

September 5, 2023
Jackson, Minnesota

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall and also by Teleconference and Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 5, 2023 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Marcus Polz. On the roll call, the following persons were present in-person, Mayor Marcus Polz, Alderwoman Sara Mix and Aldermen Mark Titus, Chris Naumann, Nathan Peterson and Joe Pell. Also attending in-person were City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Public Works Director Tony Oxborough, Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk, Community and Business Development Specialist Dave Schmidt of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), Transportation EIT Cody Woessner of HDR, Jackson Fire Chief Dave Bond, Jackson Assistant Fire Chief and Park Board Chairman Michael Haeffner, John Weland of the Jackson County Animal Protection Society, Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services, Pastor Ted Carnahan of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Jackson, Catherine Koppen, Rita Lopic, Bridget Kolander-Gilbert, Paul Hargus, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff, Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot and Mathew Grisham of KKOJ/KUXX Radio. Joining the meeting via Zoom was Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR and Shelley Pohlman of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA). (Alderman Brandon Finck was absent.) (A quorum of the City Council was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Polz announced the Pledge of Allegiance would be recited before the City Council meeting was called to order. All those attending in-person and by Zoom recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Polz called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He said the roll call showed all Councilmembers were present except for Alderman Brandon Finck.

There were no Public Hearings, Bid Lettings or Open Forum.

Unscheduled Guests:

Mayor Polz asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Polz again asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Polz asked for a third time if there were any unscheduled guests in the audience.

Seeing and hearing no unscheduled guests, Mayor Polz said the Council would move onto the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

PELL/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Council Discussion Items

NORA IBARRA – REQUEST FOR PEDDLER/TRANSIENT MERCHANT’S LICENSE FOR FOOD TRUCK

Nora Ibarra joined the City Council meeting via Zoom.

Mayor Polz asked Ibarra to tell the Council a little bit about her business.

Ibarra explained she has owned and operated a Mexican restaurant in Mountain Lake for approximately two years. In addition to Mexican, she also offers American cuisine along with desserts.

Mayor Polz asked Ibarra what her hours or days of operation would be.

Ibarra said she plans to see if she could operate a food truck in Jackson one or two days a week from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. She said she’s been operating her food truck in Windom serving Mexican tacos and other menu items and that’s been going pretty well.

Mayor Polz asked City Clerk Maschoff if all the needed paperwork has been submitted to City Hall.

Maschoff said all the paperwork is in the process of being filed at City Hall.

Skaret asked Ibarra where she plans to operate her food truck in Jackson.

Ibarra said she has contacted Sunshine Foods and also the Family Dollar/Dollar Tree store. She said both locations have granted her permission to operate her food truck in their parking lots.

Titus asked Ibarra what the name of her food truck was.

Ibarra said her food truck is called “La Tejanita”. Ibarra said she’s from Texas and La Tejanita means a “Texas girl”.

PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Peddler/Transient Merchant’s license for Nora Ibarra to operate a food truck in Jackson.

Ibarra thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers.

Mayor Polz thanked Ibarra.

BRIDGET KOLANDER-GILBERT – END OF SUMMER STREET PARTY FROM 5 P.M. TO 12 A.M. ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

Bridget Kolander-Gilbert said she was attending the City Council meeting to request permission from the Council for an event on Saturday, September 16th from 5 p.m. to midnight. She said she would request having the street blocked off in front of Bridget’s Bucksnots Brew Ha Ha and Grill at 105 Sherman Street.

Kolander-Gilbert said she would also like to have live entertainment from 8 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. having “last call” at 11:30 p.m. with everyone off the street by midnight.

Kolander-Gilbert said she’s talked to Jackson County Sheriff Shawn Haken about her plans who gave her a “two thumbs up”.

Kolander-Gilbert said she’s also planning to have food on the street during the event as well.

Peterson asked if the street would be cleaned up and able to be reopened after her event was done at midnight on September 16th.

Kolander-Gilbert said the street would be opened up right after her event was done.

Mix asked Kolander-Gilbert if she would also have picnic tables for her outdoor event.

Kolander-Gilbert said she would have picnic tables.

Mix suggested contacting Public Works Director Tony Oxborough if she needed tables. She told Kolander-Gilbert it was very nice what she did by having picnic tables set up for Race Days/Jackson Days in front of her business. Mix said it was great to be able to sit outside during those days.

MIX/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the request from Bridget Kolander-Gilbert to hold the End of Summer Street Party on Saturday evening, September 16th, 2023 and to close Sherman Street in front of Bridget's Bucksports Bru Ha Ha and Grill from 5 p.m. to 12 a.m. for the event.

Mayor Polz thanked Kolander-Gilbert.

Kolander-Gilbert thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers.

