

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee Minutes

October 13, 2003 AT 6:45 P.M.

PRESENT: Chairman Barr, Ald. Rackow, Phillips, Molski and Walther

ALSO PRESENT: C/T Schlice; Mayor Wescott, City Clerk Zdroik; Admin. Assistant Gebert; Directors Euclide, Gardner, Disher, Schrader; Assessor Kuehn; Fire Chief Barnes; Capt. McCulley; Deputy C/T Wroblewski; Ald. Sevenich, Seiser, Moore, Sowieja, Markham, Stroik; Kate Garsombke (Stevens Point Journal); Gene Kemmeter (Portage County Gazette); Wally and Marie Sturm; Alexandra Curless; Christopher Jennings; Tom Jakusz (Bucks N Bulls Archery); Todd Tuskowski; Gary Tuskowski; Joan Lodzinski; Patrick Pettit; Mike Fuge

Index of these Minutes:

1. Assessor's Report.
 2. Activation of deferred special assessment. Janick.
 3. Request to cancel deferred special assessment. Bayba.
 4. 2nd Quarter Room Tax Report.
 5. Consideration of sale of land. Maria Drive and Second Street.
 6. Deer culling proposal.
 7. Consideration of fees. Fingerprinting.
 8. Assessor's plat.
 9. Consideration of payment of claims.
 10. Adjournment.
1. ASSESSOR'S REPORT

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Walther to approve the report of the Assessor and place it on file.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

2. ACTIVATION OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENT. JANICK

C/T Schlice explained that we need to do this every time we have an annexation that has deferred assessments. The paperwork has been signed by the Janicks.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Molski to approve the activation of the special assessment on the Janick property.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

3. REQUEST TO CANCEL DEFERRED SPECIAL ASSESSMENT. BAYBA

C/T Schlice stated that they are eliminating the special assessment because the plan was changed and it is being serviced from a different direction. This deletion was approved previously under a different plan which was not completed, we now have an approved plan and we need to allocate the cancellation over two parcels.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Walther to approve the canceling of the deferred special assessment for the Bayba property.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

4. 2ND QUARTER ROOM TAX REPORT

C/T Schlice stated that everything is on track and there have been no material changes.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Barr to approve the 2nd quarter room tax report and place it on file.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

5. CONSIDERATION OF SALE OF LAND. MARIA DRIVE AND SECOND STREET

C/T Schlice stated that this is a 14-foot remnant and the Committee needs to decide on the price of either \$1.50. \$2.40 and whether zoning should be residential or commercial. A survey will need to be completed if the approval is given for the sale and also to determine who will pay for the survey.

Ald. Molski questioned if it is still going to be used for parking.

Joan Lodzinski, 425 W. Wilson, stated that it will be used for parking, but she wanted it to be part of the home that is there since the lot is very small (only 37 ½ feet wide). For the last forty years it has been used for parking for everybody in the area.

Ald. Molski stated that if it is zoned commercial and stays with the business it would make the business more valuable.

Ald. Stroik stated that if the house is zoned residential, then it would make sense to leave it with the house and zone it residential.

C/T Schlice questioned if Plan Commission approved this.

Mayor Wescott stated they did.

Director Gardner stated that an argument could be made on both sides. The Plan Commission recognized that the sale of the property recognized that when access public right of way is sold, it always reverts back to the adjacent property, in this case it would be two family zoning, which is what the house is. However, the property is used for parking now and will likely continue to be parking and she has the right to make the parking exclusive for the business if she chooses.

Ald. Markham questioned if there are any other areas like this and if so how are they handled.

Director Gardner stated that this lot will not be split, it is going to be zoned residential since it right next to the house. He recommends not zoning it commercial.

Motion made by Ald. Molski, seconded by Ald. Barr to approve the sale of the land at two family residential at \$1.50 per square foot with the buyer to pay for the survey.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

6. DEER CULLING PROPOSAL

Ald. Phillips stated that a couple of months back when this was brought up he was requested to get some numbers and he now has the prices and that this is the cheapest route to go to save the city dollars.

Gary Tuskowski, 400 Forest Street, stated that he owns land just across from where the hunt could take place and he wanted to know what we are going to let the people chosen shoot and what the problem is over there. He questioned if they were going to be allowed to shoot bucks and does.

Ald. Phillips responded that anything that comes under the tree or eats from the bait pile will be shot, as recommended by the DNR.

Gary Tuskowski questioned why, when it was done in the City before and anywhere else, they shoot the does. He stated that he owns land there and he manages it and has let the deer grow for two to three years and it bothers him that we are going to let these other guys in to take care of them. He stated that we should take care of the deer that are multiplying. It will hurt him watching these deer all these years, managing them and having someone else come in to take care of them. He wants just the does and the fawns culled like was done before.

