

CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES
January 7, 2020

The City Council met this date in a regular session in the Council Chambers at City Hall at #4 E. Lockwood at 7:37 p.m.

Present at Roll Call: Mayor Gerry Welch
Councilmember Frank Janoski
Councilmember Laura Arnold
Councilmember Pam Bliss
Councilmember David Franklin
Councilmember Emerson Smith

Absent at Roll Call: Councilmember Bud Bellomo

A quorum was present.

Also present: Mr. Steve Wylie, City Manager
Mr. Neil Bruntrager, City Attorney
Ms. Katie Nakazono, City Clerk

REMARKS OF VISITORS

Lexie O'Brien, 135 Hammel Ave., spoke in support of the Charter review proposal. I think absolutely it should be reviewed every eight years. I also wanted to point out that documents like our Charter are featured on the homepage of our City website. Documents like these shape not only how we build and maintain our community, but how other people may view us and our community. Another document on that homepage that I think deserves our attention is our Comprehensive Plan. It was written in 1978 and portrays a vision that was no doubt typical of subdivisions seeking to secure their property values. It is sadly lacking in a contemporary vision for equity and quality of life for diverse residents. I commend the Council for taking steps favorable to affordable housing, but I believe we must do more. Words matter. And if we cherish our reputation as a welcoming and inclusive community, we owe it to ourselves to re-envision this relic from the era of white flight.

Dave Buck, 124 S. Elm Ave., read the following statement, "City Council reports to the Residents. Last year has ended, so I am fulfilling my supervisory responsibility tonight by conducting your annual performance review regarding your seven 2018-2019 Council goals, but not your six Visional Directions, which are longer-term and on-going, such as "Ensure Financial Security" which was a focus of your work session earlier this evening.

I'll be using the simple Roman Emperor method of rating your performance: Thumbs Up; Thumbs Middle; and Thumbs Down.

Goal #1 - Create a plan for a proactive approach to encourage and grow the commercial sector of the city.

Thumbs Up. It's very exciting around Webster Groves these days with all of the new construction, like the Elle on Lockwood apartments, Regions Bank and the Auto Beauty Specialists building, and all of

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the new restaurants, like Olive & Oak, Clover & the Bee, the rebirth of the Webster Groves Garden Cafe, Frisco, Balkan Treat Box, etc.

Goal #2 - Investigate options for increased parking in the two major business districts. Thumbs Middle. You have certainly investigated various opportunities, such as using the Bristol Elementary blacktop, but not aware of any concrete decisions, plans or actions.

Goal #3 - Promise safe gun use and ownership by enacting legislatively acceptable municipal ordinances. Thumbs Down. Your weakest performance, in my view. This is a very personal area to me but I know it's tough and that your hands are tied in many ways. The "Be Smart" program was good but limited and lasted only one day, as I remember.

Goal #4 - To increase opportunities for public engagement with the Council and staff. Thumbs Up. You provided many and better opportunities for public engagement and communications, such as two town hall meetings, Coffees with the Mayor, Council and our Cops, Council member office hours, the W-K Times Community Connect, etc.

Goal #5 - Explore additional housing options, such as multi-family housing and affordable housing. Thumbs Up. You are definitely exploring this issue big time, such as devoting a town hall meeting to it. A big question is what is the city's choice regarding gentrification – whether to embrace it or to fight it - and its impact on longer-term residents. For example, historic black neighborhood, North Webster, has transformed into the most integrated neighborhood in Webster, with gentrification playing a role. But it comes with a human cost.

Goal #6 - Address and correct, through ordinance changes, housing issues that negatively affect Webster Groves homes and neighborhoods. Thumbs Up. Your recent source of Income landlord discrimination ordinance was a very important and positive step forward.

Goal #7 - Continue to promote the arts in Webster Groves through new funding sources for public art. Thumbs Up. Webster Groves is certainly living up to its new slogan of, "City of the Arts" by celebrating, advancing and promoting ALL arts - fine arts, music and theater. The funding and dedication of Barbre Park and its "Ascension" monument was a seminal moment.

