

City of Long Prairie
7:00 P.M., Monday October 4th, 2021
City Council Meeting Held Via-Teleconference

The Long Prairie City Council met by phone at City Hall, 7:00 pm, on Monday October 4th, 2021. Mayor Dixon called the meeting to order with the following present by phone or at City Hall: Council members, David Wright, Lilah Gripne, Bob Klick, Datrik Mitchell and City Administrator/Clerk Ted Gray.

Before the consent agenda was approved the council listened to Daiv Freeman in regards to changes and corrections to the September 20th City Council Meeting.

Council member Klick motioned Gripne seconded to approve the consent agenda:

- (a) Approve Agenda for October 4th, 2021**
- (b) Approve minutes for September 20th, 2021, with the change's and corrections presented by Mr. Freeman**

Motion carried unanimously

(Public Comment)

Amanda Hinson addressed the council regarding concerns with Facebook and the City's Facebook pages. Mrs. Hinson expressed concern about the closure of the Hat's Coffee which should found out about on Facebook. She had posted those concerns to several Facebook pages which included Mayor Dixon's Facebook page and the City of Long Prairie Facebook page. Mrs. Hinson questioned if it was correct to have the mayor control the unofficial City of Long Prairie Facebook page. Mayor Dixon had blocked Mrs. Hinson from her personal page which blocked her from the Facebook pages that maybe associated with the City of Long Prairie. At this time Mrs. Hinson's allotted time for public comment had been met. Mrs. Hinson asked that the control of both these Facebook pages would be looked into.

(Council Reports)

Public Works: Council member Mitchell reported that the Public Works daily water and wastewater rounds and samples are going fine. In the next few weeks, the staff will be working on winterizing fire hydrants, lake bathrooms, mowing, picking up leaves at parks, sweeping, and cleaning sewer lines. We have been monitoring the water usage at the water plant, the City's usage goal is 19.17 million gallons for the month of September. The city met its water usage goal by being at 18.04 million gallons used.

EDA: Council member Wright gave a report that the EDA will be having a special meeting on Wednesday October 6th discuss potential uses of the Prairie Foods Building.

Police Safety: Council member Wright gave a report on the Police and Fire Departments. The Police Department had 355 calls in September. It is Fire Prevention week, there will be no open house and tours would be limited.

Airport: Council member Klick reported that the Airport Commission met on September 22nd to continue discussion on the Airport Master Plan and other minor repairs and updates needed at the airport.

Liquor Store: Council member Klick reported that the Liquor Store will be closed on Sunday October 10th for cleaning and floor waxing.

Health and Wellness: Council member Gripne reported that there will be a Wellness Network meeting on Friday October 8th, where it is expected that most of the discussion will be around COVID.

Community Concerns: Mayor Dixon reported that the Senior Center is still open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and may consider being open an additional day.

(Old Business)

Administrator Gray gave an update to the City Council regarding 334 Central Ave. Gray stated that Mayor Dixon, Council member Mitchell, and Administrator Gray meet with Mr. Freeman on Monday September 27th at the Senior Center per the councils request for mediation at the September 20th meeting. Through that meeting no resolution was found, and two options were discussed. The options from that meeting that were either take legal action to enforce the ordinance or allow for the apartment to exist. City Attorney Joe Krueger was referenced to explain the options that city had. The council can look to enforce the current ordinance. The city council can also look to change the ordinance in question, they can choose to tighten up the ordinance or to relax the ordinance. If the council chooses to make the ordinance less stringent it would cause the comprehensive plan to match the new ordinance. Council member Klick stated that to not enforce the rules could lead to chaos in our downtown area. It would not be fair to our current business owners downtown. The downtown area should remain a business district, with the option to allow for apartments in the back of the buildings. Even though there would be concerns with the building being purchased, due to the age, repairs, and design costs to create apartments. Steven Hinson questioned council member Klick's comments and asked when the last time the ordinances was revised. The ordinances in question were last revised in 2006. Mr. Hinson questioned how the apartment located at 334 Central Ave is hurting anything? And stated that the decisions and comments made by the council have real implications in reacting to this issue. Ron Richter asked a question to the council regarding another property located in the C-1 Commercial District. The property has an apartment on the ground floor and enters onto the alley way. The city has allowed apartments in the rear of commercial buildings as long as the commercial space was not eliminated. At this time Mr. Freeman asked about the options that had been presented earlier and asked if there was an option where the apartment in question would stay without changing the ordinance. Mr. Kreuger responded that the city could do nothing which would be fourth option, but this would not be recommended because of the city's interpretation of the ordinance and the conflict it would have with the comprehensive plan. Mike Weiner expressed concerns about the ground floor apartments and the interpretation of the city code. The city code does not reference square footage of the required commercial space or the use of the front portion of the property. Mr. Kreuger responded that the city has been willing to compromise in regards to the commercial space being divided between the residential unit and the commercial space at 334 Central Ave. Mr. Freeman did respond that the city has been consistent with this compromise. Mayor Dixon asked the council their thoughts on this issue. Council member Klick responded that he is not in favor of doing nothing. Council member Wright stated he would like purse ordinance enforcement. Council member Mitchell abstained

from the discussion. Council member Gripne stated to pursue ordinance enforcement. There was no objection to ordinance enforcement.

Administrator Gray gave an update to the City Council in regards to the request the made at the September 20th council meeting to have the developer, Skip Duchesneau of the 2nd Ave Apartments reach out to Dave Ruda to discuss solutions to the headlight issue. Email correspondence between Mr. Ruda and Mr. Duchesneau were shared to the council. At this time there was no resolution found between Mr. Ruda and Mr. Duchesneau. The only correspondence they had was through email, Mr. Ruda would have preferred a phone call. The discussion led to the review of the Conditional Use Permit and the Planning and Zoning minutes approving the Conditional Use Permit. Comments were made within the minutes that the lights would need to be shielded from the building and raising the entrance and exit approach to the apartment complex to allow for car headlights to point down and away from neighboring properties. City Attorney Mr. Kreuger explained that if the city chose to take legal enforcement on this issue, there are concerns that the minutes do not support the city's position. Mr. Ruda questions the verbiage in the conditional use permit, which states, raise the approach to prevent light shining into neighbors' home from property in 2nd Ave NE. Mr. Ruda asked which verbiage is correct, the minutes or the conditional use. Administrator Gray stated that this would need be reviewed for clarification. Mr. Ruda mentioned that this could have been corrected much sooner if there was proper communication between him and the developer. Also, if Administrator Gray would have reached out and invited Mr. Ruda over during several meetings with the developer that occurred onsite during the construction of these apartments to discuss this issue.

(New Business)

Mayor Dixon opened the Public Hearing for the Body Worn Cameras at 8:00 p.m. Chief Breiter, Officer Larson, Officer Hanson, and Officer Lowe were in attendance to answer questions from the public on the purchase and implantation of body worn cameras. Chief Breiter explained the need for the cameras, the officers are currently using body worn microphones, but are having issues getting proper recordings within in certain buildings and distance from the squad cars. The new cameras will fit in with the Police Departments current system and software. Council member Klick asked if the body worn cameras would record for every, stop or call. Chief Breiter stated they would be automatically turned on when they are in response to call and will sink together with the squad camera and microphones. With no other questions or comments the public hearing was closed at 8:03 p.m.

Council member Klick motioned Mitchell seconded to approve Snow Removal Truck Rental for 2021-2022 for Chad Twardowski Motion unanimously carried.

Council member Klick motioned Mitchell seconded to approve Snow Removal Truck Rental for 2021-2022 for Ron Twardowski Motion unanimously carried.

Council member Klick motioned Mitchell seconded to approve the update to the Lodging and Meals Policy, changing expenses for Breakfast to \$10.00, Dinner to \$15.00, and Supper to \$25.00. Motion unanimously carried.

Council member Klick motioned Gripne seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm. Motion unanimously carried.

Ted Gray
City Administrator/Clerk

Jodi Dixon
Mayor