

CITY OF MUSCATINE
IN-DEPTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – February 13, 2014

Mayor DeWayne Hopkins called the In-Depth City Council meeting for Thursday, February 13, 2014, to order at 7 p.m. Councilmembers present were Rehwaldt, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, Phillips, and Spread. Also present were City Administrator Gregg Mandsager, Community Development Director Steve Boka, Planning and Community Development Coordinator Adam Tompkins, and City Planner Andrew Fangman.

The first item on the agenda was a presentation by the Muscatine School District concerning the temporary closure of E. 9th Street. Jeff Miller and Don Krings were present representing the school district. Mr. Miller explained the reason for the request. He stated there were two options considered with the first allowing for one-way traffic and the second closing E. 9th Street between Mulberry Avenue and Cedar Street. He stated with this option busses will pick up and drop off students on Cedar Street and parents will pick up students on Mulberry Avenue. He stated the closure will begin about the middle of April with the expected re-opening to be June 1, 2015.

There was discussion concerning access to the homes that will be affected by the closing. A long-term solution for picking up and dropping off students is still being discussed.

Councilmember Spread asked if the alley would remain opened, and he was told there was no construction through the alley.

Mayor Hopkins stated he was concerned about the busses on Cedar Street. He was told that once the new school is completed and the old school demolished, a bus lane will be added to the north side of the building to line up with 10th Street.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked why a bus lane could not be installed now. He was told there was not enough room.

Mr. Miller stated there was no simple solution to the problems that will rise during the construction of the new school.

The next item on the agenda was a community garden presentation. Planning and Community Development Coordinator Adam Thompson gave a power point presentation on the Community Garden being proposed for Taylor Park. He stated the concept stems from Leadership Muscatine and is a Blue Zones initiative. He stated a public meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2014, at Franklin Elementary School. Mulford Church has been involved in this project and is very supportive. Their community garden has been very successful.

Councilmember Natvig asked if volunteers would be overseeing the garden, and Mr. Tompkins answered yes.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked if the Taylor Park location allowed easy access to water, and he was told it did.

Mayor Hopkins stated he would like to see the community gardens grow into other locations as well.

Sarah Lande, 515 W. 2nd Street, stated that other locations are also being considered. She stated the community gardens were inspired by the Blue Zones Project. She stated she feels it will be good for the community.

The final item on the agenda was a Capital Improvements Program update. City Planner Andrew Fangman provided an update on what has taken place to date. He stated tonight he is interested in finding out what changes City Council would like seen made and to answer questions they might have concerning the program.

Councilmember Natvig stated he appreciated having the CIP broken down into categories. He stated there are still some details and numbers that need to be updated.

Mr. Fangman stated the goal is to have annual updates to the CIP.

Councilmember Phillips asked about adding the Eagle Ridge sewer project.

Councilmember Bynum asked for everyone's thoughts on the cemetery stairs

City Administrator Gregg Mandsager stated staff has concerns about vandalism and insurance costs and that the stairs are not a priority project at this time.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked about the use of outside funding/endowments for the stairs if it is owned by an outside entity.

Councilmember Spread stated the stairs are nice but not a high priority item.

Councilmembers Spread, Natvig, Phillips, Fitzgerald, and Rehwaldt agreed that the stairs were not a high priority. Councilmembers Bynum was in support of refurbishing the stairs. Councilmember Shihadeh stated he was in agreement with Councilmember Bynum if an outside party took full ownership/liability for the stairs.

Councilmember Fitzgerald stated that one of the reasons the stairs were closed was due to criminal activity.

Councilmember Shihadeh, speaking in reference to the CIP, stated it can be updated on a yearly basis.

Councilmember Spread spoke concerning the East Hill Station and public safety needs.

The CIP will be brought back for discussion at the March In-Depth meeting.

Under comments, Councilmember Bynum wished his wife a Happy Valentine's Day.

Mayor Hopkins also wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

#22772. Councilmember Shihadeh moved the meeting be adjourned at 7:08 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Fitzgerald. All ayes; motion carried.

Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator