

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Groat at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Groat, Henk Berbee, Nevin Taylor

OTHERS PRESENT: Terry Emery, Tim Aslaner, Taylor Evans with Journal Tribune

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the meeting on July 27, 2015 were approved as presented.

AGENDA:

Comments from Citizens: Mr. Taylor was asked by a citizen how soon we will be coming down Fourth Street to repave. Mr. Emery said he knows they are coming back in September but he will check on it and get back with Mr. Taylor.

Discuss the prohibiting of e-cigarettes on City property: Mrs. Groat said what you have in front of you is an amendment to Chapter 515 as a committee had suggested at the last meeting. Mrs. Groat said Mr. Aslaner was not at the meeting and talking to him some time later he felt strongly that the indent of the ordinance needed more. Mrs. Groat said at the last meeting, we as a group removed some of the wording because we considered it was unjustifiable and a social statement and it was not really a health concern.

Mr. Aslaner said with this ordinance we are prohibiting something that is lawful the smoking of e-cigarettes. He said there are studies out there that can conclude that e-cigarettes are harmful to the user. He has done some research and cannot find where the vapor that you inhale is bad for bystanders. He said he wanted to put in some language justifying why the City was banning e-cigarettes when it was otherwise lawful and that justification was it was harmful to the user.

Mrs. Groat said if the only person who's health is being damaged is the adult who is using the e-cigarette she sees no reason for the City to make it illegal anyway. She said to her it is an assumed risk, the person who purchased it as an adult is taking it upon themselves. She said we have no proof that the vapor is harmful to a bystander. She said she supports banning the e-cigarette but not putting in the language that states the only harm done is to the user.

Mr. Taylor said his suggestion is to give the rest of the council a copy of both pieces of legislation for them to review and give their feedback. Mr. Aslaner said he does not have a problem submitting the ordinance the way Mrs. Groat has changed it, he just wanted to make sure this committee understands why he had it in there.

Mr. Taylor proposed we take this to council, he would like Mrs. Jones to mark the agenda for Mr. Aslaner to speak after Mrs. Groat give the committee report.

Mr. Berbee said it is a life choice and he has not seen anything that the vapors harms bystanders.

Discuss the prohibiting of dogs in Partners Park: Mrs. Groat asked Mr. Emery if Partners Park included the pavilion or not. Mr. Emery stated he sees that all as one. Mrs. Groat asked as a committee are they in an agreement that the prohibiting needs to be done? Mr. Taylor said there are two things that need addressed on this. Partners Park when it is open has definite concerns because he watched a dog owner not control their dog and they used the splash pad as a urinal and left. He said that is recycled water and that is why it is an issue, luckily there were no children using the splash pad. We have not had a dog incident yet, there has been where dogs had longer leashes than what they should and wrapped around kids. Mr. Taylor does not have a problem with walking the dogs on the sidewalk but when we get into the actual park area he has a concern. He thinks that it should be all City Parks but Bark Park is a different situation. He asked Mr. Aslaner if we can write something just covering Partners Park. Mr. Aslaner said yes, we can write something for just Partners Park.

Mr. Berbee thinks that maybe we should consider parks that have recreations, i.e. Lewis Park football field. He said we start with one but when do we add more? Mrs. Groat said when it becomes an issue. She does not want to create an issue that has not been an issue before. She does believe that Partners Park is a key point because of the Friday night uptowns and Thursday night Music on Main. Mr. Emery said he agrees with Mrs. Groat and we have the dog park, which is a place where people like taking their dogs and walking through parks with their dog. He said we need to stress cleanliness and cleaning up after your dog.

Mr. Taylor asked if we could say pets, and we need a provision in there for service dogs. He said it is ok to just keep the ban on Partners Park and he is against putting up a lot of signs. Mr. Taylor said the reason he said pets is including snakes, etc. Mr. Aslaner said we can add the word pets in there and he will have a provision for service dogs.

Mr. Aslaner asked if the committee wanted him to put it on the agenda or bring it back to the committee. Mr. Taylor said if Mr. Aslaner would provide a draft copy to the committee by email, and then put it on the September 10th agenda. Mr. Aslaner said he will send a copy of the language by email and let him know if there are any changes.

Mr. Berbee asked about the FFA for the animals at the Farmer's Market, and we keep them on Sixth Street. Mr. Aslaner said we need to add a sign for prohibiting dogs. Mr. Emery said he will try to put a sign up and with an existing sign.

Mr. Aslaner said we need to discuss the signage for the e-cigarettes. He said we are going to have to change the signs we have now. Mr. Emery said he will look into how they could change the current signs. Mr. Aslaner said he needs to know about the signage for the language in the ordinance. He suggested saying "signs will be conspicuously throughout the parks and the signs will contain this." He said if we leave the signage language the same, then we need to add e-cigarettes to the signs. Mr. Emery said they will be sensitive to what Mr. Taylor was saying by not putting up to many signs.

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.