Ald. Phillips stated that Ald. Barr and himself went to a seminar in Madison about a month ago and their recommendation is to just shoot all the deer under the bait pile, they all have an effect, they all eat.

Ald. Barr stated that if the goal is to cull the herd, then cull what is needed.

Gary Tuskowski questioned if there was a way to stop the shooting of the bucks like everyone else does. He has looked into this and every other jurisdiction kills the does because they are the ones that multiply.

Patrick Pettit, 1808 College Avenue, agreed with Mr. Tuskowski. He stated that if you look at the State Regulations, when they want to clear a number of deer in the area, they create a T-zone and the T-zone is for shooting does. When you eliminate the does, you eliminate the bucks. We have a long term problem that has not been able to be solved and he thinks that the City needs to come up with a long term plan rather than to go out there and kill a bunch a deer at random. It does not look good for the City. He thinks we need to look at this program and create a better solution. He stated that he has a written proposal and turned it into the Committee. He went on to say that we need to look at this better because it is against the law to bait deer. He assumes the State is going to give us some leeway on that because we have a problem, but he thinks we should look at it from a completely different perspective. If we are going to have people out there, we should have the city and county residents hunting and they should be paying for the right to hunt. The City should not be paying \$3,000 to private hunters to take the game that belongs to the people. He would gladly pay \$20-\$30 for the right to go out on a section of that land and exercise his right to hunt.

Ald. Molski stated that unfortunately the bucks eat like all the others do and she stated that she was walking a week ago Friday night and on the corner of Somers Street and Jordan Lane was a big buck standing on the northwest corner just eating away.

Patrick Pettit stated that is not true, the bucks do not eat as much as the does. The does carry offspring so they eat a lot more and the only reason bucks are in that area is because the does are there.

Ald. Molski stated she could not see another deer around . They have deer by the dozens in that area and the people are really suffering, their yards, their gardens, and shrubs.

Patrick Pettit stated that we do have a problem with deer but we need professional hunters and professional advice.

Alexandra Curless, 4300 Pine Ridge Drive, stated that she filed a petition last year to save the valuable wildlife deer within the City limits. She requested that the individuals who signed her petition be contacted by their respective alderpersons as to whether or not they have changed their minds. She has lived across the street from the Plover River Park for 18 years and the beauty and enjoyment of the deer far outweigh the small amount of vegetation eaten from her yard. It was the deer's home first. She personally walks through the Plover River Park down to the Fire Station approximately three times a day and she has not seen a single deer within the last three weeks either in the park or the neighboring yards. The most deer she saw all summer was six deer and if the Alderman of the 6th District wants to cull the deer herd in his area on the west side of the Plover River, that should be one issue, the east side should be another.

Wally Sturm, 3001 Stanley Street, stated that they have had the deer problem for a number of years. He stated that you can sit in his living room and look out and see ten to eleven deer lined up on Highway 66 ready to come into town and then in the morning, you see them going back into the woods again. It is causing a lot of damage. Another issue that he brought up was accidents. There are a lot of emergency vehicles that go down the highway in excess of speeds and he suspects that things would change if one of those vehicles collided with a deer. It is not just a matter of whether or not the deer survive, but a matter of protecting the citizens.

Christopher Jennings, 1725 McCulloch Street, stated that there is no question that we need to do something about the deer issue, but he feels that it is irresponsible to hire anyone to do it when there is a number of able bodied hunters who would do it for free or have a tag type of system. He feels that bucks should be available because that makes the hunt exciting.

Ald. Sowiejka stated he agrees that we need to reduce the herd but he feels that reducing the expense would be more beneficial. He stated that a lot of bow hunters would pay to kill the deer. He stated that he also has done a lot of research on this and feels that we could get away from having to pay for it.

Tom Jakusz, Bucks N Bulls Archery, 5208 Heffron Court #6, stated that two gentlemen tonight have stated that they would pay to hunt these deer. He has had a tag in the City for the past two or three years when these areas were opened up for deer hunting and if they were so willing to hunt, where were they when the deer were available for everybody to hunt. He stated that he hunted the open areas quite a bit and there was no

pressure out there at all. It is obvious that everybody is interested in the bucks, they are after the big racks.

Todd Tuskowski, 2851 Blaine Street, disagrees with Mr. Jakusz because he said that if you shoot a buck, another buck will move into the area and if you shoot a doe you will be reducing four to eight deer per year.

Tom Jakusz stated that a small percentage of the deer population are bucks, so there will probably not be that many shot.

Ald. Moore stated that it is obvious that we are not the only city in the State of Wisconsin that is considering this. Mr. Phillips has made comments on many issues about double taxing the people. We already pay the State who pays the DNR to manage the deer herd. He does not believe that we need to cough up more money to reduce the deer herd when the DNR should be taking care of this statewide.

