why we are limiting the homeowner's ability to trim street trees. Croes talked about the trim cycle and homeowners killing trees by over trimming. Watson asked about alley trees. Croes said that the crew does maintenance on alley trees.

**REPORTS:**

Administrator's Report

Simpson provided updates.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk