

The Common Council met immediately following the Water Utility Board on the above date in the Meeting Room at City Hall Annex with Mayor Knowles presiding and members Askren, Angel, and Cooper attending. Councilmen Tucker and Rueger were not present. Others attending were Chief Beloat; Comm. Gray; Supt. Givens; Attorney Funkhouser; Ann Fisher; Nancy Sexton; Mary Weintraut; Larry Williams; Ken Rudibaugh; Mary Ann Watson; Bob and Liz Buckley; Dan Hefling - ICI; John Robb; Jamie Grabert - Posey County News; and arriving during the meeting Chris Janak - Bose McKinney.

Mayor Knowles called the meeting to order by stating members were either mailed or hand carried copies of the minutes of their previous meeting and by asking if there were any corrections or additions. She added if not, she entertains a motion to waive their reading and to approve the minutes as presented.

Councilman Cooper moved the reading of the minutes be waived and they be approved as presented. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, she reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Knowles reminded everyone that anyone wishing to address the Council should approach the podium and state their name and the nature of their business.

Mayor Knowles stated they will now hear the reports of the Standing Committees.

Street & Light Chairwoman Askren stated she has no report.

Comm. Gray stated he has no report.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Police & Dog Chairman Tucker was absent.

Chief Beloat reported with Halloween coming up, the number of calls the police department gets also goes up. He added to handle the vandalism, etc., the police department will be conducting extra patrols on the weekends in marked and unmarked cars to help curb some of the vandalism.

Chief Beloat continued his report by stating Officers William Denning and Anthony Stallings graduated from the Academy on September 30, from the first ever academy in Evansville. He added he is very proud of this, as Mount Vernon was the only other agency allowed to send people to this academy outside of Vanderburgh County.

Councilwoman Askren asked the cost difference between this one and the one the officers usually attend ?

Chief Belloat replied he is not sure but they had been paid mileage checks in the past and he is sure the savings is quite substantial. He added this academy is a great asset at the local level and hopefully it will also afford more training possibilities.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Fire Chairman Rueger was not present.

Mayor Knowles stated Chief Webber also had informed her that he would be absent this evening.

Sewer Chairman Angel stated he has no report.

Supt. Givens stated he has no report.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any questions ?

There were none.

Mayor Knowles asked if the Financial Report for September was available ?

Clerk-Treasurer Wolfe replied yes.

Mayor Knowles asked if the Clerk-Treasurer had any Communications for the Council?

Clerk-Treasurer Wolfe replied not at this time.

Mayor Knowles stated the first item on the Legal portion of the Agenda is the final reading of the proposed Ordinance Establishing Salaries for the Elected Officers for the City of Mount Vernon for the Year Ending December 31, 2006.

Councilman Cooper moved the ordinance pass final reading. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles requested a roll call vote.

Roll was called by the Clerk-Treasurer with Council voting as follows:

Askren - yes; Tucker - absent; Rueger - absent;

Angel - yes; Cooper - yes.

Mayor Knowles stated the motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Wolfe added it will be numbered 05-32.

Mayor Knowles stated as they await the arrival of Mr. Janak, they will continue on the Agenda. She stated the next issue is a motion in relation to the Executive Session that was held earlier.

Councilman Cooper moved the Council defer any settlement to the insurance company. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, she reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Knowles stated on the Agenda and in the Audience is Phil Wilzbacker with the Port Commission and Doug Debelak with Consolidated Grain and Barge.

Mr. Wilzbacker stated their purpose this evening is to discuss the safety issue of trucks on Kimball Street. He added the trucks main entrance is further east and that empties into a busy intersection with two lanes of traffic, moving east and west. He added at various times, in the afternoon especially, it is a safety issue getting across the two lane, so the trucks basically just insert themselves into the flow of traffic. He added he and Mr. Debelak have discussed the safety aspect of this and the Kimball Street area and think they may have come up with some ideas. He added they had discussed with INDOT the possibility of putting a light at the port entrance, but INDOT did not feel it was justified at that time. He then stated they had discussed with INDOT a solution that utilizes their right-of-way that is already in place. He added at State Street, INDOT has a right-of-way that heads east and they are wondering if it would be feasible to construct a feeder road at that location.

Mayor Knowles stated that would mean a shorter route and would make it easier for the trucks to turn.

Mr. Wilzbacker stated if there was signal at the port entrance, along with the ones already in place at State Street and the Southwind Shopping Plaza, that extra light could be an issue causing traffic to back up. He added again he is not sure of the feasibility of this plan, and he can almost guarantee that this would be no short term process for INDOT. He added however, it is a long term solution with value, though they need to get together to see what can be done in the short term to alleviate the safety issues on Kimball, find an interim resolution.

Mayor Knowles agreed they need a solution before they meet with INDOT and wondered if a stop sign at Bluff Road and Kimball would help, something to slow down the traffic.

Councilman Cooper stated he will go out tomorrow and look with Comm. Gray to see what the city can do.

Mr. Debelak stated he would appreciate that. He added he bikes and it is a concern of his as well of getting hurt, a very real concern. He stated they all to work with INDOT to find a better way to get the trucks out, they do not want anything to happen to anyone.

Mayor Knowles stated she feels INDOT may be open to the suggestion since they already own the easement, that may make them more favorable. She stated if it did happen, it would help everybody - besides, no one wants semis in a residential area. She added it is a good idea for Councilman Cooper to go out tomorrow and take a look.

Mr. Debelak stated if Councilman Cooper has any questions he may feel free to give him a call or stop by his office.

Mr. Wilzbacker stated he would be happy to meet with Councilman Cooper as well and they can start some discussion that will lead toward a short term solution.

Mayor Knowles agreed and added it could end up being better for the city, GE traffic could also use the road to get directly onto the four lane, it would be wonderful for all.

Mayor Knowles stated as they are still waiting for Mr. Janak, is there anyone in the Audience that would like to address the Council ?

Mr. John Robb approached and stated he lives on Raintree Circle and would like to compliment the Mayor and Council for looking into this annexation, it is about time, and they have all shown courage and leadership. He then stated he is present about the riverfront, what is being done ? He added he hears things on the street, and the Mayor did make a campaign promise relative to the riverfront, what is getting done ?

Mayor Knowles replied well, it is a very slow process, one that she has been working on the eighteen months she has been in office. She added they have had some progress on one parcel, some movement/action may possibly happen even this year. But she cautioned, not with the concrete structure, those silos are owned by Consolidated Grain and Barge and though they have been very helpful, Mount Vernon opted not to deal with those directly at this time. She added they hope to be using TEA 21 funds on the project, but they were also not awarded they grant they had applied for. She added she is attending a meeting next Tuesday with several legislators about that grant, as no one in southwest Indiana got a dime of that money. She added that hopefully in January the city can apply again and be successful.

Mr. Robb asked about the grant, how long before they would find out next year if they were successful ?

Mayor Knowles replied about this time again next year. She added she does some capital improvement money available that should would like to look into using to purchase some of the available ground on contract, though she is not sure if that can happen. She added if it did, the city would at least have some kind of control, but also, real estate purchases have to have Council approval.

Mr. Robb replied he hopes they all stay on it.

Mayor Knowles stated she is trying really hard, but is only so much on person can do, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Mayor Knowles asked if anyone else in the Audience wished to address the Council?

Nancy Sexton stated as the Council is aware, she lives on Water Street and she has just been listening with bated breath the conversation on the riverfront. She wondered if there was something either the Council or the Mayor could assign to the citizens that they can help with, letters to state officials, etc.. She added she realizes everyone has so much on their plate right now and if the citizens can help, she knows they would be more than willing. She then stated the citizens want the riverfront project off of the backburner.

Mr. Janak arrived at the meeting.

Ms. Sexton stated she and her sisters are on board with this project and they all really appreciate the Mayor and the Council's efforts, but just know that the citizens are also there to help.

Mayor Knowles stated the city is looking at all the options.

Ms. Sexton asked about the building there on the property, she has heard that once that building is down, they can not do anything on the property.

Mayor Knowles replied no, that is not correct. She added only if the construction is within the 100 year flood plain. She also stated she feels the project is an important one and they need to get something down there that would fit the zoning in the area. She also stated cities purchase real estate all the time, or eminent domain could be used to get the land, it is will be used for the common good of the city. Of course, she stated, that would also need Council approval.

Ms. Sexton asked if the Council would protect that ?

Councilwoman Askren and Councilman Cooper both stated yes.

Ms. Sexton asked if they would do almost anything to save it, she added she is serious. She stated there are many people at this meeting tonight who are interested in this project. She added they all want to live in a healthy community.

Mayor Knowles agreed she wants to offer residents of Mount Vernon a good quality of life, but the riverfront always seems to turn into a political issue. She added she has been hearing that the project isn't for the "lower" class of people, but it is for everyone, there is a wonderful park, parents can take kids down there for lunches, and it is totally free and at our disposal. She stated it is not only for the upper echelon.

Mayor Knowles asked if anyone else in the Audience wished to address the Council ?

There was no response.

Mayor Knowles stated they will go up to Item 2 on the Legal portion of Agenda, as Mr. Janak has arrived.

Mr. Janak approached and stated he was present three weeks ago and at that time, he hinted on a property development on the east side of town, .5 to .6 of a mile out of the city limits. He added several things need to happen before this significant investment can happen. He added some of the things that may be asked for include tax abatement, and tax increment financing, which can be used to attract business. He added the first thing that has to happen is the property in question has to be annexed. He then stated in 2000 Bonar did an annexation feasibility study and at that time, the eastside was recommended in the master plan. He stated Liz and Bob Buckley are looking into building a Chevy and a Ford dealership in this area. He reminded the Council they are not obligated at this time to move forward and with that, he introduced Mr. Buckley.