So overall, based on my assessment of your goal performance, City Council had a very good year. But, to me, your single greatest achievement was a little over a year ago, when given the intense and prolonged negative criticism hurled at Council, you could have caved in to the pressure, thrown in the towel and thrown Neil under the bus.

But instead, you stuck together, stood up and spoke up for Neil and your decision to hire him. That's what I call courage of conviction. That's what I call integrity. That's what I call leadership. And that's what I call character. And in a country where character is sorely lacking, the Council's collective character matters most to me, and always will, above all else.

I thank you for a job very well done in 2019 and look forward to a great 2020."

Ron Zager, 337 Dobbin, stated that the City Council is to be praised for placing two Charter amendments on the April 2020 ballot. The first would remove the residency requirement for the City Attorney, a move

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long overdue. If the City wants employees to reside within our boundaries, they can list that as a preference when posting qualifications for the job. The best available candidate should not be disqualified for living in Glendale or Shrewsbury. The second proposal would require the City to review the existing Charter every eight years if approved by the voters. Should, for example, the City Manager be the only City employee required to maintain a residence within the City borders. I think not, for the same reason the attorney should not. Why should any employee be forced to do so? All of our surrounding municipalities, Affton, Crestwood, Glendale, Rock Hill, Brentwood, Maplewood, and Shrewsbury, elect their Council from districts called wards and their Mayor at large from a citywide vote. This provides for greater diversity on the Council and the prospect for more responsiveness to the electorate. They have been doing this successfully for many years. Isn't it time that Webster Groves enter the 21st century and do likewise. Other issues could also be reviewed on a regular basis. For example, the compensation for our Councilmembers which has been frozen for over a generation while the demands have increased significantly. Let's give the voters the chance to have their say on the contents of the Charter. And, since we will have three openings for seats on the Council on the same April ballot, let's have a debate among the candidates on the amendments. It would be helpful to know where they stand.

NEW BUSINESS – MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS, CITY ATTORNEY, CITY MANAGER

No New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

BILL #9110 - FIRST AND SECOND READING

Councilmember Smith introduced **BILL #9110 ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE SUBMISSION TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF THE CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY, ALL OF WHICH SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTORS AT THE REGULAR ELECTION ON APRIL 7, 2020, AND PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO ELIMINATE THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR THE CITY ATTORNEY; TO REQUIRE A BALLOT INITIATIVE EVERY EIGHT YEARS REGARDING THE FORMATION OF A CHARTER REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD**, and at the Councilmember's request, the Bill was read twice, first and second times by title only, and placed on the agenda for future consideration of the Council.

Councilmember Bliss stated that she is wondering specifically about the word "regarding". To me, it might be helpful if that word were more specific, such as "requesting". We are not saying we are automatically forming a Charter Review Board, we are asking whether we should. Is that clear in this language? Does it have to be clear in this language?

Neil Bruntrager, City Attorney, stated that this is the title, it is not the body or substance of the ordinance. So this has no legal effect other than a description and notice of what we are trying to do.

BILL #9111 - FIRST AND SECOND READING

Councilmember Bliss introduced **BILL #9111 ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE OCCUPANCY INSPECTION ORDINANCE**, and at the Councilmember's request, the Bill was read twice, first and second times by title only, and placed on the agenda for future consideration of the Council.

Mayor Welch asked if there is anything in here that is new, or is this just a rewrite of what already exists.

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Mara Perry, Director of Planning and Development, stated that it is essentially a rewrite to pull it out so it is not in the building code to make it easier to amend in the future. The only thing we did tweak, there is a six-month period from the point of compliance to when they could sell it. It used to be a year, which was a long time. So we reduced it.

Councilmember Arnold asked what the process is if the time runs out. Ms. Perry stated that if it is close in time to the six months they can extend it. Or they can get a new inspection so we can make sure it is still in compliance. We do charge them again for the inspection. It is \$70.

