

Sidney, Nebraska, March 23, 2021 A Fair Housing City

A meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Sidney, Nebraska, was convened in open and public session at 6:15 P.M. on March 23, 2021 in the Council Room. Present in person were: Mayor Gallaway and Council Members: Arterburn, Sherman, Radcliffe and Olsen. Others present: City Manager Scott, City Attorney Leef and City Clerk Heilbrun. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in *The Sidney Sun Telegraph*, the designated method for giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was also given to the members of the City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the City Council. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Mayor Gallaway noted that Governor Ricketts Executive Order No. 20-36 allows governing bodies to meet by electronic communications from December 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021, as long as such meeting access is available to members of the public and members of the media.

Mayor Gallaway informed the public of the location of the posted Open Meetings Act.

Sherman moved, Arterburn seconded "That the minutes of the March 9, 2021 meeting be approved as printed. Roll call vote: Yeas: All council members present.

As required by Nebraska State Statute 18-2117.02, Finance Director Lane Kizzire gave the Annual TIF Report for the City of Sidney, which included ten projects totaling \$11,640,000.00.

Mike Palmer, Electric Distribution Supt. and representative on the ACE Board of Directors, presented a power point on the Gas Provider Open Election Period which runs from March 18 through April 22nd. He noted that the City of Sidney has been a member of ACE (Alliance for Community Energy) since its inception in 1998, receiving \$226,319.84 in total disbursements back to our community during this period. The disbursements have been used for community projects such as the Legion Park Pond, Playground Equipment, Ballfield Lighting and Community Clean-up. He noted that there are seven suppliers in the choice program this year and urged everyone to select a supplier. He noted that not doing so would put them at the highest rate through Black Hills Energy. There will be an Open House on March 25, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for anyone wanting more information on the program, along with handouts and t-shirts for attendees.

Mayor Gallaway gave a recap of the L17J project with the State paying 80% and the City of Sidney 20% of the estimated \$2,474,788.00 project total. He explained that the City is not allowed to add aesthetic improvements to the medians such as trees, rock, etc., but could elect to enhance the medians with color/stamping. At the March 9, 2021 Council meeting he had proposed to add red-stamped concrete in the medians along L17J and Hwy 30 coming into Sidney for a cost of \$141,155.10, or \$21,523.65 for stamped concrete only. In addition, the maintenance for this was estimated at \$30,000 every two years. He opened the floor for public comment.

Members of the public speaking on the issue included Jamie Bitner, Adam Price, Sarah Sinnett, Kevin Howard, Vickie Loghry, Joel Ahrens, Mark and Ruth Plaster, and Kevin Challburg. The general consensus of those speaking was that the cost would not be worth the return to the community. They suggested improvements to the downtown business district, park equipment, the extension of sidewalks

to the Swimming Pool, signage/wayfinding to get people downtown, etc., rather than stamped concrete.

Street Supt. Hank Radtke cautioned that the State periodically sprays yellow paint on the sides of the medians which can drift onto the top of the medians, as well as weed spray which contains dye that can cause discoloration.

Councilman Radcliffe pointed out that the City would have to borrow the \$141,000.00 for the color/stamped concrete in addition to the paving costs of \$2.4 million, and questioned whether it was wise to do so.

Councilman Arterburn pointed out that the Downtown Master Plan does not recommend Wayfinding improvements, etc. to the L17J route, but rather Old Post Rd, 10th and 11th Avenues. It was his opinion that the addition of “new concrete” in the medians will already be an improvement without the color and stamping, while also saving the taxpayers the additional money.

Councilman Sherman stated that he appreciated everyone’s comments and found himself in the middle of the road on the issue. He noted that while he thought the red-stamped concrete would look nice, the City could do other things to make more impact.

Councilman Olsen felt that the cost for the color and stamping of the medians was exorbitant and would like to see other items, such as signage to bring people into town, addressed.

Mayor Gallaway described this issue as one piece of a bigger picture. He noted that while he felt the City could not afford to neglect all the entrances into town, he agreed that additional signage and lighting would be an asset to draw people into town. He broke down the estimated cost of the red-stamped concrete over a 15-year period, noting that the return on investment showed a lot of potential.

Another option, that only the Highway 30 median into downtown Sidney be red-stamped concrete, was offered for consideration. City Manager Scott stated that he could get an estimate on this if needed. The suggestion was added to the list of options to be considered.

Mayor Gallaway thanked all who contacted the City or attended the meeting for their positive feedback. He outlined the four (4) options for consideration for the medians along L17J and Hwy 30 and asked for a motion for one of the following:

Option 1) Enhanced with red-stamped concrete - L17J and East entrance-Hwy 30

Option 2) Stamped concrete only - L17J and East entrance-Hwy 30

Option 3) As Is

Option 4) Enhanced with red-stamped concrete - East entrance-Hwy 30 only

Arterburn moved, Radcliffe seconded “ That Option 3 – As Is for the L17J/Hwy 30 Medians be approved.” Roll call vote: Yeas: Arterburn, Olsen, and Radcliffe. Nays: Gallaway and Sherman.

Economic Development Director Melissa Norgard noted that “Wayfinding” is a distinct point in the Master Plan and that she is currently working on a grant to cover costs for this.

City Manager/Staff Report: City Manager Scott 1) reminded everyone of the Ribbon Cutting for the new ESU Building on April 20, 2021 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.; 2) Economic Development Committee meeting on March 24th at noon; 3) Has not had any response on LB408 which has not gone to the floor, as they are still debating possible amendments; 4) Guidelines are still being determined on the American Recovery Act for additional recovery of police salaries, possible local infrastructure, etc. **Chief Aikens** reported that signage is going up in the L17J Construction Zone and speed limits have already been lowered. He noted that fines for speeding are double when workers are present; **Street Supt. Radtke** Pre-Construction meeting for 13th Avenue project is March 30th; **Library Director Sandstrom** reported that the Bookmobile is back on the road; **Electric Supt. Palmer** reported that the sign up for the underground conversion for the core of town is underway. Residents are required to pay one-half of the cost, up to \$600, which can be paid in 24 monthly installments on their utility bill once the project is complete. Reminded everyone to choose Someone/Choose ACE for gas supplier.

City Council comments: Councilman Olsen noted that he would be late for the special Council meeting on 3/23 due to a conflict with the Housing Authority meeting at the same time. **Mayor Gallaway** noted that Olsen is also serving on the Downtown Business Association and asked if anyone else on the Council would want to represent the City on the Housing Authority Board. **Councilman Sherman** volunteered to serve as the City's representative on the Housing Authority Board. This appointment will be added to the next council agenda for approval. Sherman thanked the public who had come to speak at the meeting tonight. **Mayor Gallaway** echoed this thank you.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

/s/ROGER GALLAWAY, MAYOR

ATTEST: /s/CYNTHIA K HEILBRUN, CITY CLERK