Mr. Buckley stated the plans call for Expressway Auto World and have been in the works for over a year and a half now, but they had run into some budgetary issues. He added the first plans were \$700,000 over budget. He added the plans call for 100,000 square feet of development with a \$7.5 M budget, but they could not get them to come in at that. He added they are currently at \$9.5 M, which at 5.25% would mean a monthly payback of around \$72,000. He added that is rent only and just not feasible. He then stated he really wants to do this project. He then stated one reason they want to pursue this is that the corridor exiting Mount Vernon to the east really needs developed and he is sure he can bring success and therefore they are looking for a win/win deal for all. But he stated, they need support from the City of Mount Vernon. He also added the construction would be done by ICI and he can guarantee they will be top of the line buildings. He stated they currently have 105 people employed in Mount Vernon and with this, they would look to hire an additional 30-50 more with above minimum wage jobs, good jobs. He stated as a result, revitalizing the east side of Mount Vernon.

Mayor Knowles stated east sides of cities tend to grow first and grow best.

Councilman Cooper asked the timeframe, are they talking five years down the road, two years down the road ?

Mr. Buckley replied they have been wanting to do this for a year and a half and once the project starts, it will go fast. He assured the Council that if they could afford the project, it would not be put on the backburner, they are going to do it. He added they would be a good partner, if the City goes along.

Mr. Hefling stated he is with ICI and he has worked on the plans. He added the plans call for four buildings over sixteen acres, it is a very nice project and not substandard, it is something the Council could be very proud of.

Mr. Janak stated the Buckley's are asking for assistance. He stated TIF is not something that is just done by larger cities, and it works. He stated a redevelopment commission is created by the Council, bonds are issued for the public improvements needed for the project and the money is paid back by the larger taxes generated by the project. The bonds are paid that way, from the extra money generated by the project, and the bonds will not come back on the city. There is no risk, he added. But, he also stated there is no extra revenue for the city either immediately, but development will be encouraged. Also, good jobs, will bring more folks in and encourage growth from folks that pay regular property taxes. He also stated once the assessed valuation is increased, property tax rates could go down, which will help city from the financial prospective. He then stated the Buckleys have a proven track record. He stated another incentive the Buckleys may ask for is tax abatement, and that can last up to ten years, at which point they will then be paying full property taxes. He stated at first there is little or no repayment of the bonds in the beginning, then it escalates along with the abatement. He then asked if the Council was interested? He stated if yes, then the area has to be annexed, actually ten to twelve parcels will be effected, from the Plaza to Mr. Buckley's property. He added if there is 100% voluntary annexation, that could happen in 100 days, if not, it could take six months. He then asked Council what they thought?

Councilwoman Askren and Councilman Cooper both agreed they were interested.

Councilman Cooper added they city has spent a lot of money on a water line out there, it was a good investment, now it needs to get the area growing.

Councilman Cooper then moved the Council authorize Attorney Funkhouser and Mr. Janak move forward on TIF, the tax abatement, and the annexation of the Buckley property. Seconded by Councilwoman Askren.

Mayor Knowles stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, she reported the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Janak stated he will send the Council updates in a timely fashion and keep them in the loop.

Councilman Angel stated he would like to thank the Buckleys for taking a chance on Mount Vernon, thanks a lot.

Mayor Knowles agreed.

Mayor Knowles asked if there were any more Legals for consideration ?

Attorney Funkhouser stated the sign ordinance is up for second reading.

Mayor Knowles asked if there was any action on the Ordinance to Prohibit Signs Obstructing the View of Drivers ?

Councilman Cooper moved ordinance pass second reading. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles asked if there was any discussion ?

There was none.

Mayor Knowles requested a roll call vote.

Roll was called by the Clerk-Treasurer with Council voting as follows:

Askren - yes; Tucker - absent; Rueger - absent;

Angel - yes; Cooper - yes.

Mayor Knowles stated the motion carried.

Mayor Knowles stated the next item is the first reading of the Ordinance to amend Chapter 50, Section 50.004, Definitions, and Section 50.038, Laying Pipes Through Sewers, of the Mt. Vernon Code of Ordinances.

Mayor Knowles asked if there was any discussion ?

There was none.

Councilman Cooper moved the ordinance pass first reading. Seconded by Councilwoman Askren.

Mayor Knowles requested a roll call vote.

Roll was called by the Clerk-Treasurer with Council voting as follows:

Askren - yes; Tucker - absent; Rueger - absent;

Angel - yes; Cooper - yes.

Mayor Knowles stated the motion carried.

Mayor Knowles asked if there was any Old Business ?

There was none.

Mayor Knowles stated under New Business, the Delta Queen will be in Mount Vernon on October 22, 2005.

Mayor Knowles state they will now hear the reports of the Districts.

1st District Councilwoman Askren stated she has no report.

2nd District Councilman Tucker was not present.

3rd District Councilman Rueger was not present.

4th District Councilman Angel stated he has no report.

Councilman-at-Large Cooper stated he has no report.

Mayor Knowles stated if there were no further business, she entertains a motion to adjourn.

Councilman Cooper moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Councilman Angel.

Mayor Knowles stated all those in favor of the motion should signify in the affirmative; and following the vote, she reported the motion carried unanimously and adjourned the meeting.

Rosemary L. Knowles

Mayor

ATTEST:

Cristi L. Wolfe

Clerk-Treasurer

