

CITY COUNCIL WORKING SESSION

OCTOBER 26, 2020
203 Broadway Ave N

PRESENT:

Tom McCauley	Mayor	Elizabeth Barker	Treasurer
Michael Higbee	Council President	Regie Finney	Public Works Director
Pam McClain by phone	Council Member	Scott Bybee	City Engineer
Sue Gabardi	Council Member	Jeremy Engbaum	Police Chief
Kelly Peterson	Council Member	Autumn Jones	Billing Clerk
Andrew Wright	City Attorney	Concerned Citizens	
Karen Drown	Clerk		

Because of the recent COVID-19 pandemic Buhl City Council made this meeting available telephonically.

PUBLIC HEARING opened at 6:02 PM

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

Kelly Peterson stated he had been contacted by both sides and he was recusing himself from the public hearing and decisions voted on tonight.

Sandy Gleason presented to Council information regarding her appeal of the variance with the Planning and Zoning Commission decision not allowing the use of storage containers to be used as storage units on her property. She noted several other properties where they were used and added containers are better for Buhl. She stated there would be 85 units and that there would be no more traffic than stick built.

Tecopa Gleason presented information regarding security and safety of the units. The containers themselves have thick walls and lock on handles. He explained their plan to have a coded gate system and 24/7 video security system. He also explained in the event of a fire it would be contained to one unit but in a stick built multiple units could be damaged. He also detailed the units themselves as being on beige in color, one trip containers. There would be inspection done on a regular basis and contact numbers would be posted. The containers would not be attached to the ground and their lifespan is two to three decades. He also noted there is a water retention pond on site and 6 inches of base gravel over the property.

Scott Bybee informed Council the application for a variance had been turned down through Planning and Zoning. He explained there are parts of city code that is antiquated and it doesn't address steel units, only stick built storage units. He did note the property was rezoned for a previous owner to allow the stick-built units.

Mayor McCauley asked for testimony in support of the applicant.

Jessie Clayborn read a letter from Debra Tucker who was in support of any new business. She also stated it is hard to commute 30 miles round trip to fetch belongings.

Howard Crowns stated he has a business at 118 Broadway Ave N and gives back to the community. He noted containers were a better option in their research. He added other storage unit facilities have a back log.

Amy Crowns lived in Buhl for thirteen years. She stated this plan came from her own families need to store things. She explained the name of the business was named after their father. Her concerns were others are not big enough, not fire stable or very appealing.

Mayor McCauley asked for testimony against the applicant.

Mary Wonenberg stated she is opposed to the storage units. She noted Buhl is limited and didn't feel the middle of town is not the best location. She stated the plans for the facility does affect the property value and was concerned if the business doesn't work out. She stated stick built looks better. She asked Council to consider the future of Buhl.

Alex Wagner noted the property is question borders him on two sides of his property. If the people make a loop through the facility, they are looking at the back of his house. He added that storage units are not taxed. He also had concerns of traffic coming and going and residential don't want that traffic.

Karen read letters provided prior to the meeting from Mary Wonenberg and Alex Wagner.

Mayor McCauley asked for anyone neutral of the applicant. There was none.

Mayor McCauley asked the applicant for rebuttal.

Tecopa Gleason stated the pictures are examples. If approved there would be a privacy fence and gating around the entire property and the operating hours would be 7 am to 8 pm. He also noted concrete pads are not in the current proposal. There was a discussion about the current containers

on the property. Tecopa stated there was one that is a different color and it would either be painted or moved out.

Mayor McCauley closed the public hearing at 6:44 PM.

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes of October 12, 2020 – Regular Meeting
2. Bi-Monthly Claims for Payment
3. Clerk Report
4. Treasurer Report

Michael Higbee moved to approve the consent agenda. Sue Gabardi seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

Review and Consideration of Public Hearing Testimony and Appeal of Variance Application:

Mayor McCauley asked Scott to explain to Council their options for the appeal. Scott stated they can either approve, deny, table for more information or approve with conditions.

Michael moved to approve the appeal of the variance at 500 Elm Street. Sue seconded the motion.

Michael noted he was vocal during the original rezone and having two homes on islands. His concern was a privacy fence. He stated the applicant had addressed concerns of hours and looks. He noted the eye sore the property was before. He noted it is was a tough situation because it was bought as a storage unit.

Sue questioned how they were different that stick built. Scott clarified they are removable so they are not taxable but would have to check with the county. He added they are harder to break into and containers are safer. He didn't know if it was better for the city to make them more permanent.

Pam asked questions concerning the containers themselves and the upkeep of the property. Tecopa explained these are one trip containers, which means they have made one trip to Asia and

back, so they are in good shape and close to new. He also stated the property would be sprayed twice a year and the entire property would be completely fenced.

Scott stated Planning and Zoning had multiple issues and the applicant has addressed some at this time.

Mayor McCauley referenced Buhl City Code 9-19-1 Variances and stated he hasn't heard of the undo-hardship the code requires. He noted the city has gone a long way with Gleason to see if there is anyway to do it.

Andrew Wright stated he doesn't see it as a variance for this application. Tecopa stated there was no code they could fall into request. He also noted they had gone through the process to this point and was kind of thrown off by this question.

There was discussion about having Andrew review it further and table the item so all information is provided. Pam noted she wants to do what is right.

Michael moved to table until the November 23rd working session meeting. Sue seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

Michael moved to amend the agenda and switch items 2 and 3 on the agenda. Kelly seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote with all voting yes.

Presentation of information on new K9 do in police department: Jeremy informed Council that the current police K9 Kayah has recently been diagnosed with arthritis in her back leg which is unrepairable. He stated there is a dog available for \$5000 which he can then work with the trainer for new training with Officer Katsules. This dog would be a dule purpose as opposed the Kayah who is only a sniffer. Jeremy stated he felt he could do this within his budget that just started October 1. He noted training would take 8-weeks and Jeremy would help cover Officer Katsules shifts during the training.

Update on Car Show and Shine Event: Coke Lacombe presented an update on the event that was held on October 3, 2020. He noted the event was very well attended with 90 vehicles. They were able to raise \$3,634.00 in six hours. All of the funds were donated directly to the school lunch program. They hope to do it next year and make it even better. Michael stated the community has them to thank for the event.

Review of Utilities Comparison Worksheet for FY 2019-2020: Elizabeth reviewed the utilities revenue worksheets for fiscal year 2019-2020. She presented worksheets showing revenue over

expenses and how they improved from last year. There was a discussion about the reasons for the improvement. It was noted some savings were due to departments being asked to hold expenses in advance of COVID and the unknowns it could bring. There was a further discussion about the possible uses for those funds. Elizabeth also reviewed the aging and billing information regarding collections.

Council Concerns – There were none.

MEETING ADJOURNED – Kelly Peterson moved that the meeting be adjourned; Pam McClain seconded the motion and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 pm.

Minutes prepared by Karen Drown, City Clerk