

LOWELL TOWN COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION  
APRIL 11, 2022

A Work Session of the Lowell Town Council was called to order on Monday, April 11, 2022, at 5:35 P.M., by President Todd Angerman. Members present were John Alessia, Todd Angerman, and John Yelkich. Councilman Shane Tucker arrived at 6:05 P.M., and Councilman Mike Gruszka was absent. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Judith Walters, Town Manager Craig Hendrix, Town Attorney David Westland, Police Chief Jim Woestman, GIS Director Greg White, and Building Administrator Tim Henke. The purpose of the work session was general town business.

Acceptance of Beverly Estates Unit 1 Pond - Mrs. Cripe - Discussion had been held last summer with Mrs. Cripe on the Beverly Estates Subdivision and the fact there were no sidewalks around the retention pond and no street lights had been installed in the subdivision. Mr. Hendrix stated the Cripe's had acquired the lots in Beverly Estates after the developer walked away and the Town would have to be responsible for the installation of the street lights. Mrs. Cripe submitted a Quit Claim Deed and Sales Disclosure Form for the pond and proposed she will pay for the sidewalks around the pond. The estimated cost of the sidewalks is approximately \$18,000.00. Discussion followed. Mr. Hendrix explained that street lights are now part of the performance bond, so the developer will have to install before they receive final plat. Mr. Hendrix said the estimate from Nipsco to install street lights is around \$20,000, and said he is only installing at intersections. The subdivision does have coach lights. He said the installation of the street light for Burr Street/Route 2 has already been ordered, as well as the new street light on Holtz Road. This item will be added to the regular meeting agenda and accepted contingent on Attorney Westland's review and a firm estimate on the installation of street lights.

Permission to seek quotes for Liberty Water Tank Demolition Project - Mr. Hendrix will be seeking three quotes from Dyer Construction, GE Marshall, and Austgen Equipment for the removal of the Liberty Water Tank. The local contractor will work with a tower company to have it taken down. Mr. Hendrix stated he had already gotten permission to use recycling funds, or funds could be used from the Water Utility. Current balance in the recycling fund is approximately \$165,000, but was being held for new playground equipment when Liberty Park is designed. Mr. Hendrix also stated he had been contacted by a cell tower provider about installing a mono-pole at the Liberty Tower area, as well as Evergreen Park. Discussion followed that a Sprint tower had been installed on the Liberty water tower and the Town had received about \$3500 monthly in rent, but when they were sold to T-mobile they removed. Council was interested in pursuing the offer from the cell tower company. Councilman Alessia asked about leaving the water tower and making it aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Hendrix stated they are designed to hold water and if not become unstable and require a lot of maintenance.

Building & Planning Department Fee Presentation - Building Administrator Tim Henke explained Lowell uses the International Code Council building



valuation data sheet as a base line in determining building permit fees. He compared a 1732 square foot ranch with an unfinished basement and 3-garage car that has three bedrooms and two bathrooms, with our fees to fees in Lake County, Crown Point and Cedar Lake. In Lowell the building permit would be \$2,641.00, in Lake County \$2,426.00; in Crown Point the fee would be \$2,992.00 with an added park fee of \$1159 for a total fee of \$4,151.00; and in Cedar Lake the building permit costs is \$4,249.00 with an added park fee of \$1700 for a total permit cost of \$5,949.00. Mr. Henke stated that Lowell, Crown Point, and Lake County all use the same valuation data sheet. The cost is by square foot and once a base price is calculated a multiplier is applied to determine the base permit price for the structure, then pricing for the mechanicals are added. Lowell multiplier is 6, and in Lake County it is 5 and in Crown Point it is 7. The Building Department is proposing to change our multiplier from 6 to 7, which would have generated an additional \$107,000 in the last three years on new building permits. The multiplier for commercial, and multi-dwelling is currently at 7 and they propose to increase to 8. Mr. Henke also asked that all ILP permits such as decks, fences, etc be listed at \$75. Discussion followed that fees had not been increased since 2005 and that if they were going to increase they should possible go from 6 to either 8 or 9, as they don't feel that would stunt growth with all the proposed new subdivisions. Impact fees were also discussed and it was noted a base line study would have to be determined and the revenue can only be used for new that is based on population. Mr. Hendrix stated we collect a park fee from the developer that is based on the number of square foot houses per acre and that money goes to the Park Improvement Fund. Mr. Henke said that except for subdivisions that are specific builder based, the town is running out of lots for a regular home owner to build in and pick their own builder. Stormwater fees were discussed. They are currently at \$7.00 per month and discussion had been held in the past to increase. Mr. Hendrix reviewed the map that showed the sewer sheds for existing sanitary collection system on dry weather flow condition. He stated the Stormwater Board will be meeting with the consultant to review proposed three tier projects, that include rear yard drains that could be done in house, projects like Powell ditch and bonding projects for storm drainage that will have to be bonded. Mr. Hendrix will provide a spreadsheet to Council on what surrounding communities are charging for stormwater. Mr. Hendrix reviewed planning fees that need to be increased or added such as an annexation fee, zoning and site plan and engineering fees. Council members agreed the Town needs to cover their costs. Staff will work with Attorney Nicole Bennett on proposed changes and an ordinance will be prepared for Council consideration at the May meeting.


Old Towne Square Park Renovation Proposal - Mr. Hendrix was proposing a make over be done at this park. He stated the Chamber wanted to plant a tree in the old fountain location and before they would give permission he suggested that the old fountain be demolished and some money be invested in upgrading the park. He stated he would like to see other groups in Lowell be involved in the renovation. He will gather some ideas and a site plan for the area will be proposed.

Building Renovation Grant Program - Mr. Hendrix presented a Building Renovation Grant Program to be established to provide financial assistance to existing and new businesses for building improvements in the Lowell TIF District. The proposed maximum award is \$50,000 per applicant and is

intended to help property owners rehabilitate, restore, and improve existing structures that will have an improvement on the overall appearance, quality and vitality of downtown Lowell. Mr. Hendrix stated this is different from the facade grant program because many of the buildings needs structural repairs not just new signage or windows. Mr. Hendrix stated it is not just for the downtown area, and used the old Pawn Shop as an example that the Town could help in making improvements for potential buyers. The applicant would have to agree they are planning to stay in Lowell for a number of years or they would have to pay back the grant. Mr. Hendrix stated the money for the project may come for the water sale and then eventually TIF funds would be used.

Other Topics - Mr. Hendrix stated paving will begin in May in the Driftwood, and Indian Heights area. He stated next years Community Crossing Grant will be applied for in July and reminded the Council that Lowell is now a 50/50 matching grant as opposed to 75/25 due to our census increase in population. This means instead of being able to do a million dollar project in matching funds, we will only be able to do \$700,000.

No further discussion, the work session adjourned at 6:56 P.M.

  
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Todd Angerman, President

Attest:

  
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Judith Walters, Clerk-Treasurer