

CITY OF MUSCATINE  
MUSCATINE CITY COUNCIL  
IN-DEPTH MEETING

January 12, 1989

7:00 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Mayor LeMar, Councilmembers Amerine, Phillips, Kemp, York, Harder and Sayles

Absent: Brewer

Staff: Kevin Whittaker, Acting City Administrator; Deb Neels, Director of Finance; Steve Boka, Acting Community Development Director; Larry Wolf, Director of Parks and Recreation; Ray Childs, City Engineer; Randy Hill, Acting Public Works; Randy Elder, Landscape Architect - Parks Department

1. Review of Greenhouse Proposal for Weed Park - Larry Wolf, Parks and Recreation Director indicated that the previously approved budget contained a line item for the construction of a Greenhouse at Weed Park. During the process of obtaining proposals it is estimated that the cost of the Greenhouse will significantly exceed the budgeted amount and the purpose of this meeting was to evaluate the proposal and decide whether to proceed. He indicated that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission continued their support of the proposed Greenhouse. Randy Elder of the Parks Department staff reviewed the project history. He indicated that the proposal originated when the Zoo Site was eliminated as an activity in Weed Park in 1981. At that time the proposal was to construct a Greenhouse on the former Zoo Site. A temporary Greenhouse has been constructed on the former Zoo Site and bedding plants are raised there. However, the Parks Department staff has experienced continued vandalism with this temporary Greenhouse. In August 1987 the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee made the decision to relocate the proposed Greenhouse from the Zoo Site to the Rose Garden area. The proposal is to acquire a manufactured Greenhouse from Lord and Burnham Inc. The dimensions would be approximately 31' x 18' with tempered glass material. Anticiapted uses include but are not limited to courses being offered at the Greenhouse, school tours including Community College tours, and the raising of plants especially for the rose garden and other City parks.

Councilmember Amerine inquired whether the staff of the Parks Department could do the work in-house as indicated in the report submitted as an option. Larry Wolf responded that it could be done, however, it would delay the project by approximately one year from start to finish. He indicated that the project could be done this summer if it is contracted out and that it would take this summer and the following summer for his staff to complete the project. He also stated that the trend during the

past seven to ten years for other communities has been to raise bedding plants in greenhouses for use in public parks. Councilmember Harder questioned the cost of raising bedding plants as opposed to purchasing them from a commercial outlet. Wolf responded that the savings amounted to about 50% of the commercial price. Councilmember Sayles asked Kevin Whittaker if special grants or other funding was available for this project. He responded that funding would have to come from the General Fund and the estimated cost at this point for the completion of the entire project was \$25,500. Councilmember Kemp and Phillips indicated that they thought the project was a worthwhile project. No Councilmembers or anyone else raised any objections to the proposed Greenhouse project. Councilmember Kemp then indicated that the shell and foundation could be completed this fiscal year with the remainder of the project being funded in fiscal year 89/90. He also indicated that Project Green in Iowa City whereby perennials are offered for sale as a method of raising revenue should be kept in mind for the City of Muscatine. No further action was taken at this time.

Councilmember York indicated that he had received complaints from Downtown Merchants regarding birds in trees located along the sidewalks. He would like to discuss this matter at the February In-Depth Meeting. Larry Wolf responded by saying that he would obtain information on this issue.

2. Status Report on Weed Removal Program - Steve Boka, Acting Community Development Director reviewed the weed removal program of 1988. He indicated that this was probably not a typical year due to the dry summer weather. However, with the private contractors completing the first year of weed removal, it had worked more efficiently from his point of view. It was stated that 37 lots in town had the weeds removed by a private contractor at a approximately \$2,170. Twelve of these property owners have paid their bill as of this date. The City has not received payment from the remaining 25 property owners and that amounts to \$1,537.50. Boka indicated that he will be presenting a resolution at a future Council meeting to assess the cost of weed removal to those property owners who have not paid.

Councilmembers Kemp and Sayles indicated that the system appeared to be much more responsive than it has been in the past in terms of the timeliness of weed removal. No further discussion was conducted on this item.

The status of the structure known as the "La Fiesta Restaurant" was explained. Mr. Boka indicated that he had been in contact with all the parties involved and in summary it appeared feasible that the City could demolish the structure, improve the site, and assist in repairing the common wall that would be exposed. However, no firm offer of private assistance in achieving this was forthcoming. Boka explained his background report and indicated that this item had come to the attention of a number of individuals due to the fire in this location approximately two years ago. Councilmember Harder inquired about the demolition costs. Boka responded that it would be approximately \$20,000 to remove the building and improve the lot. In addition, there would be the repair of the common wall. The total estimated cost at this time is approximately \$30,000. Councilmember Harder further inquired if the building was structurally safe. Boka indicated that the building is structurally sound and not a

threat to public safety. However, it is a nuisance. Councilmember Kemp indicated that an option available to the City would be to wait for the County to conduct a tax sale and then the City could make a decision whether to acquire the property. Back taxes are presently owed on the property.

City Council by consensus directed staff to proceed with a notice to abate a nuisance.

