

**MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
JULY 1, 2010, 4:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Mayor Jeremy Riddle called the meeting to order. Council members present were Paul Whitcomb, Dick Dobson and Victoria Hallin. Lee Steinbrecher was absent. Staff present was Administrator Mark Karnowski, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Community Developer Jay Blake, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Fire Chief Brian Payne, Police Sergeant Joe Backlund and City Clerk Katie Hunter. Also present: City Attorneys Damien Toven and Dick Schieffer.

FERAL CATS

Karnowski explained that the City Hall has received several calls from city residents regarding feral cats and Clerk Hunter has been investigating various options to address the problem. She learned of an organization called "Camp Companion"; which is used by some cities in the Rochester area that traps, neuters and re-releases cats. Obviously they are too far from Princeton to provide a similar service to the city.

Clerk Hunter learned of another company called "MN SNAP" located out of Plymouth who advises they will come to the city and provide a spay (\$50) or neuter (\$40) service on feral cats that the city traps. They would need some space in the city to perform the operations. They would be willing to attend a future Study Session to discuss the matter and their program. Of course, a "catch and release" feral cat program would not address the concerns of the feral cats' possible impact on song birds or the spread of disease.

Currently the city is paying \$50 to a local animal clinic to impound and euthanize animals brought to them by the city (not just feral cats).

The city has only one live trap and loans it out to citizens who have a stray/feral cat problem. The PD also accepts cats caught by citizens in their own traps. Chief Payne has advised that the problem is probably up a little from previous years and centers mostly in the river bottom area. He suspects that folks from the outlying area are dumping unwanted cats in the city. The problem is probably also exacerbated by kind hearted people leaving food out for the feral cats which has the effect of keeping them in town.

Karnowski went on to say that unfortunately, "MNSNAP" accomplishes the problem that the cats will no longer reproduce, the problems of disease and the impact on wildlife (hunting songbirds) are not addressed.

Payne added that the Police Department (PD) encourages people to catch the cats, and contact the department to bring the animal to the vet clinic, if in city limits, the PD will okay the catch. On the other hand, the PD cannot "catch" an animal if it is cornered in the garage, for safety of the officers.

Payne suggested purchasing more live traps for the residents to borrow, and the PD will remain responsible for transporting the animals after they are okayed to impound.

Dobson asked what traps cost. Payne estimated about \$35.00 to \$55.00. Riddle suggested the PD keeping a sign out system so the residents are liable for the traps. Whitcomb added a list of dos and don'ts for the residents to follow. Dobson commented he stays open to the idea of getting rid of the feral cats altogether in town. Hallin asked if there would be any liability to the city, with renting the traps out to residents. Karnowski said there wouldn't be any liability to the city and if there was, the city's insurance would surely cover it.

The question was brought up if the Department of Natural Resources handles any calls such as these. Sergeant Backlund answered that the DNR will not entertain these types of calls.

Jackson added that currently, the city spends anywhere from \$2000 to \$3000 a year on the cats coming from the General Fund. The traps are going to be less than actual impounding. Jackson added that the catching used to be 50 percent dogs and 50 percent cats, but in the past couple of years, the percentage of cats has risen, so you can see that there is a problem.

The Council concurs to purchase of four or five more live traps for the Police Department.

Dobson added, since the subject is being discussed, to send out bids for the local veterinary clinics for impounding.

PROPERTIES NOT CURRENTLY HOOKED UP TO SEWER & WATER THAT HAVE ACCESS

Blake explained that while researching information relating to residential connections to city sewer and water for the Princeton Economic Development Authority, the staff and the Princeton Public Utilities Commission compiled a listing of properties that were identified as:

- Not connected to City Water
- Not Connected to City Sewer, or
- Not Connected to Sewer or Water.

There were more than 75 properties identified in this listing. After weeding out homes that were in areas of the city that did not have municipal sewer or water services, there are about twenty (20) properties that do not meet our municipal sewer connection requirements. Water connection issues will be addressed by the Public Utilities Commission.

There are two principal issues. First, the City should notify property owners without municipal sewer service that they are required to connect to the city sewer. Second, the City is required to establish a more assertive inspection and monitoring program for all on-site septic systems. It appears that many of the "missed connections" occurred when the original municipal sewer lines were installed during the 1950s and 1960s. They are in random locations scattered throughout the city. There are also some areas where development occurred and no sewer service was required.

Chapter 900 of the Princeton Municipal Code requires that all buildings that are within 150 feet of a sewer line shall be connected within 60 days of the availability of the service. That section also states that private sewers shall conform to the MPCA rules relating to the installation of private individual sewage treatment systems (ISTS).

The MPCA Septic System Rules (Commonly referred to as the 7080 Rules) also require the local units of government to establish a monitoring plan for ISTS (on-site septic systems). Some communities use a biannual inspection report from a licensed installer/inspector and require that the reports be on file for each of the properties.

While additional research is required, staff would like to inform the City Council of our plans to address this situation.

1. Staff will complete research of building permits issued for each of the subject properties to determine if indeed the properties are connected to the municipal sewer system. Some properties will not have records available due to age of the structures.
2. Staff will notify the owners of the requirement to connect to the municipal sewer system.

3. Staff will also review the building files to determine if a conforming septic system is located at each of the properties.
4. Staff will prepare a bi-annual sewer system inspection program for areas of the city where municipal sewer is not available or anticipated.

The purpose of this discussion is to inform the Council and the general about the issues to develop a plan to resolve the problems.