AIRPORT PARALLEL TAXIWAY CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION NO. 1

Field Engineer Cody Woessner of HDR was in attendance at the Council meeting and Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR joined the meeting via Zoom.

Woessner said Pay Application No. 1 is the first pay application for the Parallel Taxiway work. He said it totals \$759,808.19.

Woessner explained the apron area is about halfway completed and work is progressing well on the north end of the new taxiway.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve Pay Application No. 1.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Airport Parallel Taxiway Construction Pay Application No. 1 in the amount of \$759,808.19 payable to Svoboda Excavating, Incorporated of Jackson, Minnesota.

AIRPORT RUNWAY RECONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION NO. 7

Woessner said the new runway at the Jackson Airport was opened up in mid-August. He said Pay Application No. 7 will be the second to the last pay application to be submitted besides the closing out of that project.

Woessner said Airport Runway Reconstruction Pay Application No. 7 is in the amount of \$274,627.98.

Skaret asked Woessner and Hanson if the work at the Airport was ahead of schedule, behind schedule or right where the project needs to be.

Woessner said the new runway was opened when it was expected to be open and so far on the taxiway job, it's going very smoothly. He said he would say the taxiway work is almost ahead of schedule at this point.

Hanson agreed with Woessner. He said the work at the airport is pretty much progressing on their projected schedule. Hanson said, so far, the work on the taxiway is progressing quicker than they had hoped.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve Pay Application No. 7.

TITUS/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Airport Runway Reconstruction Pay Application No. 7 in the amount of \$274,627.98 payable to Svoboda Excavating, Incorporated of Jackson, Minnesota.

GIS CONTRACT AMENDMENT 1 – ZONING MAP UPDATE

Engineer Troy Nemmers said the engineering firm of Bolton and Menk is working on updating the water and sewer mapping by getting it onto GIS so the City has a good beginning of an asset management system.

Nemmers said all the field work for the GIS was done this summer. He explained what was in front of the City Council for consideration is an amendment to take the GIS map that's being set-up and also incorporate the current zoning map and update the zoning map changes that have occurred in the last few years. Nemmers said new zoning maps will be printed to hang on the wall in the Council Chambers and for use by City staff.

Nemmers said the amendment to the GIS Contract would update the City's zoning map using existing maps and City records from previous zoning adjustments, convert existing zoning to GIS and import that into the City's new GIS system, provide a final zoning map for City Council review and approval and provide digital and printed maps as requested by City staff. He said the total price of the contract amendment would be \$3,850.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve the GIS contract amendment.

MIX/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the GIS Contract Amendment No. 1 and Zoning Map update in the amount of \$3,850.

TORGERSON LANE GRAVEL EXTENSION AD FOR BID

Engineer Troy Nemmers explained this project is an extension of the existing Torgerson Lane where it dead-ends in the Industrial Park area. He said currently there's a driveway that comes off the end of that road that runs back to the electric substation located in kind of the southeast corner of the property. Nemmers said there have been some land transactions that have occurred and there is a current need to relocate that driveway.

Nemmers said the City has some agreements with the owner of the electric substation to help build a new driveway that will extend directly south off of Torgerson Lane and kind of loop back around to the east and come in as an alternate access to the substation.

Nemmers said the plans and specifications have been put together and he's looking to advertise the Torgerson Lane Gravel Extension Project with the bid opening on September 28th.

City Attorney Brad Anderson asked what was the projected completion date for the project.

Nemmers said plans are to try and complete the main access road this fall with restoration and clean-up probably taking place in the spring.

Skaret said the final completion deadline is June 14th, 2024.

Nemmers said plans are to try and get the access road installed by November so it's accessible.

Attorney Anderson asked if the contract includes any recovery of the existing pathway?

Nemmers said it doesn't right now. He said it was his understanding to leave the pathway in place but it's certainly something that could be added if there's more discussion about that.

With no further questions, Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve the plans and specifications and authorize advertising for bids for the Torgerson Lane Gravel Extension Project.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the plans and specifications and authorize advertising for bids for the Torgerson Lane Gravel Extension Project.

Mayor Polz thanked Nemmers.

DBS HOUSING PROJECT SUBDIVISION NAME

Skaret said right now on all of the DBS Housing Project Subdivision documents, the Subdivision is referred to as “Fallbrook Heights” which is the proposed housing development east and a little bit south of the liquor store.

Skaret the name “Fallbrook” was suggested by the Jackson EDA but the EDA members that supported that name were also open to changing it.