3. Discussion of Proposed Bed and Breakfast Ordinance - Steve Boka reviewed the ordinance to permit Bed and Breakfast facilities in the R-3 Residential District and compared it to suggested changes proposed prior to the final reading of the ordinance. He indicated that the ordinance be modified to reflect that the structure is a residential home and that the owner be an occupant of the home if it is to be used as a Bed and Breakfast. He also indicated that the ordinance reflected State Code in that only two families would be permitted to stay in a Bed and Breakfast home at any one time. The ordinance as proposed intentionally does not address parking, landscaping, signs and other site related items. This is due to the fact that each proposal, if approved, would have to be presented to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for review. Neighborhood residents would be notified by the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the proposal and as each site would be unique, the parking issues, landscaping any signs would have to be addressed on their own merits.

Helen Rehwaldt, 609 West Second Street spoke in opposition to the proposed Bed and Breakfast ordinance. She indicated that the City established zoning especially in the residential areas to protect existing neighborhoods and that any intrusion by business related activities would have detrimental effect on the City's neighborhoods. Kathy Danner who proposes to open the Bed and Breakfast facility on Iowa Avenue stated that the intent of the Bed and Breakfast proposal could be interpreted as a means of protecting larger older homes. The incentive of generating some revenue with a Bed and Breakfast facility could result in reinvestment in the property and prevent neighborhood decay. She did state that the State Code requirement of no more than two families per Bed and Breakfast was rather restrictive and she urged Council to approve more than two rooms. It was also indicated by Danner that she did not intend to live in the facility but she would arrange to have a competent host reside in the facility and insure that it was properly managed. Jeanette Phillips questioned her regarding the owner/host relationship and what the City should do. Danner responded that the City has to do what it deems best for the entire community. Councilmember Sayles was of the opinion that the best protection for the property and the adjoining neighborhood would be to have the facility owner occupied. Ruth Beltramo, 2820 Mulberry Avenue, spoke in favor of the Bed and Breakfast proposal. She indicated that this would offer home owners in the community with larger single family homes an opportunity to renovate those homes and would also offer travelers an alternative to motels. No further discussion ensued on this item.

4. Review of the Capital Improvement Program - Steve Boka indicated that the Planning and Zoning Commission had reviewed and recommends approval of the City's Five Year CIP Program. He highlighted some of the new projects and significantly altered projects from previous years. He indicated that the new projects consisted of Phase II of the Garfield School Neighborhood, the

Airport Fuel Tank Project, the Fire Station Location Study, Boat Harbor Improvements, Resurfacing Improvements on Cypress Street and 57th Street South. City Engineer, Ray Childs reviewed the status of the fuel tanks at the Airport. He indicated that FAA had granted design approval and with the contribution from Bandag in the amount of \$40,000 the City would be implementing the project sometime this spring. No further discussion took place.

5. FY 89/90 General Fund Budget Review - Deb Neels, Director of Finance reviewed the Wage and Benefit Schedules, Personal Services Schedules and the growth that had occurred from January 1, 1987 through January 1, 1988. In reviewing these schedules, it was noted that the Union contracts provided for a 4% wage increase for employees and that the Consumer Price Index was approximately 4%. She also summarized a Machinery and Equipment account and indicated that the short fall would be approximately \$20,000. It was further indicated, that if the law had not gone into effect the tax revenue generated from Machinery and Equipment would have been \$304,334. As indicated in the schedule the Machinery and Equipment tax has not resulted in the anticipated industrial growth that it was supposed to have generated. For the purposes of starting the budget review process, there was general agreement by members of the City Council that a 4% increase was acceptable.
6. Other Business - Kevin Whittaker indicated that information was attached with the agenda regarding the Wellness Scholarship Program for City employees. This item was previously approved in the budget by City Council and it provided scholarships for City employees signing up at one of the five community health clubs in the amount of \$50.00 if the employee uses the facility at least 36 times within a six month period. He indicated that this was available for full time and permanent part time employees. Whittaker also stated that the President's proposed budget had deleted funding for the Corps of Engineer project to raise the levee along the Mississippi River. This project involved raising the levee in order to provide protection during the 200 Year Flood. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Congressman Jim Leach requesting information on the status of this project.

Whittaker indicated that it had been ten years since the last job classification study and wage survey. Funding had been approved in the previous budget for this item and City Council directed staff to obtain proposals from consulting firms in October 1988. In reviewing these proposals at the November In-Depth City Council Meeting information was requested from other communities on the performance of the various consultants. As there was no December In-Depth Meeting the item was again being discussed. The consensus of City Council was to have the proposals placed on the regular Council Meeting Agenda for January 19, 1989.

The communication from the Civil Service Commission regarding the Police Chief certification list was noted by the City Council.

The Civil Service Commission also presented a list of certified candidates for the position of Equipment Operator II.

# 11432 On a motion by Councilmember Amerine, seconded by Councilmember Phillips, City Council approved the certified list for Equipment Operator

II. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

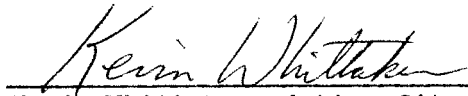
# 11433 A motion was made by Councilmember Amerine, seconded by Councilmember Kemp to go into Executive Session to discuss the status of the City Administrator recruitment process. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

# 11434 Councilmember Amerine moved to go out of Executive Session, seconded by Councilmember Phillips. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

# 11435 A motion was made by Councilmember Amerine, seconded by Councilmember Kemp to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:55 p.m. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

  
Don LeMar, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Kevin Whittaker, Acting City Clerk