

Proceedings of the Ironwood City Commission

A Regular Meeting of the Ironwood City Commission was held on March 12, 2007 beginning at 5:30 P.M., along with a Public Hearing at 5:20 P.M. in the Commission Chambers, Second Floor of the Municipal Memorial Building in the City of Ironwood.

1. Mayor Noren opened the Public Hearing at 5:20 P.M.
2. Public Hearing: To hear comment on Ordinance No. 460, Book 4 an Ordinance providing for the Amendment to the “Code of Ordinances, City of Ironwood, Michigan” Chapter 17 Entitled (Nuisances).

Mayor Noren opened the floor to City Commissioners comments. No comments were received. The floor was opened to citizen comments. Scott Sturzl, 511 Bundy Street, stated that the Ordinance in general is good, but questioned the penalties should a person violate any provision of the article. He asked if blight constitutes a felony. Mr. Sturzl believes the City needs a plan of attack by starting with the worse problems first.

Jim Albert, 135 W. Aurora Street, asked why the police can’t take over duties of enforcement on blight instead of hiring a new person.

City Manager Scott Erickson stated that the City is taking a pro-active approach to blight and will be reviewing blight systematically throughout the town. The ultimate goal is to not write tickets, but to have the violators clean up the blight. He believes a person needs to be hired whose time will be dedicated almost entirely to the blight issue.

Commissioner Koivisto believes Mr. Albert’s comment has some merit. The police department handled blight for years. The City doesn’t need a trained person to see blight.

3. Mayor Noren closed the Public Hearing at 5:28 P.M.

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A. Mayor Noren called the Regular Meeting to Order at 5:30 P. M.

B. Recording of the Roll:

PRESENT: Commissioner Adams, Kasieta, Koivisto, Toth and Mayor Noren.  
ABSENT: None.

C. Approval of the Consent Agenda\*

- \*1) Approval of Minutes – February 26th Regular City Commission Meeting.
- \*2) Review and Place on File:  
Downtown Ironwood Development Authority Meeting Minutes of Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- \*3) Approve sale of:
  1. Knights of Columbus “Tootsie Rolls” – March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>.
  2. American Legion Auxiliary “Poppy Days” – May 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>.
  3. American Legion Post #5 “Miniature Flags” – June 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>.
  4. AMVETS “White Clovers” – April 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>.
- \*4) Approve letter of support for the Gogebic-Iron County Airport when reviewing the contract proposal of Essential Air Service.
- \*5) Approve the close of the required 30-day public review period for the 2007-2011 Parks and Recreation Plan.
- \*6) Proclaim week of March 26<sup>th</sup> as Tootsie Roll Week for the Knights of Columbus on their annual drive to help the Mentally Handicapped.

**Motion** by Koivisto, seconded by Toth to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

D. Approval of the Agenda.

*Motion by Kasieta, seconded by Adams and carried to approve the Agenda as presented.*

E. Citizens wishing to address the Commission on Items on the Agenda. (Three Minute Limit).

Steve Frank and Corey Richards reserved the right to speak under Item H.

NEW BUSINESS

F. Discuss and Consider authorizing engineering services agreement with the Consulting Engineering firm of Short, Elliott, Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) in the amount of \$23,014.00 for Water System Upgrades.

City Manager Erickson indicated that the Commission authorized Request for Proposals (RFP) for the water system upgrades. Comprehensive proposals were received from five firms. The criteria for choosing a firm were qualifications and cost. Based on the criteria, staff is recommending the contract be awarded to Short, Elliott, Hendrickson, Inc. They are based out of Rice Lake with a main office in the Twin Cities. When asked if the work is scheduled to be done this year, City Manager Erickson noted that the majority of the items in the contract would be completed this year, however, there are some items that may be long term. Discussion revolved around bringing the chlorination room up to code and the pros and cons of the use of liquid chlorine.

*Motion was made by Kasieta, seconded by Adams to adopt a Resolution awarding the Water System Upgrades in the amount of \$23,014 to the Consulting Engineering Firm of Short, Elliott, Hendrickson, Inc. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.*

G. Discuss and Consider approval of the 2007-2011 Parks and Recreation Plan.

Community Development Director Pat Merrill noted that the Public Hearing was held and the Plan was available for public review for the required 30 days. He received only one comment, which involved the walking trails at Norrie Park. Commissioner Koivisto questioned whether the City would be held to the dollar figures quoted in the Plan. Merrill indicated that no money is committed at this time. Projects have to be listed in an approved Plan in order for the City or other entities to apply for State funding. When asked if the Plan can be amended from 2007-2011, Merrill indicated yes.

*Motion was made by Koivisto, seconded by Adams and carried to approve the 2007-2011 Parks and Recreation Plan.*

H. Discuss and Consider renewal of Pat O'Donnell Civic Center lease.

Citizen Steve Frank and Corey Richards both spoke in favor of renewing the lease.

City Manager Scott Erickson noted that the lease is between the City of Ironwood and Gogebic Community College. The 25-year lease is coming due and there is an option for renewal five more times for 10-year periods.