Ald. Phillips stated that the City is responsible for annexing all of this property around the City of Stevens Point, we brought deer into town because we annexed them into town, that is the reason they are here. The DNR cannot allow people to hunt in the City, the City can allow people to hunt in the City.

Ald. Moore stated that the DNR is also suppose to manage the entire deer herd in the entire State of Wisconsin. They are to control it so that we do not have so many of them moving into the City.

Ald. Phillips stated that they are not moving into the City, they were already here, we just annexed all this property (Whitetail Subdivision, Old Hwy. 18, etc.) and the deer were already there when we built all these homes.

Gary Tuskowski commented that if we are worried about deer crossing the roads and getting hit by emergency vehicles in the City, then we will have to shoot every deer in the state because the emergency vehicles use every road in the state, not just Highway 66.

Alexandra Curless stated there are a lot of people who walk the Green Circle and one of their enjoyments is the wildlife, to see the deer, and a lot of people who live in the suburbs do so because they like the deer.

Gary Tuskowski stated that it is illegal to bait deer in Portage County and baiting them is really going to draw them in and there are a lot of roads that they will have to cross to get to that bait.

Captain McCulley questioned Ald. Phillips as to who is going to handle all of the complaints.

Ald. Phillips replied that he did not expect any complaints because these are very isolated and secluded areas.

Captain McCulley stated that there will be complaints.

Ald. Phillips stated that it would not be from gun shots as they are bow hunters.

Gary Tuskowski stated that he has hunted for a long time and they do not just drop, they run for awhile.

Captain McCulley stated that we need to consider the complaints.

Ald. Phillips stated that the Police Department would handle complaints if there is any.

Patrick Pettit repeated that we need a long term plan and if we open it up for hunting, the deer are not stupid, they know when they are being hunted and they will just cross the river. We need a long term plan because if we kill a bunch of deer one year, they will all be back. He asked that we think about this and put a long term effort into it.

Ald. Markham questioned how this proposal was come to versus other options that are out there, how the number of deer came up, and also where the four sites are.

Ald. Barr replied that they attended a seminar in Madison that was put on by the DNR and they recommended doing this for the first year. It is not a one year proposition, but we are to see what happens the first year. They are familiar with our area and recommended 60 deer. We went with bow and arrow because when we talked rifle last time, there was a lot of objections to the safety of the bullet. The locations would not be publicized, purposely so that there is no demonstration. They are four areas of City property, there is not private property involved.

Ald. Markham stated that she understands not wanting to publicize the areas, but on the other hand if we are going to have deer running around with arrows sticking out of them, we may want to consider talking to the neighbors in that area even if it is not publicized in the newspaper.

Ald. Barr replied that these are very isolated areas and obviously the police would know the areas but for safety reasons, he feels it would better not to publicize.

Gary Tuskowski questioned how they can be isolated areas when there are houses all the way around with a main road and a highway in the area. He questioned if the City is going to be liable if a deer gets shot and runs into Second Street or on the Highway or into somebody's house because deer do stupid things when you hit them.

Mayor Wescott replied that there have been some good points made and he is going to follow up on them. Everyone in the room appreciates the fact that we need a long term plan. Ald. Phillips is working on that but he agrees with Mr. Pettit that the City needs a long term plan. He realized that both of them have spent time with the DNR. He questioned Ald. Phillips if there has been any consideration to finding these hunters that are willing to pay and whether or not that was an option as the plan was worked on.

Ald. Phillips stated that at the first meeting a year or two ago the DNR suggested that you get certain people rather than having open chaos and letting everyone in town shooting deer. We are not taking out all the deer in Stevens Point, just taking a small percentage. We need to control the herd we have.

Mayor Wescott questioned if the intent was a multi year plan.

Ald. Phillips stated absolutely and he has already requested money for next year.

Mayor Wescott questioned if this was discussed with DNR, as per Ald. Moore's comment being that why won't the DNR, the wardens, or other state officials come in here and work on a management plan.

Ald. Phillips replied that they do not have jurisdiction in the City limits.

Mayor Wescott then questioned the baiting issue.

Ald. Phillips stated that it is not a problem when it is a city culling project.

Mayor Wescott questioned if the DNR informed him of that.

Ald. Phillips stated yes.

