

CITY OF NORTON SHORES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
June 24, 2014

A regular work session of the Norton Shores City Council was held on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 4814 Henry Street.

Present: Mayor Nelund, Council Members Beecham, Dolack, Flanders, Kinney, Martines, Moulatsiotis and Ostrom; also Mark Meyers, Carrie Larks, Mike Huston, Jerry Bartoszek, Dan Shaw, Joe Kinnucan, Lynne Fuller and Doug Hughes

Absent: Council Member Jurkas

1. Muskegon County Drain Commissioner Presentation

Muskegon County Drain Commissioner Brenda Moore presented information on the history of the drain law and her plans to change some procedures of the Commissioner's office. Council Member Ostrom asked about progress on the celery flats project. Ms. Moore reported that she is still waiting for all parties to approve the required permits. She said the project is not likely to be completed before fall due, in part, to Jackson Merkey's schedule. City Administrator Mark Meyers said that he and Public Works Director Jerry Bartoszek are continuing to track the permit process.

2. Community Survey Results

Director of Administrative Services Carrie Larks presented the results and comments received from the 2014 Citizen Survey. Each single family residence in the city received a postcard inviting them to participate in the survey through Survey Monkey using a password or by requesting a paper copy to complete and return to the City. A total of 972 people (11.56%) responded to the survey and 178 of the respondents made additional comments. The report included previous survey responses from 2007 as a comparison. The largest percentage of those responding indicated they were 66 years of age or older. The survey results will be included on the City's web site.

Council Member Dolack requested answers to the general comments that were made because the issues addressed are the same as questions often asked of him. Mr. Meyers said that staff will spend time addressing the specific themes noted in the comments. Council Member Ostrom stressed the need for further education because residents still do not understand the distribution of their tax bill among the various taxing jurisdictions (i.e. City, schools, County, etc.). He suggested a quarterly postcard providing brief and concise facts about one specific topic rather than relying on the bi-annual newsletter. Council Member Martines pointed out that approximately 60% of the respondents said they were in favor of a single trash hauler. Mr. Meyers reminded Council that the question about trash collection was conditional on the same or better services as well as no increase in cost.

Mr. Meyers noted that respondents were quite evenly split on the issue of deer culling and about 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea of a community pool. He also said that Muskegon Community College has commissioned a market study in conjunction with their gymnasium remodel to determine if their project should include a pool.

Mayor Nelund encouraged Council and staff to keep the results of the survey in mind moving forward.

3. Solicitation Ordinances

Police Chief Dan Shaw presented drafts of two ordinances addressing private citizens soliciting for donations at several major intersections. A Court of Appeals decision (Speet vs City of Grand Rapids) found that disorderly person ordinances prohibiting panhandling were unconstitutional as they prohibit freedom of speech and, as a result, the City's disorderly person ordinance was amended to remove the panhandling section. However, several communities in Kent County have adopted new ordinance language to manage solicitation and, so far, these ordinances have been upheld in court. One proposed ordinance would restrict begging and soliciting and the other allows limited intersection solicitations by charitable organizations based on the City Council's intersection solicitation policy which was previously adopted by resolution and would result in panhandlers being guilty of a municipal civil infraction. Council Member Ostrom asked about people panhandling in driveways such as Walmart. Chief Shaw explained that is private property and can be allowed by the property owner. Walmart has chosen to allow such activity but Meijer does not. Mayor Nelund and Council members said that this is not only a public safety issue but it also affects the image of the city. Council Member Martines also stressed that there are community resources available to help people in need. Council agreed to move the ordinance forward pending review by the City Attorney.

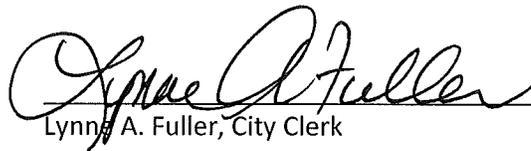
Comments

Mr. Meyers reported that a section of Black Lake Road has settled for the third time and staff is researching alternative solutions for a permanent repair. He also reported that the street resurfacing projects have been delayed by rain but are expected to begin next week.

Council Member Beecham asked about different hours at the leaf site so that the attendants don't have to spend their whole weekend manning the site. Mr. Bartoszek explained that the schedule is set to provide a uniform schedule throughout the week.

Council Member Dolack asked if the speed limit on Norton Avenue between Roosevelt Road and Lincoln Street could be increased from 25 to 35 since the school is no longer located on McCracken Street. Staff explained that the reason for the lower limit is the ball fields on Norton Avenue.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.



Lynn A. Fuller, City Clerk