

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

Volume I

Number 15

December 11, 1998

COUNCIL CHRONICLES

December 7, 1998

By Lois Ann Marler

NEWS ON THE REC PLEX

Much of the December 7, 1998 City of Rolla council meeting was dedicated to details surrounding the proposed Recreational Complex. The council and audience heard from Sverdrup Facilities, the Architectural and Engineering firm that won the contract for Phase I (design) of the project. Brad Simmons, a firm representative, articulated that his firm has ties to UMR, with several of their associates being graduates of UMR.

Ken Kwantes, Parks Director and contract negotiator, outlined the estimated cost for this phase of the project to be \$150,000 plus "reimbursables". These added expenses could push the price of the contract to an estimated \$230,000. He reiterated that this is only Phase I of the project, with many more contracts to follow, including that of the Contract Manager. Upon questioning, he added that the Department of Natural Resources has not given authorization to build the recreational complex in Ber Juan Park.

REC PLEX FINANCING

Finance Director Dan Murphy outlined options for financing the Rec Plex. The three options include annual appropriation types, cash purchase, and a bond issue, noting that the bond was the most

favorable type of financing. It would require voter approval, which the council hopes to have on the April ballot.

Councilman Brian DeFriese voiced concern over not having a final architectural design until after the April election. Sverdrup representative Brad Simmons estimated that design time will take between 6 and 8 months, and that Rolla is on a "typical" course as compared with other cities who have done like projects.

(I reported in the September Council Chronicle that the City must purchase replacement land if they build in Ber Juan Park due to a Land and Water Conservation Fund stipulation. There was no discussion on this matter, yet when I read the documentation surrounding this, it appeared to be a relatively lengthy and "complex" process. I'll keep you posted)

HOSMER RECOGNIZED

Mayor Morgan presented outgoing City Planner Bob Hosmer with a plaque and praise for a job well done in Rolla. Hosmer has taken a job in Wilmington, North Carolina to be the Project Manager Director for the city of Wilmington. Hosmer will be supervisor to four other city planners. Congratulations on the promotion, Bob, and best wishes!

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Sum up the exec session with one word: LITIGATION! The council discussed their latest looming lawsuit, which is a "twist" on the case involving the City and the EPA. The city is

currently paying a \$24,700 negotiated fee as a result of failure to do a timely inspection of the old Police Station building, and for failing to give a 10-day notice to the EPA for demolition. (Maggi Construction, who demolished the building, was held partly responsible in the compliance failure, and was subsequently fined \$22,000.) I spoke to John Butz about the case, but he was unable to give specific details. He did tell me that the city has received a letter from the potential plaintiff's lawyer, that this is not a health-related suit, and that it is not a "no-brainer." He assured me that the amount of money involved wouldn't break the city.

Other pending cases were also discussed, including the Mayberry, Buehler Park, and Southside Annexation cases. No action was taken on these or the new possible suit.

It doesn't take a brain surgeon to see who is making out like a bandit in all this! In April of this year, Mayor Morgan asked for "my ideas for the City." One of my observations was how "lawsuit poor" the city has become. The city may not be able to get every lawsuit behind them immediately, but the senseless drain of legal expenses on the taxpayers is leaving us a little anemic.

(For detailed budget information about the city's legal expenses, visit our website at <http://www.rollanet.org/~rwnash/nsn.html>. Click "Documents PDF Files".)

KUDOS TO CHIEF CROWELL

Fire Chief Keith Crowell is a friend of Rolla taxpayers. He presented a plan to the council that will save hundreds of dollars every month (an estimated 40%) on cellular phone expenses. The council approved the "corporate plan" unanimously. City Administrator John Butz will be working on a cellular phone policy. Perhaps the Chief has other good ideas for saving money??? Perhaps he knows of a taxpayer-friendly lawyer. Thanks, Chief!

SLOW DOWN IN THE CEMETERY

I was flabbergasted to learn that the current speed limit in the Rolla Cemetery is 25 MPH. Ken Kwantes, upon the suggestion of parks department employees, asked for the council to approve adopting a 10 MPH speed limit in the cemetery (Chapter 27-69 of the City Code). Councilwoman Judy Jepsen of Ward 4 moved to suspend the rules so that a final reading and vote could be taken immediately, noting that she, "Doubted if any of the residents would mind." I would think not. I'm usually against suspending the rules, but in this case I'd vote for it, too.

APPOINTMENTS

Carl Pietsch, a Rolla retiree, was appointed to the Planning and Zoning Commission by a 9-1 vote. Ms. Patti Hutchison's appointment to the Rolla Housing Authority received unanimous approval.

POWELL PARK

Eleventh Street Park is now "Powell Park." Located in Ward 6, the residents of the Powell Area Neighborhood Association (PANA) requested the change. Former councilwoman Mary Daily, PANA Secretary/Treasurer, explained to the council that the name "Powell Park" is a more fitting and descriptive title for the park. The council approved the change unanimously.

I called Mary Daily for more information surrounding PANA, and in usual "Daily-Duty" style she was on my doorstep with PANA information. (I can't count the number of times Mary has brought information to me. I might add that she was one of only two mayoral candidates who responded IN WRITING to my mayoral questionnaire in the April '98 election. She is a true public servant.) PANA is a wonderful organization that began in 1992. They are well organized and politically active, while extending warm hospitality to established neighbors and newcomers alike. According to Daily, they are the only organized

neighborhood association that exists in Rolla. Organizations like PANA are what I consider the "heart and soul" of a community. Hopefully, the spirit of PANA will catch on in other neighborhoods as well.

CANDIDATE FILINGS

Mayor Morgan reminded everyone of the filing dates for the upcoming April election. One council seat from every ward will be up for grabs. Filing location is in the city clerk's office and can be done beginning Tuesday, December 22 from 8:00 A.M until 5:00 P.M. Last day to file is Tuesday, January 19, 1999. Requirements for city council seats can be found in Section 2-1 and 2-2 of the city code.

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