Skaret said there have been a number of suggestions for names. He said those suggestions include Belmont Heights, Whitetail Estates, Whitetail View, Whitetail View Estates, Prospect Heights, Outlook Estates, Belmont Estates, Outlook Trail Estates, Belmont Trails Estates, Oak Park Estates and Rolling Hills Subdivision. Skaret said if the Council decides to change the name, now is really the last chance to do so without it being a lot of difficulty moving forward.

Titus asked if the City has received any feedback from the public regarding what to name the new housing subdivision.

Mayor Polz said everybody seems to really embrace the culture of Belmont and the history.

Titus said names do mean something. He said his strong feeling is that a name should be used that has some historical basis. Titus noted Jackson is full of historical names such as Ashley Street, Bailey Street, White Street and Kimball Street which were named after pioneer citizens. He said he thinks “Belmont” certainly has some significance and the new housing subdivision is in an area that he would call “Heights”. Titus said his personal opinion would be to call the new subdivision “Belmont Heights”.

Skaret said the Council also needs to look at what they want to call the east-west street that will go through the subdivision. He said right now it’s called Fallbrook Lane. Skaret said the City already has Belmont Lane which goes west out towards the Americinn and Fort Belmont.

Following further discussion among Councilmembers, Titus moved to call the subdivision “Belmont Heights”.

TITUS/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to name the DBS Housing Project Subdivision “Belmont Heights”.

Mayor Polz noted a street name had to also be chosen.

Mix proposed calling the east-west street that will go through the subdivision “Whitetail Lane”.

MIX/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to name the east-west street that will go through the Belmont Heights subdivision “Whitetail Lane”.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PATTERSON PARK SIDEWALK BID/REJECT BID FOR THOMAS HILL/PATTERSON PARK SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECT AND AUTHORIZE RE-BIDDING OF THE PROJECT

Skaret noted as was discussed at the August 1st City Council meeting, this project has been in the works for a long time. He said the project would close the gap in the sidewalk on the south side of Thomas Hill Road by Patterson Park.

Skaret said the City applied for Safe Routes to School Grant Funding back in 2022 and was awarded the grant, but unfortunately the City only received one bid for the project. He noted the City Council had a number of questions about whether the bid could be rejected or whether the City could hire a contractor and be better off just doing the project themselves. Skaret said having the City hire a contractor and do the project themselves is not recommended because it would result in the City rejecting the State Grant Funds. He noted the State normally does not look highly upon that and it might make it more difficult for the City to get funding in the future for these types of projects.

Skaret said the County, who does the engineering on these projects and are also the City’s grant administrator, had talked to the State. He said the City can reject the bid for the sidewalk project and rebid the project this fall to have an October, 2024 completion date. Skaret said there’s no guarantee when you rebid projects but the County feels there may be a better chance of getting a more reasonable bid this time. He said that’s the recommendation from the County.

Skaret said the City has until December 31, 2026 to expend all of the grant funds so the City does have time.

Skaret said if rebidding the project is the will of the City Council, then there will need to be a motion to reject the bid from MR Paving and then authorize rebidding the project this fall.

PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to reject the bid from MR Paving of New Ulm for the Safe Routes to School Patterson Park Sidewalk Project and authorize rebidding the project this fall with a completion date of October, 2024.

LIBRARY HVAC SYSTEM SERVICE CONTRACT – JOHNSON CONTROLS 2023-2024

Skaret said the City is up for renewal for their annual service contract with Johnson Controls for the Library. He said there's a slight increase in the price of the service contract from about \$9,000 to \$9,400 for next year. Skaret said he and Library Director Carrie Dose would recommend renewing the annual service contract.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the City renewing the Service Contract with Johnson Controls for servicing the HVAC System at the Library.

SET PRICE ON THE SALE OF THE DOWNTOWN "OLD ALAMO" BUILDING LOTS

Skaret noted at the August 15th meeting, the City Council approved accepting the three lots back from A.J. and Bridget Lusk. He said the Council asked City staff to get some estimated valuations for the lots from the various realtors in Jackson.

Skaret said Economic Development Coordinator Dave Schmidt reached out to Exit Realty, Bull Market and Hometown Realty. He said the sale prices submitted by the realtors all came in pretty close. Skaret said the range was between \$25,000 and \$30,000 total. He asked Schmidt if there are three lots at the "Old Alamo" location.

Schmidt said according to the plat, there's two lots.

Attorney Anderson said there were three lots, lots 1, 3 and 5. He noted the garage on lot 5 makes that lot a little bit smaller.

Schmidt noted the garage is not owned by the City.

Attorney Anderson said that's what makes lot 5 a little bit smaller.

Schmidt said basically the real estate agents were looking at what the assessed value is of the property and if the City needed to put a price on the property, the recommendation of the realtors was to stick fairly close to the assessed value.

Peterson asked if the realtors only submitted an assessed value for lots 1 and 3 and not lot 5.