Commissioner Koivisto was concerned whether the City could break the lease if it can't physically support the operation of the Civic Center. He doesn't want to bind taxpayers with something they can't afford in the future. City Attorney Cossi stated that there is nothing in the lease saying the City has to support the facility. Commissioner Adams has no doubt that everyone believes the Civic Center is a worthwhile facility for area youth and adults, but questioned whether the public will vote for millage to support it. He suggested a Steering Committee be formed to come up with creative ways to keep it solvent. Commissioner Kasieta stated that the Civic Center Board is already moving in that direction.

*Motion was made by Kasieta, seconded by Toth to approve the renewal of the Pat O'Donnell Civic Center lease for a new term of ten years. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.*

I. Mayor's Appointment.

Mayor Noren indicated he has received an application from Mark Fitting for the vacancy on the Ironwood Planning Commission. He is recommending appointment of Fitting on the Planning Commission.

*Motion was made by Toth, seconded by Kasieta and carried to approve Mayor's appointment of Mark Fitting to the Ironwood Planning Commission for a three-year term.*

J. Manager's Report.

City Manager Scott Erickson noted the following:

- Spring load limits begin March 13th;
- Reminded the Commission of a joint workshop with the Library Board on Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 P.M., Memorial Building, regarding upgrades to the Library;
- Requested Public Safety Director Bob Erspamer give an update on the down telephone line in the vicinity of the Memorial Building. Erspamer noted that he has been in contact with AT&T, 50-60 people reportedly affected, but could be as high as 300. It is hopeful that the phone service will be up and running by 8:00 A.M. on Tuesday. Josephson's Nursing Home and the High School will be their first concern. Erspamer indicated extra patrols would be out in that area for safety concerns.
- Requested Pat Merrill give an update on the Façade Grant. Merrill noted that meetings have been scheduled with the businesses in Phase I to review their specifications. Businesses in Phase II have until the 14<sup>th</sup> to submit their letter of interest and contractor estimates. He clarified that prevailing wage rates for Gogebic County need to be applied to the projects.

K. Commissioner Comment.

Commissioner Adams asked Public Safety Director Erspamer on how the 911 calls were being handled with the down telephone line. Erspamer noted he has instructed his officers to patrol the affected area and also asked that neighbors check on elderly people in that area.

Commissioner Kasieta commented on the following:

- Questioned why business licenses are not required for people who have rental units. It was his understanding that a business is anything that brings in revenue.
- Questioned the weight of garbage trucks on side roads and suggested residents bring their garbage to the corner to help save further deterioration of the road. (Bob Tervonen noted that Waste Management would fill the trucks only half full to help preserve the roads).
- Asked whether the City has a Magistrate and who receives the fine monies. City Attorney Cossi noted that there is a Magistrate located in the Memorial Building and she is paid by the State of Michigan. It is Cossi's understanding that the majority of the fine money goes toward a retirement fund for judges. A small portion goes to the Library. Kasieta asked if the money could stay in the City. Cossi noted that the City is presently looking into this issue as a civil infraction and if adopted, the money would stay here.

Commissioner Koivisto thanked the Blight Committee for their work on the Nuisance Ordinance. He asked if the Public Safety Officers call the City while on patrol when they have to swerve to miss a pothole or see some other concern. If they do so, the Working Foreman can direct his crew to those sites the following morning. He asked what the increase was in the millage rate proposal. There was a 1/10<sup>th</sup> increase (6.83 vs. 6.72).

Commissioner Toth had no comments.

Mayor Noren reminded the public that the items listed under the Consent Agenda are very worth while causes and hoped the people will go out and support these causes.

- L. Citizens wishing to address the Commission on Items not on the Agenda.  
(Five Minute Limit).

Steve Frank commented on Commissioner Adam's statement regarding the Civic Center. He manages a pool hall for kids and that is one of many things for kids to do, not just activities at the Civic Center. He also questioned why fire pits would not be allowed in the City of Ironwood when the new Zoning Ordinance is adopted. Pat Merrill stated that the Planning Commission knew that the use of fire pits would be a controversial item. The Zoning Ordinance is in draft form only and not as yet out for the required 45-day public comment period as erroneously stated in the *Daily Globe*. However, Merrill welcomed Mr. Frank's comments. City Manager Erickson indicated that there will be public information meetings on the Zoning Ordinance prior to adoption.

- M. Consider Closed Session to discuss upcoming contract negotiations with the Ironwood Professional Police Association (IPPA).

*Motion* was made by Koivisto, seconded by Kasieta to enter into closed session at 6:15 P.M. to discuss IPPA contract negotiations. Unanimously passed by roll call vote.

- N. Return to Open Session.

*Motion* was made by Koivisto, seconded by Kasieta and carried to return to open session at 7:30 P.M.

- O. Adjournment.

*Motion* was made by Kasieta, seconded by Koivisto and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 P.M.

Bruce A. Noren, Mayor

Jane Bowman, Deputy Clerk