

LOWELL TOWN COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MARCH 14, 2022

A Work Session of the Lowell Town Council was called to order on Monday, March 14, 2022, at 5:30 P.M., by Vice-President Michael Gruszka. Members present were John Alessia, Mike Gruszka, and John Yelkich. Councilman Shane Tucker arrived at 6:10 P.M., and President Todd Angerman was absent. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Judith Walters, Town Manager Craig Hendrix, Town Attorney David Westland arrived at 6:10 P.M. Police Chief Jim Woestman, and GIS Director Greg White. Also present was SEH representatives Jason Spain, and Fire Chief Nick Hylek, and Tri Creek Ambulance Director Corey Wietbrock. The purpose of the work session was general town business.

Liberty Park Design Agreement - SEH - The Liberty Park planning design was discussed at the February 28th work session. A fly-over design of the proposed design was reviewed. The scope of services for a sum of \$397,000 includes preparation of site improvement exhibits, pre-design meetings, site/utility investigation, preliminary engineering, and final engineering phase. Discussion followed on the estimated costs of the project from 3.5 million to 6 million, partially due to increased costs and change in the design with a bigger stage, and problems with soil. Vice-President Gruszka stated he liked how the design looked, but wanted to be sure that all five council members were in agreement to move forward with the costs. Councilman Alessia was concerned the splash pad is a "water feature", and wanted to make sure citizens wouldn't be disappointed. He asked again about the ability to do the project in phases. Vice-President Gruszka was concerned about inflation of costs if we did over a period of time. Town Manager Hendrix was asked to reach out to the White Foundation for some type of sponsorship. The item is on the regular agenda to enter into agreement with SEH.

Downtown Improvement Strategy Presentation - Town Manager Craig Hendrix showed a plan design of the downtown area prepared by SEH. The plan would make improvements to Mill and Jefferson Street and parking; tear down the Centier building and open up for parking, and interest has been shown in the Lump corner to build a three story building. He also showed how improvements would be made to the Washington Street area near the Liberty Park Project, and talked about changing the classification of Washington Street from a local street to a arterial street to be eligible for INDOT grant funding. Mr. Hendrix also discussed the lot near Burnham/Commercial that could be rezoned to town center and possible multi-store building could be built. The image of the downtown area will be placed in the council folder for their review.

West Side Sewer Project Design Agreement - Wessler Engineering - This item is on the regular agenda to act on the contract with Wessler for the extension design and bid for a fee of \$183,500. Mr. Hendrix stated they hope to award the bid and get the pipe and materials ordered so the project can begin in the fall. He stated while they are waiting on the materials he

will be getting the easements, and said Indiana America is aware of the project and we hope to share in the easement costs. The memorandum of understanding had been returned from Tri-Creek School and now Attorney Westland will be preparing the agreement.

Fire Department Improvements Discussion - Last fall an agreement had been received from Etica Group for the facility condition and future needs at the Lowell Fire Station, but had been tabled at that time. Mr. Hendrix stated he would like to begin discussions with the townships on the future needs of the building that is shared with the ambulance service. Discussion followed. Councilman Yelkich suggested holding the next work session at the fire station so that each council member can see what is needed. The work session on March 28th will be advertised to be held at the fire station, but the regular meeting will still be at town hall because of a public hearing already set.

Freedom Park ADA Project - CDBG - Mr. Hendrix provided a drawing of proposed improvements at Freedom Park using CDBG funds to make the dog park handicap accessible. The town is awarded \$50,000 of block grant funds that must be used for ADA requirements. The proposed project would consist of reconstructing the existing stone parking lot and stone pathways with hard surface to accommodate persons with disabilities, and provide accessible parking spaces and benches within the dog park. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ \$75,000 and would include improvements at the entrance. Mr. Hendrix had submitted the proposed project to the Freedom Park Board with both Cedar Creek and West Creek and the Town providing an additional \$12,000 each for all the improvements. The Public Hearing has been set for Monday, March 28th.

Discussion of remaining funds in Water Fund - Discussion followed on the use of the remaining funds left in the Water Utility. The water sale proceeds received was \$23,537,891.00, with \$ 1,815,240.00 to the Bank of New York and \$4,328,587.00 to U.S. Bank for bond escrow; for a remaining balance of \$17,394,064.00. There is also approximately \$900,000 in escrow for the State Road 2 Water line Project. Clerk-Treasurer Judy Walters stated the current balance in the Water Debt Service Reserve Fund, Operating and Maintenance Fund, Bond & Interest Fund and Improvement Fund are \$1,385,673.64. She asked if that amount was to be included with the amount to be invested for a total of \$18,779,737.64. Town Manager Hendrix said they plan to remove the Liberty Street Water Tower and is estimated at \$100,000., and he said we may need to hold some funds in case the water line project goes over the amount in escrow. He also stated the money from the water funds could be transferred to the General Fund and appropriated for equipment needed in the Street Department. Councilman Alessia asked that a prioritized list be made of needs and reminded everyone that the majority of the funds are to be put into an endowment fund to be invested. Council members agreed there are many great projects, but need a comprehensive plan on how to move forward with everything on the plate including the street garage, Liberty Park improvements, equipment, etc.

Update on Pandemic and Governor's Executive Orders - Attorney Westland had reviewed the previous ordinances and resolutions enacted by the Council and stated they have all expired. The 10-day Covid sick days will no longer be given and employees will have to use their own sick days. The ordinance

that was approved to allow electronic meetings via Zoom meetings will be reviewed to make sure all boards and commissions are in compliance.

Street Garage - A meeting with the town staff will be held on Friday to review the final version of the plan.

Employee meeting - A meeting with town employees will be set on either a Tuesday or Thursday.

No further discussion, the work session adjourned at 6:47 P.M.



Michael Gruszka, Vice- President

Attest:



Judith Walters, Clerk-Treasurer