



*CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN
COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS*

February 12, 2019

Mayor Dan Toland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located in City Hall.

City Council Members Present: Todd Bjerstedt, Sean Downing, Christopher Gagne, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page, Hal Watson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Scot Simpson, Assistant City Administrator Julie Bergstrom; Sergeant Denton Anderson; Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; City Clerk Amy White; Development Director Amy Peterson; Assistant to the City Administrator Brandt Johnson

Others Present: Jacob Martin, Paul Gernes, Dave Dintemann, Tom Poullos, Cheryl Dintemann, Chris Blasius, others

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

January 22, 2019, Meeting Minutes

MSC Morrissette/Odeen approve minutes. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

\$2,099,489.47

MSC Bjerstedt/Watson move to approve bills subject to the comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Jacob Martin, 629 Cemetery Road, Apt. 2 – is a Domino’s Pizza employee and is concerned about the location of the carnival for River Falls Days. He feels it is not suitable for Domino’s or Steve’s Pizza. He talked issues for the drivers including lack of parking spots. Removing the back alley would hurt business.

Paul Gernes, 631 8th Street N., Hudson - he is also a Domino’s employee. He said they share parking with the apartment residents. He is concerned about parking. More parking spots would be needed on Main Street or an assurance that the back lot can be used. Gernes also talked about security also being a problem for their back entry.

Dave Dintemann, 116 N. Main Street – from Johnnies Bar. He came to talk about the location of the carnival. He made suggestions for alternate locations for food and beer tents and the carnival. Dintemann voiced concerns about deliveries. He is a believer in the carnival but would like other options explored.

Tom Poullos, 110 N. Main Street – from Steve’s Pizza. He had concerns about the carnival in the parking lot behind his business. He was also concerned about availability of parking spots.

Cheryl Dintemann, 116 N. Main Street – she had concerns regarding beer truck deliveries, traffic, and pedestrians. She was also concerned for the safety of children if the carnival was located there.

Jacob Martin spoke a second time with his ideas for an alternate carnival location.

Presentation on 2019 River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau 2019 Events

Chris Blasius, CEO of the Chamber provided a presentation. She thanked the Council for its support. She stressed that she has regular conversations with City staff. They know what is happening.

Blasius shared an editorial from the River Falls Journal which talked about how having fun is good business for the community. She talked about this year's events. There are several changes to River Falls Days including moving the fireworks to Thursday night, different ending times for beer tents and music (which will have a negative impact on their bottom line), and relocation of the carnival.

Blasius detailed three options for the carnival: 1) eliminating it; 2) move the location away from downtown; or 3) move to the location proposed tonight. The Chamber staff recommended eliminating the carnival because there's very little benefit for them. Several entities have asked the Chamber to try and keep the carnival. Blasius showed the proposed location on a map (East Maple Street between Main and Second Streets and the parking lot by the Police Department).

There have been conversations with business owners. She talked about concerns. They have talked to the Police Department about the concerns and she believes solutions may have been identified. Some of the locations recommended in "Public Comment" were researched but are not options. It is a difficult decision which doesn't need to be Chamber-lead. It is a community decision.

Blasius also spoke about the room tax ordinance which was later on the agenda. She talked about how the room tax impacted the Chamber and what the funds were used for. She asked for support for the 2019 events and one percent room tax increase. Blasius stood for questions from the Council.

Aldersperson Morrissette asked what the driver was to keep the carnival. Blasius said the Chamber Board wanted to make sure every option was explored regarding the carnival. She also noted that it was one of the events that teenagers could participate in. Morrissette asked what happens if the carnival doesn't fit the Council's vision of where it should go. Blasius said she didn't know. They are open to ideas.

Aldersperson Gagne asked Blasius if she knew last year's carnival attendance. She did not and didn't know if that data was available. She commented that the Chamber only receives a small percentage of the ride revenue. Blasius provided further information.

Aldersperson Bjerstedt asked about the third option and if concerns had been addressed. Blasius provided answers.

Aldersperson Page asked about other lots and why they were eliminated. Blasius responded with information about the various sites.

Aldersperson Odeen asked for clarification and asked if the consensus of Chamber staff to eliminate the carnival? Blasius said yes. There was further discussion.