Mayor Wescott stated that the City Council has already approved some type of culling activity so tonight it needs to be decided as to whether or not the funds are appropriated or not. He would like to know more about the plan and he has asked the City Attorney several questions on issues that need to be resolved before the Monday Common Council meeting. It is not whether or not we spent the \$3,000, but more that there are some significant legal questions that he has to have answered before this can be proceeded with. He has asked the City Attorney what the overall liability on the part of the City will be since we would be hiring six hunters and if one of them is hurt, what is our responsibility or liability (falling out of tree stand, on City time, culling the herd). Also, if a deer is struck and causes property damage while it runs away or if a deer that has been struck should injure a member of the community, what is our liability. If a hunter should accidentally injure a citizen is another question. He is awaiting answers and as of late today the City Attorney has stated that he needs time to study those questions. We do have responsibilities, we can not just waive liability. One alderman stated that we could just have the hunters sign waivers but they cannot waive all of the areas outlined and he is not sure if under the law, they can waive their right to be protected. They could sign it, but if they are injured, he is not sure they can waive their right. The real decision tonight is to decide if money is to be allocated.

Captain McCulley stated that since we are on the legal questions, another one may be getting an injured deer on private property and how it is to be handled.

Mayor Wescott stated that there is no question that the decision has been made to take the steps to thin the herd, but we need to work through the legal ramifications.

Ald. Barr stated that he has not heard any negative comments from our neighboring communities that have been doing this for years.

Ald. Walther stated there is no doubt that we have a deer problem and he does see it occasionally on Highway 10 on his way home from work and he admits it is a dangerous problem. He has a problem with spending \$3,000 because it has been said month after month that times are tight with the City budget and he does not feel comfortable spending the \$3,000. He said that he doesn't know how we can look at the State lawmakers and try to convince them that we are acting responsible and then go ahead and spend \$3,000 on this. He does not know the answer but he does not feel that approving \$3,000 is the way to go, at least not at this time with the financial situation the City is currently in.

Ald. Molski stated that people in her District have suffered more than \$3,000 in damage to their property this year alone. She turned in a petition right after Memorial Day with over 200 signatures just from the Green Avenue area and she has had received more calls than ever from everybody in her neighborhood. The damage is really bad and far exceeds \$3,000 and these are taxpayers and they need to have their property protected from this damage.

Motion made by Ald. Molski, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve the \$3,000 for the culling of the deer herd.

Ald. Rackow questioned what would happen to the carcasses.

Ald. Phillips stated there will be a sign up in the City Clerk's office and if there is more than fifty to sixty names on it, the names will be drawn out of a hat and they will be put on the list in that order.

Mayor Wescott questioned whether charitable organizations would have an interest in this.

Ald. Molski questioned who would pay for butchering.

Ald. Phillips said it would cost more dollars to prep the meat.

Ald. Stroik stated that he represents the 9th district which is on the border of the City limits and he does not hear any complaints because it is part of the way of life on the west side. He stated that Ald. Molski brings up an interesting point that if an area is overwhelmed with deer, we are pretty broad in saying that they are going to remove sixty deer over four locations. He questioned how the sixty are going to be split up between the areas.

Ald. Phillips stated there will be fifteen deer from each location.

Ald. Molski questioned if other parts of the City are bothered as bad as the 8th District.

Ald. Phillips stated that there are certain areas that have it worse than others, but the 8th District is open to bow hunters out by the airport which more deer are taken from that area than the rest of the city. It is a trial thing and next year we can adjust it if need be.

Ald. Stroik questioned if we could get more specific and if maybe a University Conservation program could help us determine where the deer are.

Ald. Phillips stated that there has been an on-going study on the deer herd for years and they are involved in this.

Ald. Barr stated that they are not opposed to this and they want feed back from us when this is over.

Tom Jakusz questioned if there has been any thought of doing CWD testing.

Ald. Phillips replied the DNR said no, we do not have to do it. They do not require it in their permit so we do not bother. We can if we want to, but it will cost money and we want to keep the cost down.

Ayes: Ald. Barr, Rackow, Phillips and Molski Nays: Ald. Walther

Motion carried.

7. CONSIDERATION OF FEES - FINGERPRINTING

C/T Schlice stated this would bring the charges up to what the Sheriff's Department and others in the area are charging. The problem now is that since we are the lowest, everybody comes to us for the cut rate and sometimes we need to bring in officers from the road for fingerprinting. The fee has not been changed for sometime and the recommendation is to bring the fee from \$10 to \$20.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Molski to approve the fee increase for fingerprinting to be \$20.

Ald. Molski stated that it is warranted when you consider the amount of time it takes to do them and since people have to stop their jobs to do it.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

8. ASSESSOR'S PLAT

C/T Schlice stated the City Attorney said that we may or may not have to invoke this, he is hoping that we get an agreement, but if we cannot, we would enforce the assessors plat and it would be charged against the benefiting properties. The cost would be anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for the cost of doing the plat.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Walther to approve the assessors plat procedure.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

9. CONSIDERATION OF PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve the payment of claims in the amount of \$1,039,092.37.

The claims were discussed.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Adjournment at 7:38 P.M.

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