

June 6, 2022

The regular meeting of the Decorah City Council was called to order by Mayor Borowski at 5:45 pm.

The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers and electronically.

The meeting was opened with the pledge of allegiance.

Members present: Randy Schissel, Emily Neal, Kirsten Olson, Steve Luse, Steven Zittergruen, Ross Hadley, Kirk Johnson

Public Comment:

Kate Scott-405 E Broadway

Kate expressed how beautiful and moving the Nordic Choir Concert was. She also wanted to address a comment that Council member Zittergruen had made at the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding the amount of commercial space Decorah has. Kate expressed how vital downtown is to Decorah. She would like to see a retail analysis be completed in Decorah and urges Council to make connections with the main street businesses.

Kim Bosworth-3105 Locust Road

Kim is the owner of Java John's in Decorah. Kim feels that the downtown area is thriving, and people enjoy our business district. She feels that the downtown area should not be a residential district and that Decorah needs parking. Decorah should not follow trends of other towns.

Christopher Hick-812 Fifth Avenue

Christopher and Linda own Heavenly Made in downtown Decorah. They are not in favor of an apartment complex in the downtown area. Decorah has a unique community and a great downtown. He feels that change would hurt the retailers.

Zach Kerndt-504 E Water St

Zach helps run the Winneshiek Raceway and due to scheduling conflicts he wanted to get input from Council regarding holding the races on Sunday June 12, 2022. Winneshiek Raceway would be flexible on the time of the races, so they do not go late into the evening.

Motion by Luse, seconded by Olson to approve consent agenda

- a. Minutes of the May 16, 2022 Regular Meeting and May 23, 2022 Work Session
- b. Claims
- c. Art on Washington Special Permit
- d. New Application for Class B Beer Permit Pizza Hut #4319
- e. Skyline Lanes Tax Abatement
- f. FY'23 Cigarette/Tabacco/Vapor Permits
- g. Amendment to Skyline Lanes Class C Liquor License with Sunday Sales – New Ownership

Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Borowski opened the public hearing at 6:09 p.m. regarding the proposed vacation of the utility and sidewalk easement at 704 Serenity Drive Decorah Iowa.

Jeff Grusy of 704 Serenity Drive spoke regarding the property he owns. He explained to the Council that this was due to landscaping on his property and with the easement there is limited room, therefore he is requesting the vacation.

Mayor Borowski closed the public hearing at 6:13 p.m.

Hadley made a motion to approve Resolution 3277 approving to vacate the utility and sidewalk easement at 704 Serenity Drive, Luse seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Borowski opened the public hearing at 6:14 p.m. regarding amending Chapter 15.04 related to design criteria variances in the C-3 district.

Kate Scott at 405 E Broadway, Decorah spoke and requested that Council put the multiple, Where As, back into the Ordinance. That information supported the intent to keep the downtown Decorah looking historical.

Mayor Borowski closed the public hearing at 6:17 p.m.

Hadley made a motion to approve the first reading of an Ordinance amending Chapter 15.04 related to the C-3 design criteria as presented, Johnson seconded the motion. The Council spoke regarding the "Where As" that Kate Scott had referred to. Hadley then withdrew his motion and Johnson also withdrew his second to the motion. Hadley then made a motion to table this discussion and send this to the Betterment Committee, Johnson seconded the motion. The Council then discussed again what the purpose of this ordinance was and decided it would be best to clarify the original language first, then they could work on the "Where As" later. Hadley then withdrew his motion with Johnson also withdrawing his second of the motion. Schissel made a motion to approve the ordinance amending Chapter 15.04 changing the language to state the Board of Adjustment grants variances, not the City Council as it was presented. Luse seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

Schissel made a motion to approve Resolution 3278 setting a public hearing for the Kwik Star site plan for June 20, 2022 at 5:45 p.m. at the Decorah Council Chambers; Olson seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

Schissel made a motion to approve Resolution 3279 setting a public hearing for July 5, 2022 at the Decorah Council Chambers on the airport lease with the FAA for the NAVAID; Neal seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

Johnson made a motion to approve the second reading of the ordinance approving the conditional rezoning for the Prairie Lakes Church, Schissel seconded the motion. Neal expressed to her fellow Council to vote against this because of the potential loss in property taxes. Roll call vote. Ayes: Johnson, Schissel, Zittergruen, Hadley. Nays: Neal, Olson, Luse. Motion carried.

Kate Scott-405 Broadway- requested to speak to the Council regarding property Lots 1 of 3, 4, 5, 6 of BLK 5 of Original Decorah. She feels that it is important to know the market value of this lot. Kate is asking that the Council explore every option and to be aware that there is more than one solution for the use of that land. Please let others be aware that there are discussions happening regarding the use of that land. Hadley made a motion to reject an offer from Kate Scott to purchase Lots 1 of 3, 4, 5, & 6 of BLK 5 Original Decorah, Olson seconded the motion. City Manager, Travis Goedken, explained that the Council would not necessarily need to reject the offer. The offer itself has an expiration date, so if the Council does nothing, the offer will just expire. Hadley then withdrew his motion to prevent more confusion for the public. Motion dies.

Luse made a motion to approve the Leave Policy as presented, Olson seconded the motion. The City Manager explained that this policy mimics the Union Agreement but thought it was better if the City had an actual separate policy for the nonunion employees. Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

The City Manager explained that the board members of the Decorah Senior Hospitality Center approached the city about possibly entering into an agreement allowing the Center to become part of the city. Marilyn Bassford-606 Fifth Avenue, a member of the Center, requested to speak to the Council on this matter. She stated that this Center is especially important to the community and that the senior citizens represent 25% of the population in Decorah. She feels that the city should be providing services for this population but for the Center to remain available to the senior citizens during the day Monday through Friday. The Center has up to 125 members. The Council discussed their thoughts on the opportunity. The Council directed the City Manager to move forward with discussions with the board members.

The City Manager explained to the Council that there is an individual that would like to donate the money to install three decorative lights on the Fifth Avenue Bridge. The donation would be in the estimated amount of \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00. The individual would like to remain anonymous. The City Engineer, Jeremy Bril, told the Council that the costs and maintenance of these three lights would be minimal. Steve Zittergruen stated that he is concerned about the light pollution. Majority of the Council felt there was no need for anymore lights on the bridge since the walkway is lit up. Johnson stated that the lights were part of the original design that was never completed. He felt the Council should reconsider the donation and install the lights.

The City Manager discussed the business park tax abatement program with the Council. When the City Manager was researching the abatement process for the business park, he discovered that this was being done on a per project basis and not as a whole. He wanted to discuss this with the Council due to Skyline Motorsports requesting a tax abatement. Goedken explained options to the Council. Neal felt that the Council needs to dedicate a work session to the tax abatement program. She has no interest in giving tax abatement. Hadley and Olson feel that the area needs to be treated as a renewal area. Zittergruen would like to see the City being able to negotiate the tax terms with the individual businesses. The City Manager will set up a work session to work on the tax abatement and tax rebate process.

Hadley made a motion to support Mayor Borowski's reappointment of Ben Grimstad and Michelle Barnes to the Sustainability Commission, Neal seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voting ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Borowski also reminded everyone that the city is still accepting applications for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Applications will be accepted through June 15, 2022. There is also an opening on the Tree Board.

Adjourned 8:15 p.m.

Keri Sand  
City Clerk-Finance Officer