Councilmember Franklin asked how much a certificate of occupancy is. Ms. Perry stated it is \$25. Councilmember Franklin asked if every municipality in St. Louis County requires a certificate of occupancy. Ms. Perry stated that it is hit or miss depending on the community. She stated that she does not know how long Webster Groves has had one. I know that in our files, we have them going back to the early 1970s.

Councilmember Franklin asked if she knew the reasoning they came along. Ms. Perry stated that she thinks it depends on the community. I think in some cases it was related to ensuring that the correct number of people were living there. In some cases it is to ensure that people who are going to a particular school district are living in the proper location. And then in some cases it is for basic life safety.

BILL #9112 - FIRST AND SECOND READING

Councilmember Janoski introduced **BILL #9112 ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE DANGEROUS BUILDINGS ORDINANCE**, and at the Councilmember's request, the Bill was read twice, first and second times by title only, and placed on the agenda for future consideration of the Council.

Mayor Welch asked about vacant commercial buildings. I know there are fines and such, are they contained somewhere else?

Ms. Perry stated, no, this is the one we did with the Business Development Commission in 2012. If we did something somewhere down the line about vacant housing, it would go into this because it is no longer part of the building code.

Councilmember Arnold clarified that otherwise this is just moving things. Ms. Perry stated that essentially, yes, that is correct.

Councilmember Bliss asked about where the clarification is between residential and commercial. Ms. Perry stated that it ties to the section with the 2012 ordinance. I apologize. There is another section in the adoption you already adopted with the main part of the building code that relates to the inspections for commercial buildings and their vacancies. Sorry, there have been so many ordinances we have adopted I am mixing them up. All of the 2012 is in here and this is related to any vacant building deemed dangerous, regardless of the type.

BILL #9113 - FIRST AND SECOND READING

Councilmember Arnold introduced **BILL #9113 ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI AMENDING CHAPTER 80, ARTICLE II "FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT" BY REVISING SECTION 80.040 "PROVISIONS FOR FLOOD HAZARD PROTECTION" AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO**, and at the Councilmember's request, the

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Bill was read twice, first and second times by title only, and placed on the agenda for future consideration of the Council.

Ms. Perry stated that this is just removing something that was adding additional expense to residents. We had some additional training with FEMA and determined that we didn't have to require people flood proof when they were simply replacing mechanical fixtures.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Franklin, seconded by Councilmember Janoski, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Welch called for the vote on the Consent Agenda.

MEMBERS VOTING:

AYES: JANOSKI, ARNOLD, BLISS, FRANKLIN, SMITH, WELCH

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: BELLOMO

Mayor Welch stated that the Consent Agenda was approved.

The following consent agenda was approved:

- **Approval of Minutes** – December 17, 2019
- **Resolution #2020-01** – Authorizing the City Manager to Purchase Two (2) Replacement Vehicles for the Public Works Department
- **Resolution #2020-02** – Amending the Budget for Fiscal Year 2020
- **Resolution #2019-59** – Establishing Certain Policies and Procedures Related to Bids and Proposals for Tax Increment Redevelopment Projects
- **Resolution #2019-60** – Authorizing City Staff to Distribute a Request for Redevelopment Proposals

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- Carrie Falkenrath was appointed to the Traffic Advisory Commission.
- Toni Hunt and Maddy Heikkila were appointed to the Plan Commission.
- Randy Sprague was appointed to the Board of Adjustment.

EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION

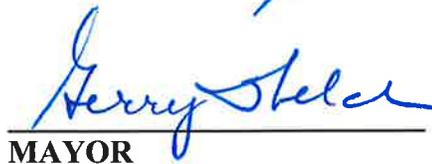
No Executive (Closed) Session followed the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. on motion of the Mayor, duly seconded.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 21ST day of JANUARY 2020.


CITY CLERK


MAYOR