

CITY OF MUSCATINE
IN-DEPTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – April 12, 2018

Mayor Broderson called the City Council meeting for Thursday, April 12, 2018, to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Spread, Harvey, Brockert, Saucedo, Brackett, Fitzgerald and Malcolm.

The first item on the agenda was a presentation by City Engineer Jim Edgmond regarding the courtesy sidewalks in the West Hill Sewer Separation Project. Mr. Edgmond stated that in the past if courtesy sidewalks were removed they were replaced but he has come across a policy adopted in May of 2015 stating that the courtesy sidewalks would not be replaced if removed. He stated the reason for the policy was the courtesy sidewalks encourage pedestrians to cross in the middle of the street rather than at the corners, and there were no ramps, making it a tripping hazard.

Mr. Edgmond stated if sidewalks are reinstalled the homeowners would be responsible for keeping them clear of snow and maintaining the upkeep on them.

There was discussion among council members and a consensus from council to put them back in unless the homeowner signed a paper stating they did not want it and they understood that they will not have the option to have one put back in at a later date.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation on Muscatine flood preparation.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman gave a general overview of what the City of Muscatine's plan for flooding is and described each step regarding the flood level. Mr. Stineman stated that he used the National Weather Service website to obtain information regarding flooding by using stream hydrographs that can help project water levels for the following week by watching the levels upstream from Muscatine.

Mr. Stineman stated that because of the change in elevation, when the construction on Mississippi Drive is done the flood levels will be reevaluated and will be posted on the City of Muscatine website.

The final presentation on the agenda was a review of the Building Division Services.

Steve Boka, former Community Development Director, stated how the building codes were created. He stated that in the late 1800-early 1900 all building codes were developed locally. In 1927 the uniform building codes were adopted by combining from three major locations. In 1994 the effort began to consolidate all building codes Nationally by the International Code Council. In 2000 the first international code was published and was the code adopted by the City of Muscatine. This code is used Nationwide as well as in other countries. He stated that these codes are constantly changing because of technology and experience.

Mr. Boka stated having international codes makes it very useful for builders that want to relocate. The only thing they would need to research would be any additional local codes.

Mr. Boka then spoke about building inspections and stated that building inspections are a service. If you don't use the service you don't pay for it. He stated people need to be educated in the procedures of building codes and construction.

Mr. Boka stated that in order to perform a building inspection you are required by law to be a certified inspector. He states that the City of Muscatine is very fortunate to have 80 years' experience between its inspectors.

Mr. Boka also stated that Muscatine received a Certificate of Achievement for having a 100% certified department. He stated Muscatine was the first city in the nation to receive this award for cities under 50,000 residents.

At this time Inspector Mike Stensland came forward to speak about the permit process.

Mr Stensland states that Muscatine's permit process is very standard. It is done to assure the public of safety in the buildings and benefits the insurance.

Mr. Stensland states that the building dept first gets a plan review for a new building, an addition to a building or for the change of use of a building. He states the first thing to happen is to make sure all codes are current and up to date. He states that often at a plan review he can help save the company money by finding things in the plan that need to be corrected before they are built.

Mr Stensland states that after the plan review is approved a permit will be issued. The construction can begin and the inspections will start with the site inspection, electrical plumbing, masonry and radon. When the construction is finished there will be one final inspection.

Community Development Director Dave Gobin came forward to state that Muscatine has a lower than average permit fee. He states that the construction permit is only 1% of the value of the building and that these fees have not changed in 13 years.

Mayor Broderson asked to review the slide showing that there was a large increase in inspections but not permits in 2017.

Mr. Gobin stated that each permit requires multiple inspections and the reason for the large increase was because of the tornado damage done to many homes as well as the building of the new hotel.

Under Comments Councilmember Harvey asked what can be done to change the courtesy sidewalk policy.

City Administrator Gregg Mandsager stated it can be brought back for council's review however because of the consensus of the council at this time we will continue to replace them.

Councilmember Brockert stated that on Saturday she would be picking up trash in the ditch on Grandview Ave and encouraged others to come help. She stated anyone that helps should wear long pants and gloves.

Councilmember Saucedo asked Mr Boka if in his 37 years in Community Development if they had ever conducted a survey to determine if the City could provide better service. Mr. Boka stated there was not a formal survey but the citizens were always encouraged to attend public meetings to give their input.

Councilmember Saucedo reminded the public of the keep Muscatine Beautiful with the Spring Clean up scheduled the end of April.

Councilmember Brackett stated that he was looking for pictures of the prior Soap Box Derby's to use to promote the upcoming derby in July.

City Administrator Gregg Mandsager stated he wanted to congratulate the Merrill Hotel on their grand opening.

Mayor Broderson reminded the public of “Coffee with the Mayor” at 9:00a.m April 28th at Happy Joe’s Pizza.

Mayor Broderson stated the first showing of “Our City” is scheduled for Tuesday April 17th with the topic of Spring Cleanup in Muscatine.

Mayor Broderson stated that on April 25 from 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. there would be a youth job fair at the high school commons.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator