Houston City Council Meeting **Minutes** **July 14, 2014**

The Houston City Council met in regular session on July 14, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Houston City Hall. Mayor Edwards called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were: Mayor Connie Edwards, Matt Schutte, Kevin Knutson, Tony Schultz and Cheryl Sanden. Also present were: Chris Peterson, Larry Jerviss, Ed Jacobs, Randy Thesing, Audrey Hegland, Chief David Breault, Marlene Schultz, Ellyn Baumann, Karla and Hein Bloem, Chris Chapel, Margaret Carlson, Angie Rodenburg of the Fillmore County Journal, Marcie Jenson. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

Public Comment: Margaret Carlson spoke on behalf of the Hometown Pride group concerning the following:

-Planters: Are now in place at various sites in town; she thanked Diane Lambrecht for her leadership in the project, and Chris Peterson for the memorial idea to help pay for them. She said that more people have expressed interest in sponsoring a planter.

-Status of playground by McSpadden Field: It will be removed from current area until Field II is built and a final location can be determined. Progress on Field II is dependent on the weather and the availability of donated excavation equipment.

-Large holes in the street between the quonset and Barristas; Thesing stated this area is private property and not something the City can resolve.

-Houses identified as being in bad condition: Blue house on Ellsworth has been inspected by CMS and is for sale by owners; other properties identified will be sent a second letter, this one including a deadline for compliance.

Conditional Use Permit Application – 114 N. Grant (Quonset): Keeping in mind the main objective is to preserve the business climate within the commercial district, the Planning Commission with input from the City Attorney recommended that the City Council approve the conditional use permit for the quonset located at 114 N. Grant St. It is hoped this new business will enhance Trail tourism. The conditional use permit applies only to the living quarters; if the business fails, then the conditional use permit no longer exists. The permit will be subject to annual review or if it becomes apparent that the business is no longer in operation. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO APPROVE THE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION TO ALLOW A ONE-FAMILY DWELLING IN THE EXISTING BUILDING AT 114 N GRANT STREET, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS IN RESOLUTION 2014-11; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Animal Control: There are many complaints received regarding animal control and the City lacks proper holding facilities for animals at large. Chief Breault has contacted Marcie Jenson, a local animal control provider, regarding a service contract. Jenson currently has contracts with several other Houston County cities and is well versed in local ordinances and state statute as they pertain to animal control, and has necessary housing for animals when needed. Chief Breault would still respond to complaints about animals at large or barking, etc. MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE, TO CONTRACT WITH MARCIE JENSON FOR ANIMAL CONTROL ASSISTANCE FOR A FEE OF $1500 TWICE A YEAR; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

LETG (Law Enforcement Technology Group) Public Safety Software – Collaboration with County: A collaborative effort with the County and other cities within, it is a shared records management system that will be accessible to all participating towns in the County and beyond. The system will facilitate much better law enforcement. The County is paying the largest portion of the cost, with each city having a lesser amount based on size of police department; Houston's portion is $7,116. After further discussion, MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE, TO APPROVE ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE LETG PUBLIC SAFETY SOFTWARE FOR THE PROGRAM AT A COST OF $7,116 PLUS THE ANNUAL PER YEAR MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR $1,160; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Band Shell Access Road: Peterson stated that if an access road down to the band shell is still desired for long-term, she presented some approximate cost estimates for cement and also for Geo Block turf surface for the 10' road, possible turn-around pad by the band shell, and also a sidewalk on the west side. For the access road with walkway connection to the band shell:

PHASE I:

-1700 SF of concrete: Approximately $5,000 installed with some labor assistance. In comparison,

-1,700 SF of Geo Block reinforcement for turf surface: approximately $4500 for materials only.

Sidewalk: additional 700 SF of concrete would be required for 5' separate sidewalk; approximately $2100. The sidewalk would not be needed at this time if the road is concrete. The full pad turn around area will be delayed to see if it is needed and if so, how large of an area would be necessary. MOTION MADE BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KNUTSON, TO MOVE AHEAD WITH PHASE I TO CREATE A CEMENT 10' ROAD DOWN TO THE BAND SHELL; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Small Cities Development Program Funding-SEMCAC: This is a program that provides financial assistance to help qualified people of low and moderate incomes fix up their homes. The City has participated in this program once before in a joint effort with Spring Grove; three residences and three commercial properties received funding. The City applied again for housing grant last year but was not selected, so will reapply in November; SEMCAC will assist with the grant preparation at no charge. Residents who sent in their intent to participate in the program last time will not have to do so again this time. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL FOR THE SMALL CITIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUNDING; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Off-Highway Vehicle Project Update: City staff met with Rochester OHV clubs steering committee along with DNR representatives to review the project's current status; it is still in the early stages of development. Funding is not an issue as it has already been allocated. Discussed was contacting the federal agency "Trails Unlimited" as a consultant to assist in moving the project forward. Also discussed was repairing the erosion caused from logging by a previous owner. Once the best way to proceed is determined, the OHV clubs will hire contractors to repair and fence the area.

