

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL ADJOURNED MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008
5:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm. Council Members McAlister, Austin, Dick Pacholl, Hecimovich, and Martin. Council Member-at-Large Christopherson.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Scott Pacholl.

STAFF PRESENT: Jon Erichson, Craig Hoium, Tom Dankert, Jeanne Howatt, David Hoversten, Kim Underwood, and John Mueller.

OTHERS PRESENT: Austin Post Bulletin, Austin Daily Herald. Janet Anderson and Marian Clennon. Sandy Forstner.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, approving the agenda. Carried.

Minutes were amended to include council members' names on a motion. Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, approving the amended council minutes of October 6, 2008. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member Austin, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

Cab Driver: Russell Luns, Austin

Claims:

- a. Financial and Investment Reports.
- b. Pre-list of Bills.
- c. Kathleen Sollid. This claim has been referred to the city attorney to protect the city's interest.

Carried.

The City received bids on October 9th for the Todd Park soccer field expansion project. The project is funded by a Hormel Foundation grant for a total amount of \$250,000 over five years, at \$50,000 per year. The bid for the first phase covers moving the dirt and tiling. Bids were as follows:

Ulland Bros.	\$148,577.69
Veit Co.	\$236,468.00
S & I Contracting Inc.	\$310,245.00

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member Austin, awarding the bid to Ulland Bros.

An ordinance amending the off-sale liquor licenses – No. 555 and approved on November 5, 2007 – contained a typographical error. Under Subd. 2, which declares the annual off-sale liquor license fee, the reduced amount for licensees who satisfy certain conditions should have been \$460.00, not \$480.00.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member Dick Pacholl, to prepare the ordinance. Carried

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member Dick Pacholl, to adopt and publish the ordinance. 6-0. Carried.

There are two additional establishments that have received their second liquor license compliance violations. Council is requested to set a hearing date.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, setting a public hearing for November 3, 2008.

The Chamber of Commerce has submitted their annual requests to the City for Christmas in the City.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, approving the requests for Christmas in the City. Carried.

At a recent work session, Council reviewed a resolution proposed by Chamber Director Sandy Forstner to promote buying within Mower County. The resolution has been redrafted and is now presented to Council to approve.

Council Member Martin asked Mr. Forstner if he knew why the “leakage” occurred (i.e., the trend of less buying in Mower County). Mr. Forstner said the statistics came from University of Minnesota research. The leakage has not been tracked, but that would be a good idea, he said.

Council Member McAlister asked if the Chamber sponsors any type of program on customer service. Mr. Forstner said the Chamber does provide ongoing educational training; the most recent one was held this summer.

Council Member Hecimovich added that Chamber bucks are also available to incite people to buy in the area.

Council Member Dick Pacholl noted that some box retailers don't train their employees to help customers find other departments. Mr. Forstner said each retail business is responsible for their own training, and some businesses are better than others; however, he said this is not limited to just Austin. Mr. Forstner noted that the purpose of the Buy Mower campaign is to raise awareness of the value of our businesses. It also supports our community in a variety of ways.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member McAlister, adopting a resolution in support of the Buy Mower campaign, with one correction to the draft (changing the word 'independence' to 'dependence'). 6-0. Carried.

George's Pizza, along with the Main St. Project, has requested a sign appeal to erect a projecting sign on the east exterior wall at the new location at 209 North Main Street. George's is being relocated due to the jail/justice center project. The current sign projects 7'2"; the city code limits projections to 30". Community Development Director Craig Hoium noted that there would be some exterior improvements made to the sign prior to the new installation. The Planning Commission has recommended approval on the condition that there would be structural engineering provided.

Council Member McAlister asked if George's would be putting up a sign on the building in the place where the previous business sign was (for South Central Athlete). Mr. Hoium said he was not aware of any other signs, but if there were, they would need to be approved by the Building Department.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, approving the sign appeal requested by George's Pizza and Main St. Project. Carried.

Innovative Signs, along with the Austin School District, has requested a sign appeal to erect a wall sign on the front of the track and field stadium. The proposed sign is 60 s.f.; the limitation is 24 s.f. Community Development Director Craig Hoium allowed the petitioners to put up the sign for the September 20th dedication and if the appeal were to be denied, it was agreed that it would be taken down. Mr. Hoium reported that the sign has since been covered up until the approval. The Planning Commission has recommended approval of the appeal.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, approving the sign appeal requested by Innovative Signs and Austin School District. Carried.

The City has received a request from Qwest for a utility easement at the intersection of 27th Avenue NW and 4th Street. Typically these easements are requested at the time of platting, but this area at the east end of the Cook Farm Industrial Park has not yet been platted. The easement request would allow Qwest to provide telecommunication services to the industrial park, currently to the Smyth building.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, approving the utility easement. Carried.

REPORTS

Council Member McAlister said he would like Council to get an opportunity to see the application for the Park & Rec director before it goes out. He added that, given the current economic situation, perhaps Council should be reviewing the position: should there be an exact replacement, should the position have added duties, or should there be a redistribution of duties?

City Administrator Jim Hurm said the Park & Rec Board has held several meetings prior to the search for a new director. Recently there was some brief discussion of the possibility of a tightening of state funds and the question of this position, but it was felt that the Board should continue with its original charge of hiring a director with the goal of a new person in place by January 1.

Council Member-at-Large Christopherson and liaison on the Park and Rec Board agreed with Council reviewing the application before it was sent out. He added that the Board said it would deal with any cutbacks when and if they come. As for now, they are moving forward with the process.

Council Member McAlister noted that part of his concern is that he sees the director position becoming more of a promoter-type position, bringing more into the arenas.

Council Member-at-Large Christopherson said this was brought up as one goal the Board would like to see; however, he said the City may need to invest money to bring in a dehumidification system to steal away those who use the Albert Lea and Kasson arenas in the summertime. "It would be important to do this (more use of the arenas) in a responsible manner."

Council Member McAlister said that it seems that the ice is often more of a problem rather than a solution because of its expense. He questioned if there are other uses for the arenas.

Council Member Dick Pacholl asked if all conditional use permits come before council. Mr. Hoium said there is a 15-day appeals period, and if there are any appeals, these do come before council. Hoium has not yet received any appeals for the recent request for the home occupation.

Council Member Hecimovich reminded all that November 11 is Veterans Day. There will be a flag disposal ceremony at 3:30. Anyone may call the VFW or Sue Register for more information. Last year 250 flags were disposed of. He said this is also good instruction for the scouts, who are involved.

The Canvassing Board for the city's general election made up of Council Members Dick Pacholl, Hecimovich, Martin and Council Member-at-Large Christopherson will meet on Thursday, November 6 at 4:30 pm.

Public Works Director Jon Erichson reminded everyone of the fall yard waste program. The site at the Cook Farm is open for dropping off waste seven days a week from dawn to dusk.

There will be an informational meeting on the upcoming sidewalk assessments on Thursday, October 23 at 5:30.

Moved by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, adjourning the meeting to November 3, 2008. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:01 pm

Approved: November 3, 2008

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____