Karnowski stated that City Attorney Dick Schieffer drafted an amendment to the Sewer and Water ordinance because it became apparent that the ordinance currently does not state that residents have to be hooked up to the PUC water system. Karnowski added that during the re-codifying of the ordinance, this was looked over. At the bottom of the third page in underlined font, that the units not listed will be charged as published by the Environmental Services Division of the Metropolitan Council.

Hallin asked how a tennis court could be 2 units. Karnowski said the rationale is you have to build your Waste Water Treatment Plant so it can handle its maximum flow. Blake added that this is an indoor tennis court and would pertain to a health club, for instance.

WHITCOMB MOTIONED TO INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 653, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING VARIOUS PORTIONS OF CHAPTER 900 – SEWER AND WATER. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Hallin asked if the city attorney has looked over the ordinance. Karnowski said Mr. Schieffer wrote most 99 percent of it. Karnowski just added the underlined material on the bottom of page 3 and the summary publication at the end of the ordinance in order to publish a summary in the newspaper.

ON THE VOTE: AYES – 4; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CITY ALLEY AND MINIMUM MAINTENANCE ROADS

Blake explained that the City of Princeton has an abundance of platted alleys in most blocks and in some cases two alleys (north-south and east-west).

Platted and unimproved alleys have not been addressed the City Council. In the map attached, red depicts the alleys that are not vacated and not improved. Yellow indicates the vacated alleyways. Blake added that the City Attorney and him have been reviewing a draft city policy that addresses how these alleys are managed and maintained:

1. Establish by policy or ordinance a permit procedure to allow driveways in unopened alleys;
2. Require a driveway agreement which includes
 - a. Minimum standards of improvement to the alley;
 - b. Liability insurance (rider to homeowner's coverage) holding the city harmless; maintenance provisions;
 - c. Signs (private driveway, no public access, etc.)
 - d. No legal rights are acquired (in case we want to construct the alley in the future); and
 - e. No city maintenance, snow plowing or seal coating.

Blake said that the City of Duluth had a court case recently where a policy was established and staff wishes to take from that policy a lot of examples and writing.

Riddle asked if the alley was a public right of way, how the city can guarantee usage five years from now. Blake said something could be added to the ordinance to that effect. Blake added each alley will be case-by-case; because in some cases someone has already built a shed or a garden in the alleyway.

From past experience, Karnowski stressed that the city shouldn't vacate anything and retain an easement for future purposes of the city.

REQUEST FROM ART SKAROHLID & FIREWORKS COMMITTEE FOR \$1000 TOWARDS FIREWORKS

Karnowski explained that the group that is doing the fireworks on Sunday night went to the Park Board and asked them to continue their support financially and they were advised that the Park Board is actually not able to authorize expenditures. The original amount was \$1500, but the committee lowered the amount to \$1000, a 33 percent reduction.

HALLIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE DONATION OF \$1000 TO THE FIREWORKS FUND. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ON THE VOTE: AYES – 4; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

STEPHANIE HAUGER MATERNITY LEAVE

Employee Stephanie Hauger from the Liquor Store has requested an unpaid extension of maternity leave from July 5 to August 2, 2010. .

HALLIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MATERNITY LEAVE EXTENSION REQUEST. WHITCOMB SECONDED THE MOTION. ON THE VOTE: AYES – 4; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

AIRPORT “THROUGH THE FENCE ISSUES”

Karnowski told the council that there are a couple updates for the Municipal Airport. Several years ago, the city sold approximate two acres that Inline Packaging has built on. That land was land that the city was reimbursed for when the airport was moved. Currently, the FAA is aware and both Karnowski and Paul Dove have looked through the city's records and cannot tell what happened. Technically, the city sold land that shouldn't have been sold because it was part of the airport.

The FAA thought the city could do a square-foot-for-square-foot transfer with Inline Packaging.

Karnowski said the city wants to try to avoid reimbursing the FAA for the out of pocket cash. Jackson said the airport was moved back in 1977.

The other operation issue at the airport is the Duane Kruse property. The city has made some initial offers to Kruse's to either buy the entire airport parcel, similar to what was done at the Westling property or obtain ownership the land out from under him and lease it back to him. There are some tax advantages with the latter option. The City Attorney and Karnowski have discussed if the offers should be pulled or pursued. It has been decided that Mayor Riddle and

Airport Advisory Board Chair Gene Stoeckel will be sitting down with Mr. Kruse and discussing what the possible solutions might be.

Hallin –asked if Mr. Kruse was aware of both options. Karnowski said Mr. Kruse is aware and feels that his land is worth more than what the city has offered. Kruse had a certified appraisal done a couple of years ago, but it used comparable sales from the airport land in Anoka, Minnesota. The appraisal was higher than the city's offer. The city offered the same price as was paid for the Westling property next to Kruse's property, so the offer is justifiable.

Hallin asked what the cost would be for the city to obtain their own appraisal. Karnowski said it would cost thousands. If the city can negotiate with the Kruses rather than paying an appraiser, it would be cheaper.

Riddle requested the city look into how the Princeton Airport's lease rates are determined. Maybe the properties that the city is investing in have a higher rate of return.

Hallin asked if the size of the Kruse lot is comparable to the Westling property. Karnowski said that the lots are the same size. The configuration is a little different, but building value is the same.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business:

WHITCOMB MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:37 PM. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (4 AYES, 0 NAYS).

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Hunter; City Clerk

ATTEST:

Jeremy Riddle, Mayor