The National Parks Service has a program available that would provide an individual to work with the City on forming a local advisory committee and assist with other necessary details such as identifying the vision, goals, inventory of community resources, funding sources and community participation. The advisory committee will also help determine what is needed to enhance this project such as picnic tables, camping facilities, etc. Mayor Connie stressed it is important to take the time to do this project right. The trail design itself will be the responsibility of experts in this field. Peterson will submit an application to the National Park Service for assistance. It is too early in the process to form the local advisory committee because there is essentially nothing for them to do at this point; it may be as many as five to seven years before the project gets underway.

City Hall – Roof Repair, Bench: The roof of City Hall has developed a leak and needs repair. An estimate from Affordable Siding and Roofing was available. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATE FROM AFFORDABLE SIDING AND ROOFING TO REPAIR THE CITY HALL ROOF FOR $3,000; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bench: Peterson proposed a bench be placed in front of City Hall for the convenience of residents and passersby; this may be a project for the Hometown Pride group as memorials; could involve nine such benches, as the others on City streets that are getting old and are not in good shape. Options will be presented to the Council at their next meeting. Schutte stated he would be available to help with this project.

Library Board Appointment: MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SANDEN, TO APPOINT BARB SWENSON AS PRESIDENT OF THE LIBRARY BOARD; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Election Judges - Resolution: MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO PASS A RESOLUTION APPOINTING LARRY JERVISS, CHRISTINA PETERSON, AUDREY HEGLAND, KARYN OLSON, SHERMAN COLE, PAUL KEMPTER, RUTH ANN STENSGARD, KATHLEEN NELSON, AND JAMES SKREE AS ELECTION JUDGES FOR THE 2014 PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTION; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Sidewalk Ramp – Sheridan/Spruce: Questioned whether this is necessary since access is available at the alley by the school. Decision was made to follow current policy on creating ramps, which is not to put them in unless there is a new sidewalk installed or a medical emergency.

Minutes: MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE JUNE 9 MINUTES; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Report: Received first half of the state aids; have yet to receive the reimbursement for the OHV. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SANDEN TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT AND PAY THE BILLS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Department Reports:

EDA/Planning Commission: Reports included in Council packet.

Library: Liz Gibson Gasset reported that the current Library Board President has resigned and current Vice President Gene Lundak will take over the remaining portion of the term, after which Barb Swenson will assume the position. Marilyn Frauenkron Bayer will serve as Vice President. In addition, the Library Assistant has given notice that she will be leaving at the end of August; her position is being reviewed by the Library Board and needs to be posted as soon as possible. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO POST THE POSITION OF LIBRARY ASSISTANT; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Library inventory is scheduled for Friday, August 15, 9 a.m; volunteers are needed. Gasset distributed her monthly written report and statistics.

Nature Center: The Natural Playground is proving to be a popular recreational place, with children coming from many different areas outside of Houston. The Owl Center will be leasing the Skifton Building as interim location for the International Owl Center. She is working with the Houston Arts Resource Council on the Parade of Owls sculpture project.

Police: Chief Breault reported that the new squad car is being outfitted with necessary equipment and should be ready to go by Hoedown. He is lining up volunteer officers to help over the three-day celebration; three officers plus himself will be available throughout the weekend. A police radio will be given to Hoedown security to use so that they can stay in communication with the officers.

The annual National Night Out Against Crime is planned for August 4; Breault thanked Audrey Hegland for coordinating a committee to help him with this event, as there is usually over 400 people expected to attend.

Maintenance: Thesing reported that curbs and intersections have been painted in preparation for Hoedown. Other items discussed were that the sludge pump will need to be replaced soon; the ton truck has been placed for sale on an internet auction site along with the big plow; sewer plant needs to be painted and fence should be replaced. He will contact Philips Fencing to discuss a good used fence.

Administrator: Peterson had already reported on most of what she intended to discuss, Mayor Connie mentioned that the Council Room chairs are in bad shape and should be replaced.

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:50 PM MADE BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SANDEN; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.