

WATERVILLE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
April 27, 2015, 6:30 P.M.

There was a special council meeting of the Waterville City Council held in the Senior Center at 6:30 p.m. on April 27, 2015 to discuss Waterville Pride Business District, Nuisance Property, and business assistance programs - micro business loans.

Present: Vail, McIntyre and Mayor Mihalik

Absent: Schmidtke, Wollin

Also Present: Administrator/Clerk Teresa Hill, and City Attorney Jason Moran

Also Absent: Jason Femrite City Engineer

- 1. Call to Order.** Mayor Mihalik called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., noting that all Council members were present except Schmidtke and Wollin. Also present were Teresa Hill, Administrator/Clerk, and Jason Moran. Pledge of allegiance was recited.
- 2. Waterville Pride - Business District.** Mayor Mihalik said we recently did a survey of the public asking what do you want in Waterville. How can we make Waterville a bigger place. One of the big items that was addressed was the downtown district. Making it more pleasant and more friendly for visitors and for tourists and residents. There was also a survey done in 2008 or 2009. A lot of people were saying clean up the downtown. Mayor Mihalik said part of this meeting is not just cleaning up downtown but let's talk about just improving downtown. Discussion held regarding what the City can do to help the downtown business district. Chip Beadell and Pat Schollegardes were the business owners that attended the meeting. Mr. Beadell said that we need to attract people to come into town from the highway. Discussion held on what the City of Waterville has to offer and what can be done to improve downtown. Mayor Mihalik asked that the business owners talk to each other and give feedback to a Council member or City Hall of ideas of what they think would improve the downtown area. Ms. Schollgerdes said she thinks it would be good to attract people off of the State Trail to the downtown area. Ms. Vail advised that the Parks Board will be putting up signs for the State Trail and will be designing a route for the alternate trail to get them downtown and to our other parks. Mayor Mihalik said this is not a matter of changing downtown, this is a matter of just making it more of what it already is. That is the important message here as well, if you don't do that you are going to see more doors closing. It is important that we do what we can to help the businesses that are still here.
- 3. Nuisance Property.** Mayor Mihalik said that it is important to note that the City is the owner of the biggest nuisance property in town. Mayor Mihalik said until recently that was not the City's property. That was a private owner's property and the City had to make some decisions on what to do at that point. One which was to hope the property owner would clean the property up. Second was to follow some sort of legal action to get it cleaned up. City Attorney Jason Moran said that the City did try various routes to get the property cleaned up. Some met with success and some was unsuccessful. The City did commence litigation to get the property cleaned up. As part of the litigation we did negotiate back and forth on trying to get it cleaned up. Mr. Moran said the Court system can move very slowly and very costly. Mr. Moran said we were finally able to negotiate what he thinks was a fairly good resolution for the City. It stopped the litigation and ended the legal costs that the City was incurring and it set a clear path to get the property cleaned up. Mayor Mihalik said that May 11th is the day set to start to clean up the property and it should take about a week. The Council has not had a chance to discuss

what we will do with the property after that. There are a lot of ideas that Council will discuss. Parking may be one of them but those discussions will commence soon with what we can do with it. Nuisance properties are anything from excessive cigarette butts to weeds coming up through the cracks, to garbage, broken windows, or boarded up windows. The nuisance properties whether it is businesses downtown or whether it is residences are being addressed. The Police Department is addressing this issue. Mayor Mihalik said at the last Council meeting he suggested that maybe we hire a building inspector to go out and inspect properties. That was challenged by Councilmember Schmidtke who wanted to keep the police on duty to do that. Also the City Ordinance 94.07 says it is the duty of law enforcement. That would take an ordinance change. Discussion held regarding the police department enforcement of the nuisance property. Mayor Mihalik said the objective is to get the nuisance properties cleaned up. It is not a punishment thing. Discussion held regarding particular nuisances in the downtown area and ways to remedy them. Mayor Mihalik said the nuisance property ordinance is really just to maintain what we have to be a pleasant atmosphere and not let things get out of control. Mr. Beadell said that the City should consider suspending nuisance property notices until the City cleans up their nuisance property. Mayor Mihalik just wanted people to be aware that the City could not clean up that property up until this point. Mayor Mihalik said he will bring this issue up to the nuisance committee this week. The City has a nuisance property committee consisting of Police Chief Manning, Ms. Vail, Mayor Mihalik, Administrator/Clerk Teresa Hill and City Attorney Jason Moran. The Committee does not enforce the ordinance, it is just a matter of what is happening and give direction to the Police Department.

4. Business Assistance Programs - Micro Business Loan. Mayor Mihalik said a couple of years ago the EDA put together micro-business loans which is an interest free loan up to \$5,000. It is to be used for rehabilitation, exterior maintenance, blight removal, and enhancements. It is really for the outside of a building. This would be a great way if you want to make an improvement to the outside of the property and need cash. The micro business loan is an interest free loan and goes up to five years to repay. Discussion held regarding the process of applying for a loan. Mayor Mihalik said this meeting tonight is how can we help business owners in the City of Waterville.

5. Adjourn. Motion by Mihalik, seconded by McIntyre to adjourn. Unanimous vote. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 7:15 p.m.

Stephen Mihalik, Mayor

Teresa Hill, Administrator/Clerk