

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 10, 2010
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCIL MEMBER ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH M. BUTLER, JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER TERESA R. MACALUSO
COUNCIL MEMBER JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM**

ALSO PRESENT: **MARY M. CORRIVEAU, CITY MANAGER
ATTORNEY JAMES A. BURROWS**

City staff present: Gene Hayes, Kurt Hauk, Ken Mix, Joe Goss, Dale Herman, Jayme St. Croix and Jim Mills

Staff Reports:

1. City Center Industrial Park Option Agreement, City Manager Mary M. Corriveau, May 7, 2010
2. City Held Tax Sale Certificates, City Manager Mary M. Corriveau, May 6, 2010
3. Court Street Loading Zone Request, City Manager Mary M. Corriveau, May 6, 2010

Discussion Items:

1. Park Rules, Planning and Community Development Coordinator Kenneth A. Mix, May 6, 2010
2. Alcohol Permit Update, City Manager Mary M. Corriveau, May 7, 2010

Budget Session:

1. Parks and Recreation
2. Multi Year Plan
3. Revenues

Mayor Graham opened the work session.

City Center Industrial Park Option Agreement

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the option agreement between the City of Watertown and the Watertown Local Development Corporation expires on July 6, 2010. This option is for land at the City's Industrial Park. She asked if Council wished to renew the option agreement.

Council Member Burns remarked that it makes sense to approve this and to have Mrs. Corriveau enter into discussions. It makes the most sense in developing that area.

Mayor Graham advised that he is president of the WLDC board and Mrs. Corriveau serves on the board.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that she could assign the work to a staff member.

Attorney Burrows remarked that the first step should be to make sure that WLDC wants to exercise the option.

Mayor Graham commented that the City should send a letter to WLDC so it would be available for their next meeting.

Council Member Butler asked if they market the property.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that they do actively market the property. The parcel is sold to the Trust and then they, in turn, sell it. Such was the case with Roth Industries. In the case of Current Applications, they are the lessee and the Trust is the lessor.

Council Members Burns, Butler, Macaluso and Smith all concurred to continue to provide WLDC with option rights to develop the property, if they have a continued interest to do so.

City Held Tax Sale Certificates

Council reviewed the listing of these properties. Discussion centered on M.E. Avery property and Mayor Graham asked if there really was contamination there or if these were just rumors that have been passed down through the years.

Mr. Mix explained that NYS DOT tore down the original building when widening Massey Street. There are test wells on the site. There have been people interested in the property in the past.

Mayor Graham commented that it would seem that we should be able to find out the status of the test results.

Mrs. Corriveau will contact DOT.

Council Member Smith asked what the status of 457 Court Street was.

Attorney Burrows explained that Codes might have the information on it. The City holds the tax sale certificate, but chose not to take title to it. That way, the tax sale certificate could be sold and the City would not be in the chain of title.

Council was advised that there is presently an effort by the owners to market the Martin Street property.

Mr. Mills explained that a quit claim deed is given when the City sells a parcel at auction. We have never included tax sale certificates in the auctions before.

Mayor Graham asked about putting these certificates in the next property auction.

Council Member Burns remarked that she agrees that they should be included in the auction and would like some background information on the properties before this is done.

Council Members concurred that the tax sale certificates should be included in the next auction.

Court Street Loading Zone Request

Council Member Burns remarked that this issue was raised early in the spring and she was hoping that there would, at least, be a vehicle drop off area established there. She explained that after the Square was completed, the City revisited parking in front of Avon Shoes and the Crystal Restaurant. There is no handicap parking in the area fronting Bistro 108, the wine shop or the new candle shop. She remarked that there is room in front to have an area for one car to pull in and drop people off for these businesses.

Council Member Smith commented that this was discussed in December 2008 and staff was asked to look into at that time. On January 5, 2009, Council agreed to have two spots for a 15 minute loading zone. Council asked that Mr. Hennigan be notified of it. Council Member Smith commented that he though it was settled.

Mayor Graham advised that any member of Council could request an ordinance for this. He commented that it is foolish if Council makes a decision and a year later it still has not been changed.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the issue had fallen off her radar scope at the time.

Mr. Hauk reviewed his memo with Council and outlined his reasoning for not supporting the change.

Council Member Smith questioned the reasons and remarked that there areas on Washington Street that should be eliminated also if safety is the concern.

Mr. Hauk explained that when vehicles come off the American Corner and go up either Arsenal or Court, there is a tendency for them to speed up. He advised that there have been 88 accidents on Public Square since August 2008. The majority of them have been rear end, backing

accidents. It is all centered on the 200' site distance. He remarked that even if we don't agree with the design, which was done by a traffic engineer, we have the responsibility for the safety of it.

Discussion centered on signage and the difference between stopping, standing and loading.

Council Member Smith commented that trucks are always stopping and unloading on Public Square.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that is why we created the pull in spaces going up Washington Street. They are not parking spaces, but are loading zones.

Mr. Hauk advised that a loading zone would have to be defined in the Code.

Council Member Butler remarked that right now, a vehicle can stop and drop off someone.

Council Member Burns remarked that the average person sees the no parking sign and thinks that they can't do that.

Council Member Smith proposed the area be signed to indicate that a vehicle can stand or stop there, but not park.

Fairgrounds Concession

Council Member Smith remarked that if the private sector finds that this is not feasible, isn't the City setting itself up for a loss?

Mayor Graham commented that this could be accomplished with as little as vending machines.

Council Member Macaluso explained that this would almost have to be an off-shoot of a regular business in order for someone to make it profitable.

Council Member Burns commented that other municipalities run their arenas and make a profit.