Schmidt said he asked the realtors about the lots that were open and what lots the City owns. He said it was his understanding that the City only owns those two lots. Schmidt said he gave the realtors parcel numbers and when he looked at the parcel map, those were the only two lots that still showed they were owned by Bridget Lusk. He said the third lot shows it's owned by the Livewire.

Mayor Polz asked if the City Council needed to table action until the information regarding the lots can be clarified.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to table setting the price on the sale of the downtown "Old Alamo" building lots in order to get clarification about the lots.

LITTLE HUSKIES UPDATE

Skaret said there's been a blizzard of activity since the last City Council meeting regarding Little Huskies. He said back on August 24th, the then Director was circulating emails that the Little Huskies Center was going to close the following day. Skaret said that certainly created some concern. He said it was a top priority to keep that Daycare Center open. Skaret said it would have had an enormous effect on about 80 families or so and on the community's businesses.

Skaret said at that point, the existing Little Huskies Learning Center Board appointed the City Council's Finance Committee members, Brandon Finck, Mark Titus and Mayor Polz and himself to the Little Huskies Board. He explained that was actually kind of tied into the authorization of a \$30,000 loan the City Council had approved for two to three months to help get Little Huskies by until the City could get a sustainable path going forward. Skaret said that path may include the sale of the building which is still in limbo right now.

Skaret said with the appointment of a new Little Huskies Board, which Alderman Peterson is also now a member of, the owners of the building, Chad and Amanda Benda, have agreed to extend the lease of the Little Huskies building through June 1st, 2024 which has been signed.

Skaret explained the Little Huskies Board did some restructuring. He reported Betty Bettin is the Interim Director of Little Huskies and Makenzie Drahota is the Assistant Interim Director.

Skaret said the short-term goal is to stop the bleeding financially and get the business stable.

Skaret said there's a lot to be done, but he thinks they've made a lot of progress in the last couple of weeks. He said the Little Huskies Center is still open. Skaret said they're also starting to get a handle on the finances. He said they met with the Little Huskies staff on Friday, September 1st and had a good meeting. Skaret noted there's a couple more Little Huskies Board meetings that will be held on September 6th.

Skaret also noted Mindy Rowe was on the original Little Huskies Board and is still a Board member and Board Secretary. He said Nate Peterson is President of the Little Huskies Board and Mark Titus is Treasurer. Skaret said City Attorney Brad Anderson is acting as the Attorney for the Little Huskies Board. He said there was an attorney change as previously the Little Huskies Board was utilizing an attorney from Montevideo.

Skaret said Little Huskies will be contracting with Reed and Brinkman for bookkeeping and accounting services.

Attorney Anderson also added that those City officials that are serving on the Little Huskies Board are not representing the City in that capacity. He said Little Huskies is a private corporation and the individuals accepted their positions on this private corporation in their individual capacity and in their own name and not as Councilmen or anything else of the City. Attorney Anderson said the City and Little Huskies are two distinct entities and Little Huskies is a private corporation.

Skaret said Little Huskies is a private, non-profit corporation. He said their meetings are not subject to open meeting laws. Skaret said the Little Huskies private corporation has a set of by-laws that were just amended in the last week. He concurred with Attorney Anderson that the City officials serving on the Little Huskies Board are serving as individuals, not as City officials.

Titus said the City doesn't want to be in the business of daycare, but in saying that, daycare is critically important to the economic growth and the well-being of our community. He said they're trying to do what they can to stabilize the significant part of daycare in this City and then hopefully get it fixed, if you will, so going forward they'll be out of it completely.

Attorney Anderson said he thinks all of the individuals that are part of the whole Little Huskies organization recognize that the new Little Huskies Board had a stabilizing and calming effect and everybody had a chance to catch up, take a breath, step back and look at this and how they intend to proceed.

Naumann said it was considered as an emergency situation as the reason for City officials stepping into the role of becoming Little Huskies Board members.

Skaret said Little Huskies was in danger of closing.

Peterson said no one woke up two weeks ago thinking they would be serving on a daycare board.

Titus said for the record, the Little Huskies Board has the support of the Southwest Initiative Foundation and Scott Marquardt from that Foundation day to day spends a lot of his time dealing with daycare situations around the region. He said it's a real challenge. Titus said the Southwest Initiative Foundation recognize that and are very supportive of what the Little Huskies Board is trying to do.

Skaret said there are a number of things being looked at regarding the operation of Little Huskies. He said the number one commitment was keeping the daycare center open and keeping operations running as seamless as possible.

Mayor Polz said there's a little ways to go, but hopefully it can ease the minds of the parents and help maintain long-term child care in the City of Jackson.