Aldersperson Watson talked about his kids' experiences when they were teenagers. They enjoyed the carnival and going downtown independently. He feels there is value in the committee's recommendation. As a parent, he appreciates that.

Gagne asked what was going to be held in the Heritage Park parking lot. Blasius explained it was beer and food tents along with the musical stages. Gagne asked about the City Hall upper parking lot. There was discussion about the upper lot at City Hall.

City Administrator Simpson reminded Council to focus on what the request was before them. He provided options for them to consider. He respectfully cautioned Council not to try and figure out solutions for a committee that has been exploring options for five years. He talked further, and there was more discussion.

Mayor Toland expressed his understanding about the situation but felt a carnival was needed. He is comfortable with the Chamber working with the Police and businesses to find a solution. Simpson suggested if Council had further discussion to pull it from the Consent Agenda. The Mayor wanted to move on.

Aldersperson Morrissette had a public comment. He talked about snow events and plowing He noticed a disturbing comment on social media suggesting the City's plowing is based on income. Morrissette said plowing decisions are not made on economic classes. There is a map of plowing priorities on the City's website. He said City staff is doing a great job with snow removal. He encouraged residents to shovel out fire hydrants and help their neighbors with snow removal.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Ordinance 2019-01 - Annexing Certain Territory of the Town of River Falls to the City of River Falls, Wisconsin-Second Reading and Disposition

The Mayor recessed into a Public Hearing at 7:28 p.m. With no one wanting to speak, he closed the Public Hearing at 7:29 p.m. and moved back into Open Session. MSC Morrissette/Page to approve ordinance. Unanimous.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution Approving Request for City Support for the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau's 2019 Events→→***Pulled by Page***

Resolution No. 6344 Approving UWRF Mann Valley Land Lease

Resolution No. 6345 Approving Purchase of a Quad Axle Truck

Resolution No. 6346 - Approving 2019-2021 Agreement Between City of River Falls and City of River Falls Police Department Employees' Association

MSC Odeen/Gagne approve Consent Agenda. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 6347 - Approving Request for City Support for the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau's 2019 Events

Page appreciated the Public Comment provided for this resolution. He cannot support this resolution as drafted. It doesn't support the local businesses. Page worked at Steve's Pizza, and said it was the busiest time of year. He felt it was dangerous to put a carnival in the lot behind the businesses. He welcomed the Chamber to come up with other ideas or scrap the carnival for a year.

MS Page/Gagne to amend resolution to scratch the closure of East Maple Street and the public parking lot of the Chamber's request letter. Page clarified the amendment would remove the red paragraph on page 5 from the request. Aldersperson Odeen felt the resolution needed to be put on the table.

MS Odeen/Morrissette move to approve resolution. MS Page/Gagne wanted to add the amendment as previously described.

City Administrator Simpson asked for clarification. There are three bullet points under the 'carnival' section. Do you want to strike bullets one and three but not two? Page was fine with bullet two. He said his amendment would scrap all three bullets. Simpson said staff would understand the amendment to not approve any closures, parking enforcement changes, use of the gravel area or any electrical or water for a carnival.

Odeen said this doesn't preclude the Chamber from bringing back another proposal. Page said not at all. Morrissette would support that. He wanted the committee to come back with another option even if it was only for a year.

Gagne agreed with Simpson's assessment that the Chamber should work behind the scenes and come back with a solution. He would also be in favor in the City's lot if it worked with the City.

The Mayor asked for a vote on the amendment. It passed unanimously. The Mayor asked for a vote on the resolution as amended. It passed unanimously.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance 2019-02 – Adopting an Increase in Room Tax – First Reading

Simpson said a presentation would be provided at the next meeting. Gagne said that he sent an email to Blasius. He appreciated her quick response. She does a fantastic job.

REPORTS:

Administrator’s Report

City Administrator Simpson talked about garbage and snow plowing. He said this was a challenging sequence of events. He talked further about snow plowing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor’s Appointment

Business Improvement District Board

Appointment of Lori Moran through December 2020

MSC Morrissette/Odeen move to approve appointment. Unanimous.

MSC Bjerstedt/Downing move to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan, Deputy Clerk