Mr. St. Croix advised that minor hockey runs the Clayton arena. Alex Bay is considering taking their arena over. Some municipalities charge a percentage and others charge a flat rate.

Council Member Burns commented that having city staff approach this under the direction of Mr. St. Croix is the best idea.

Mr. St. Croix explained that they would need 3 employees for Rock and Skate and 8 for the concerts. They would be seasonal and the labor costs would be around \$8,000 to \$10,000. He also advised that there is no equipment there at the present time.

2010 Assistance to Firefighters' Grant

Battalion Chief Dale Herman was in attendance to answer any questions that City Council had concerning the application for this grant. He explained that the City had been successful in obtaining these grants in the past.

Council concurred that the Fire Department could submit the grant application.

Letter from Sacred Heart Daycare

Kelly Grass, Director of the Sacred Heart Daycare, sent a letter to Council asking them to reconsider closing the city pools.

Mayo Graham advised that there was no intention of closing the pools. A letter will be sent to her advising her of this.

Park Rules & Alcohol Permits

It was agreed that even though day programs are held at the following parks, they shouldn't be included on the list of rules in the City Code: East Hills/Meadow, John Q. Adams, Knickerbocker and New York Avenue (9th Ward). Mayor Graham remarked that if it is private land and we are only holding events there during the day, we shouldn't be responsible for it.

Chief Goss explained that over the past 2 years, 17 individuals have gone to court for open container law violations, not necessarily from in Thompson Park. He commented that it is good to have a permit system. He also remarked that he had received several calls from residents near the park and they believe the park should close at 9p.m, as does he. Since 2004, there have been 14 calls to the park for criminal mischief. There has been damage at the golf course, driving on the lawns and damage to the stonework. He said that firearms and bows & arrows should be banned there. He also mentioned that Craig's list had listed a meeting of pit bulls and their owners for Sunday afternoons. He stated that he had patrols up there but no meeting was found on the Sundays that they checked. He also mentioned that jousting groups wanted to use it and he didn't think that should be allowed.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that jousting groups have used the park for several years. There are usually very few individuals involved in the re-enactments and they have never been a problem.

Chief Goss remarked that there needs to be a point of contact with these groups so the City will know who is in the park.

Mr. St. Croix advised that there are 400 reservations in Thompson Park this year. The alcohol permit form will be sent out with their paperwork. He also advised that the pool closes at 8 p.m.

Council Member Smith remarked that by closing at 9 instead of midnight, the only people being harmed are those that abide by the rules. He commented if anyone is going to destroy something, they would do so regardless of the closing time.

Council Member Burns asked about the permit for the Syracuse Symphony concert.

Mr. St. Croix responded that it was a blanket permit.

Council Member Burns stated that we were breaking our own rules.

Council Member Smith asked if the Syracuse Symphony was aware that the permit was in their name.

Mayor Graham remarked that the Council should pass a resolution prior to the concert.

Attorney Burrow suggested that the City Manager have the authority to waive the permit.

Mr. Hayes reviewed some of the rules and regulations for the NYS Parks. He said that their permits are defined on the number of people and the number of drinks.

Council Member Burns remarked that she understood and respected Chief Goss' opinion to have permits for larger crowds and any large event as staff needs to be aware of it.

Home Rule for Deck Area

Mayor Graham asked about this legislation.

Attorney Burrows responded that in order to do home rule legislation, Council needs to know what they want to do – sale or lease and what portion of the lower deck will be involved. He also explained that, in the past, city staff has drawn up legislation and it has just been reviewed by the attorneys. He advised that the NYS Dept. of State was in on the design and the funding of the deck and was fully supportive. Now, they aren't. He also advised that the grant agreement requires the City to provide substitute property for that taken for the deck if it is sold or leased.

Mayor Graham asked if Council wanted to move forward with home rule.

Council Member Burns asked if the property owner wants it. She said if they do, then she agrees we should move forward.

Council Member Smith responded that he was not in favor of home rule action.

Council Member Macaluso and Council Member Butler stated that they were in favor of moving forward.

Mrs. Corriveau expressed her concern over the fact that if it sold, we don't know what the building would be used for in 15 year. It may have a different owner.

Council Member Macaluso questioned the need to hold onto it even if the building changed hands.

Budget Session

Parks and Recreation

Page 140; 141; 155

Mayor Graham asked if there were any significant changes in the programs this year.

Mr. St. Croix explained that they are proposing implementing concentration of staff to primary/pool complex playgrounds for the purpose of providing a greater diversity of team activities to a greater number of youth. The summer programs would be at the four playgrounds and would not only create an improved summer program but would also save about \$13,000 in wages. There are several playgrounds that have had attendance drop consistently over the years. This would provide a better program to the youth of the community. Golf and tennis will continue.

Council Member Burns remarked that she applauds these efforts as she had asked that the programs be looked into as they were getting stale.

Council Member Smith expressed his concerns with not having the playgrounds staffed and questioned how the children would get to the sites.

Mr. St. Croix responded that they come to the pools throughout the summer.

Referring to page 155 under Pool Assessment Development, Council Member Smith asked if local pool companies could do this.

Mr. Hayes and Mr. St. Croix advised that this fee was to bring in experts in these types of pools. The pools are old and these assessments need to be done before repairs can be made.

Council Member Smith responded that some of the basic information needed would be when they were built. Staff works in these pools all the time and should know what they need.

Referring to page 140, sledding hill hay/fencing, Council Member Smith suggested that ski fences be used instead.

Work session adjourned at 10:59 p.m.

Donna M. Dutton

City Clerk