Skaret noted one thing that was really stressed at the Little Huskies staff meeting on Friday, September 1st was that the future of Little Huskies is long-term and there should not be any fear that's it's going to close tomorrow or next week or in a month. He said the Little Huskies Board is fully committed to having a quality, viable long-term daycare center here in town.

FISHING FROM NORTH HIGHWAY/STATE STREET BRIDGES

Skaret said fishing from the North Highway and State Street bridges has gotten to be a problem this summer. He said there's been an overall increase in activity by the river. Skaret said a lot of children, some of them very young, are unattended and are running around the river, swimming in the river and fishing off the bridges. He said fishing off the bridges is a concern especially with the amount of traffic.

Skaret said the river is always a concern. He said there's a strong current, all kinds of debris, rocks and drop-offs in the river. Skaret said there's a lot of unknowns in the river and it's a body of water to be respected.

Skaret said the fishing from the bridge is cause for major concern especially with the volume of traffic on the State Street and Ashley Street bridges. He said the City does have options as far as putting up "no fishing" signage or possibly controlling the situation through an ordinance. Skaret said he spoke with Jackson County Sheriff Shawn Haken and Haken communicated by email that he would recommend just putting up "no fishing" signs to start with.

MIX/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to install No Fishing signs at the State Street Bridge and also request Jackson County to install No Fishing signs on the Ashley Street Bridge.

Mix said if there are kids in Jackson out fishing instead of sitting at home playing video games, that's fantastic. She said maybe the City's Parks and Recreation Committee could look to see if there's a better designated spot that could be made more kid friendly so kids have a good spot to fish. Mix said the City certainly doesn't want to deter kids from fishing. She said if the kids are outside, great, let's find a better spot for them so it's safe.

JACKSON DAYS/JACKSON NATIONALS

Skaret said Alderwoman Mix had requested the Jackson Days/Jackson Nationals be placed on the City Council's agenda.

Mix said the parade and all the activities in town for Jackson Days and the Jackson Nationals were fantastic. She said she was out and about multiple days and there were tons of people out and about.

But Mix said what she was really disappointed in is that you couldn't really tell in the community that we were supportive of the Jackson Nationals. Mix said the activities were there, but she thinks the City really needs to look visually at what they're doing to support the Nationals. She noted the banners across Highway 71 were pitiful. Mix said the City didn't have anything welcoming people into town, no welcome packets. She said everyone saw on Facebook posts from different hotels, not in Jackson, doing welcome baskets.

Mix said she thinks the City needs to put together some kind of coalition to look at what are we doing for next year and maybe budget for it now as the City enters budget time. She said the City wants to really make sure that everyone that comes to Jackson for the activities and the races feels welcomed and they're aware we're a proud racing community.

Mayor Polz said he envisioned having the streets lined with checked flags similar to the American Flags that line the streets during Memorial Day weekend so people coming into town really know that there's a presence of racing in the community.

Mix said letting people know we're glad they're here and welcoming them to our community.

Mayor Polz said he also thought things were lacking visually for the Nationals. He said good job on the last-minute banners that were set up.

Mix said she doesn't know what the City needs to do, but to start thinking about it for next year's City's budget.

Peterson said there's a group of about eight people that are working with the Chamber of Commerce but they just got started this spring. He said the group doesn't have any funds to do anything. Peterson said the group has a lot of ideas.

Mix said she thinks the effort needs to specifically come from the City. She noted there were no City trucks in the parade, why not? Mix said there's so many other things other than moneywise the City could have done. She said the City seriously needs to look at what they can do for the Jackson Nationals and what it's going to cost.

Naumann said the Finance Committee could look at what to do for the Nationals when they work on the budget.

Pell mentioned a few years ago there was a group that travelled from Jackson to Knoxville, Iowa to get ideas on what Knoxville did for their Nationals. He asked how many people are still involved in that group and are we utilizing the ideas that were learned.

Peterson said no one from the group is still involved.

In his opinion, Pell said it was kind of a wasted trip to Knoxville if we're not using the ideas after spending the time and resources to travel to Knoxville to get ideas to get more people to come to Jackson for the Nationals. He said we say we're going to implement the ideas, but we're not.

Skaret said he was actually on the committee that traveled to Knoxville. He noted the idea for an ordinance was brought back from Knoxville and approved by the Jackson City Council to declare the Nationals races as a "Special Designated Event" which relaxes the parking restrictions and restrictions on vendors and so forth.

Skaret said the group traveled to Knoxville in 2019 and in 2020 Covid hit. He said what the City of Knoxville provides for their Nationals is extra policing from their Police Department. Skaret said other than provide extra policing, the City of Knoxville doesn't do a lot pertaining to their Nationals. He said the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce is very active in trying to get the community involved. Skaret said the Knoxville Chamber has the same problems that Jackson does as far as getting the whole community to buy in.

