

City of Decorah Community Betterment & Housing Committee Meeting Thursday, July 16, 2020 – 7:30am

The City of Decorah Community Betterment & Housing Committee met on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at approximately 7:30am.

Electronic meeting pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8 – In circumstances where such a meeting is impossible or impractical due to concerns about COVID-19 and social distancing for the safety of Council members and the public.

In support of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation declaring a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency in Iowa, the current COVID-19 situation makes it "impossible and impractical" to meet in one location. Due to this the Decorah City Hall was open to the public for the July 27, 2020 City Council work session meeting. However, seating was limited to ensure proper social distancing. Seating was available on a first-come, first served basis. However, the meeting was made available telephonically.

Chairman Johanna Bergan called the meeting to order and the following answered roll: Ross Hadley, Steve Luse, and Randy Schissel. Mayor Lorraine Borowski, Andy Carlson, Kirk Johnson, and Emily Neal were also in attendance. Others in attendance: City Manager Chad Bird and several Dept Heads, Krista Vanden Brink, and John Anderson.

Agenda

COVID pandemic public health and safety measures

Neal asked how the Council / City can show support to other organizations trying to stay safe and in facilitating a mask / face covering mandate. She suggested a face covering requirement combined with an educational / PSA related campaign to push the message.

Vanden Brink noted the local board of health has been asked to work on a face covering initiative. She also noted enforcement of such a requirement is very difficult.

Mayor Borowski asked about some of the scientific aspects of such a requirement. She noted there is much information available and she also noted masks AND distancing seem to be key and tied together.

City Attorney Anderson reviewed some of the legal aspects of a municipal mandate and noted the Iowa Attorney General and the Governor have both indicated there is no local authority to issue such a mandate. Anderson noted the local Board of Health may have some authority but there is a process for that action.

It was noted the next Board of Health meeting is August 5. There was discussion of attending or sending a City representative.

The Committee directed the drafting of a resolution to speak to these points:

- 1) Urge the Governor to issue a State level mandate*
- 2) Urge the County Board of Supervisors and Board of Health to support face coverings through a recommendation or mandate*
- 3) Develop and begin a public service announcement and education program with specific brand awareness geared towards reinforcing the importance of wearing a mask*
- 4) Lead by example and wear face coverings*

Anderson reviewed his opinion and perspective on proceeds that may need to be followed for issuing regulations and mandates. He noted the Board of Health may be best situated to issue mandates, especially through the Board of Supervisors.

Hadley noted he has been wearing a mask from the beginning and he believed the City should be the bad guy and lead this initiative.

Mayor Borowski asked to review other cities' resolutions and documents and wanted a review of definitions.

There was consensus that the city should be in lock-step with the Winneshiek County Board of Health on this issue.

Neal mentioned the educational aspect and the need to continue sending the message.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 8:37am.

Respectfully submitted,



Community Betterment & Housing – *Bergan, Hadley, Luse, Schissel

Improving quality of life in a community requires supporting initiatives that look to the future of the community. Initiatives and suggestions involving housing, and quality of life matters for the citizens and visitors of Decorah. Improving the quality of the environment through conservation; educational efforts; community beautification or restoration efforts; improving the quality of neighborhoods through capacity building efforts; economic development and overall planning contribute to betterment of a community. Connecting community needs with available resources; by officially recognizing the participating communities and neighborhoods. Ordinance and other policy issues related to matters involving Human Rights Commission and code sections and Historic Preservation Commission and code sections.