Skaret said he received major kudos from a person he visited with from Washington State that was in Jackson for the Nationals following the 5K run on Saturday morning. He said the gentleman from Washington State was really impressed with Jackson and how the community supports the races. Skaret said the gentleman travels all over to races and had just come to Jackson from Knoxville. He said the gentleman was really impressed with our community on how much support and how nice it was to go downtown and eat at the restaurants and take in the parade and the block party and so forth. Skaret said the gentleman pointed out in a lot of the communities that he goes to; the town actually wants the race track shut down. He said the gentleman was really happy that the Jackson community does not want the race track to shut down and wants to support it. Skaret said we can always do better, but the community of Jackson does better than a lot of communities right now. He said we can always do better.

Skaret said the committee that Peterson is involved with is a great start and thinks that Mix has some really good ideas also that we can build off from this year.

Mix said she definitely thinks it's a building year. She said she thinks the Chamber is going to continue to build up events. Mix said she just wants to make sure that the City doesn't miss the opportunity next year to show our pride and to bring people to Jackson and get them to stay in Jackson. She said once you get people to Jackson and there's things going on and it's a welcoming and there's fun festivities, people are going to stay or next year plan to come back and do more. Mix said we have to start really working on that.

Naumann noted it's in the City's Strategic Plan that they've talked about. He said it would be good if the group that Peterson is involved with provides a recommendation so that can be given to the Finance Committee to see if there's something that's workable.

Mix said there will need to be somebody to put the initiative behind it. She suggested making a five-year plan to work on things to make the community look more welcoming for the Nationals. Mix said a list could be made of what things to complete each year. She said it will take some prep time to do such things as ordering checked flags and associated items and coordinating with the Public Works Director in putting things up.

Polz said the next Strategic Planning Review scheduled in October would be a good time to discuss ideas for the Jackson Nationals.

Mix said she wanted to bring up the Jackson Nationals to the City Council's attention before it's forgotten and next year's Nationals come around again.

Mayor Polz thanked Mix for the input. He said he thought it was a good year for the Jackson Days/Jackson Nationals and was something to build off of.

ORDINANCE REVIEW CHAPTERS 33 AND 34

Skaret said he really didn't have any recommendations for updates to Chapters 33 and 34 of the City Code Book. He said the chapters talk about signatures, purchasing procedures, lodging tax and marketing. Skaret said really the marketing arm of the City is the Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) which is funded from the three percent lodging tax that's collected from the hotels.

Skaret said the funds from the lodging tax are used for promotion. He said there's State Attorney General opinions that are pretty strong on what the funds can be used for. Skaret said the funds can't be used to purchase certain physical things. He said the revenue from the lodging tax is really strictly for marketing.

Mix asked since there are no changes recommended for Chapters 33 and 34, is a motion needed?

Skaret said this agenda item was just for information so it's in the minutes that the City Council reviewed Chapters 33 and 34.

Peterson asked if the lodging tax revenue goes to the Chamber of Commerce.

Skaret said the lodging tax goes to the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. He said the Chamber Director is the Director of the CVB. Skaret said there's a CVB Board and Alderman Joe Pell is the City Council's representative on the CVB Board.

FORMER ERICKSON LOT

Skaret said there's been interest expressed by private parties in purchasing the former Erickson Truck Sales lot along Highway 71. He said since the City purchased that property, the City Council really hasn't had a lot of discussion about what the City wants to do with that lot.

Skaret said he just wanted to inform the Mayor and City Council that they may want to think and talk about what they want to do with the property or if the City wants to sell it to another party for business purposes.

Mayor Polz said his preference would always be if the lot can be used for a business or something to get it back on the tax base, that would always be number one.

Mix said she would agree. She said if someone has interest in it and as long as it's someone who wants to put up a business and has the finances and everything to back it up to operate it in 12 months, sell it.

Skaret said the City wouldn't want to make money off of it, but at least break even with what the City paid for the lot.

Titus agreed if a private party is interested in purchasing the lot for a business that would be the way to go. He said a new business would be a value to Jackson rather than having a sign on that lot that would say "Welcome To" or "Thanks for Visiting Jackson".

Peterson said just like the former Coast to Coast building. He said if someone wants to buy it, have them come forward with a plan

Skaret said no action was needed from the City Council on this agenda item. He said he just wanted to get some direction from the Council.

Mix suggested the City reach out to the private party that's interested in purchasing the former Erickson Truck Sales lot.

Mayor Polz asked if the City had to solicit bids in order sell the lot.

Attorney Anderson said the City doesn't have to solicit bids.

MAYOR'S PROCLAMATION OF SEPTEMBER AS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Mayor Polz said he had a proclamation proclaiming September as Suicide Prevention month.

Mayor Polz read:

WHEREAS, *suicide is a national public health challenge that causes immeasurable pain among individuals, families, and communities across the country; and*

WHEREAS, *suicide prevention is just one element in the larger picture of mental health awareness; and*

WHEREAS, *on November 15, 2022 the Jackson City Council approved a resolution designating the City of Jackson as a Stigma Free Zone and Mayor Polz proclaimed May 2023 as "Mental Health Awareness" month in the City of Jackson; and*

WHEREAS, *according to the CDC suicide rates increased approximately 36% between 2000-2021. Suicide was responsible for 48,183 deaths in 2021, which is about one death every 11 minutes. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher.*

WHEREAS, *for every individual who feels alone, ashamed, or believes that they would be a burden if their thoughts or feelings were shared, there are scores of others in every community who want to help but are not sure how; and*

WHEREAS, *according to the CDC, financial stress, social isolation, substance use, barriers to health care are among the highest factors that can lead to suicide; and*

WHEREAS, residents of Jackson can help raise awareness and lower the stigma surrounding suicide by personally reaching out to someone they suspect is struggling with mental health with personal contact and asking friends and family if they are struggling and connecting them to resources like the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Marcus Polz, by the power vested in me as Mayor of the City of Jackson, Minnesota do hereby proclaim September 2023 in the City of Jackson as Suicide Prevention Month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Jackson to be affixed this 5th day of September, 2023.

Marcus Polz, Mayor

Other:

Alderman Joe Pell

Alderman Joe Pell asked Economic Coordinator Dave Schmidt if there were any leads to fill the empty spaces in the strip mall located near Cabin Coffee.

Schmidt said there are no leads right now that are serious.

On another note, Pell said the renovated City Council Chambers look a lot better and the new chairs are comfortable.

Mayor Polz said the renovation brightens up the Council Chambers a lot.

Pell asked about the City of Jackson sign located by the golf course. He noted the sign is broken at the bottom.

Schmidt said replacing the City of Jackson signs are still being worked on. He said about another \$13,000 is needed to replace the sign near the golf course and the sign on the south side of town.

Pell asked if the signs would be replaced with the same thing as in the past.

Schmidt said there's a sample of what the new signs would look like hanging in the conference room of the Economic Development Office.

Pell said he would be honest, and asked Schmidt if there are other samples besides the two hanging on the Economic Development Office's conference room wall.

Schmidt said those are the two samples of signs a group chose. He said other samples of signs could be looked at if so desired.

Pell said he likes the current signs. He said in his personal opinion, the current signs kind of fit the area.

Schmidt said originally it was thought to keep the original sign but the bottom of the sign was broken. He said the thought of the Committee was if the sign was going to be replaced on the south side of town, let's have uniform signs so they're the same on both the north and south sides of town. Schmidt said if desired, the sign on the north side of town could be redesigned and a similar sign installed on the south side of town.

ALDERWOMAN SARA MIX

Alderwoman Sara Mix asked if the City knew what was going on with the façade at the laundromat on Ashley Street. She asked if the owners had a building permit or are they going to fix the front of their building.

Schmidt said he knows the laundromat's owners received a building improvement grant, but they haven't contacted him with anything further.

Mix said the front of the laundromat is kind of an eyesore. She asked if the laundromat had pulled a building permit.

Maschoff said he would have to check.

Mix asked if there was an update regarding the seeding of yards on South Street.

Skaret said confirmation was received from Duininck's that they were willing to contribute \$10,000 to go towards the turf restoration on South Street. He said that amount would basically be what's left in the final pay application from Duininck's.

Engineer Troy Nemmers said following approval of the final pay application from Duininck's, Duininck's would be looking to work with City staff to come up with a good approach to address the sod and turf restoration. He said the first step is looking at weed control and then looking at some of the areas of turf that need repair.

Mix asked if the turf repair work would try to be done yet this year.

Public Works Director Tony Oxborough said a letter will be composed and sent out to all the homeowners to determine who would, or would not, want their boulevard sprayed for weeds. He explained the season just opened up for planting or putting grass back in. Oxborough said letters will be sent out to all the homeowners along the South Street project to see who wants their boulevard sprayed for weeds. He said Polz's Lawn Care will actually spray all the boulevards.

Oxborough said near the end of September, sod replacement will be taking place for all the street projects and it will be an opportunity for the City to figure out which yards need the sod replaced.

Mix said that was awesome. She asked if there were any updates regarding the swimming pool.

Skaret said the City is waiting for the report on the pool. He said the report was expected at the end of August. Skaret said an email was received last week from Burbach Aquatics that it will probably be another couple of weeks before the report is ready. He said the people that have been working on that have been on the road working in the field building pools, that's what makes money for them. Skaret said Burbach Aquatics said a report on the Jackson pool should be ready in a couple of weeks.

Mix asked if there was a final report yet regarding the former Coast to Coast building.

Skaret said a report on the former Coast to Coast building is not ready yet.

Mix asked as the owner of the building, does the City need to do anything to prepare for winter? She asked if the building was secure.

Mayor Polz said since Mix brought up the topic of the former Coast to Coast building, he did see there was a letter to the editor in the newspaper from an individual that claimed the City is anti-business. He said the individual wrote that he was looking to put apartments in the upper floor of the building and looking to refurbish the retail space and possibility open a sporting goods store. Mayor Polz said he took the liberty to address the individual in a letter and invited him to get some quotes to repair and renovate the building and come to the City with proof of funding. He said then maybe the City and the individual could look at putting together a development agreement. Mayor Polz said by all means, the City doesn't want to be anti-business and wants to give the individual the opportunity to look into quotes and develop a business plan.

Titus agreed with Mayor Polz. He said his only suggestion is that Mayor Polz's response to the individual thinking about developing a business in the former Coast to Coast building needs to be printed in the newspaper. Titus said that kind of response is needed and the public needs to hear it. He said the City is being criticized because they're against business and, of course, they're not. He said have the individual come and show the City their plan.

Mix asked Mayor Polz if he put a time-frame for the individuals to come forth with a development plan.

Mayor Polz said he asked for a plan to be submitted in 60 days.

Mix said if a plan is not submitted, what does the City need to do to secure the former Coast to Coast building for winter.

Pell suggested replacing the boards on the front of the building so it looks a little bit more appealing. He said the material that's on the front of the building now is ridiculous. Pell said even if the City has to spend the money and put some decent plywood on there and paint it, just make it look a little bit better.

Alderman Nathan Peterson

Alderman Nathan Peterson asked City Attorney Brad Anderson what the next step was regarding the former Prairie Winds Motel property.

Attorney Anderson reported between 4:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. on September 5th, he received information that the judgement regarding the former Prairie Winds Motel property had been entered. Previous to the judgement, Attorney Anderson said he talked about getting a certified copy of that judgement to enforce it.

Attorney Anderson said the next step would be sending a copy of the certified order to the owners of the property and inform them they have two weeks or 30 days to get their personal property out of the building. He said then the City is going to take action to remove the nuisance and haul it away.

Mix asked if the City had a bid to remove the building.

Skaret said the City does not have a bid. He said City officials haven't been able to get onto the property.

Mix asked if the property owners are given two weeks to remove their personal property, can the City access the property during that time?

Skaret noted there was a 30 day stay in case if the property owner wanted to appeal the Judge's ruling, but that 30-day period has now expired.

Attorney Anderson said he spoke with Skaret this afternoon. He said he suggested if there's a contractor that wants to take a look at taking the building down, to contact City Hall, get a copy of the Court Order and get a Sheriff's Deputy to go along to maintain peace so the contractor can look at the building and provide the City with an accurate bid.

Mix said she would like the City to get quotes for demolition of the building.

Pell asked if the Fire Department could do a controlled burn of the building.

Jackson Fire Chief Dave Bond said the City would have to have the DNR (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources) involved in the process and inspect the site before a controlled burn could take place. He said it involves a lot of paperwork even to do a controlled burn.

Attorney Anderson noted the City would have to do the hazardous materials abatement regardless whether it's a controlled burn or tearing the building down with a bulldozer or a truck. He said it may be cheaper overall to burn the building, but the asbestos will still have to be removed before the burn along with obtaining the proper permits. Attorney Anderson said whichever path is followed of either tearing the building down or burning it, the City will still have to remove the asbestos and incur that expense.

Mix said it sounds like things are progressing.

City Administrator Matt Skaret

Skaret said the second Citywide Clean-up of the year will be held on September 16th for the west side of Highway 71 and on September 23rd for the east side of Highway 71.

Skaret said the City is advertising for a new Ambulance Director. He said applicants have until October 1st to apply. Skaret said the City is advertising the position online on the City's website. He said if the Mayor or Councilmembers know of anyone that's interested in applying, the link is on the City's website on how to apply.

Alderwoman Sara Mix

Mix said “good job” to the team that redesigned the City Council Chambers. She said it really looks nice.

Skaret noted the room is not totally completed. He said the baseboards, which will be green, still need to be installed. Skaret said the baseboards are on back-order and should arrive in a week.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mayor Polz asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 7:39 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Marcus Polz, Mayor

