

MINUTES
PIQUA CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
January 12, 2012
7:30 P.M.
201 WEST WATER STREET
PIQUA, OHIO 45356

Piqua City Commission met in a Work Session at 7:30 P.M. in the Commission Chambers in the Municipal Government Complex, 201 W. Water Street. Vice Mayor Vogt called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. Also present were Commissioners Wilson, Martin, and Terry. Absent: Mayor Fess. Also present Directors and Managers, Chris Schmiesing, Dave Burtner, Don Freisthler, Cynthia Holtzapple, Amy Welker, Stacy Wall, Police Chief Bruce Jamison, and City Manager Gary Huff. Numerous citizens were also in attendance.

Work Session Discussion

Safe Routes to School Program

City Planner Chris Schmiesing gave a brief power point presentation on the Safe Routes to School Program. The SRTS programs are sustained efforts by parents, schools, community leaders, local, state, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. Mr. Schmiesing explained the health benefits and the environmental impacts of the SRTS program. This is 100% funded by the Federal Government and the eligible applicants include state, local, and regional agencies, including non-profit organizations, along with infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Mr. Schmiesing explained the 12 steps included in the Safe Travel Plan (STP) guidelines. There are four targeted buildings in the program and they include Washington School, Wilder Intermediate School, Bennett Intermediate School, and Piqua Junior High School. Mr. Schmiesing explained the timeline since the inception of the program in April of 2009. In October 2011 the STP acceptance letter was received making Piqua eligible to apply for up to \$500,000 in funds for infrastructure, and \$100,000 for non-infrastructure projects. On January 5, 2012 the SRTS committee identified the priorities. The application is due on March 2, 2012 and the applicants will be notified on April 30, 2012 of the results.

Several questions were asked, will Piqua Catholic Schools be included in the plan, and if "Walking Buses" were included. Mr. Schmiesing stated Piqua Catholic Schools are included and this plan would be a benefit to the community as a whole. The term "Walking Buses" was explained as a group of parents who meet and walk the students to school together as a group. This also includes a "Bike Train" which is done similar to the "Walking Buses". The use of Safety Patrols was mentioned and wondered if they were included in the funding. Police Chief Jamison explained there were some training issues with the program, stating the Miami County AAA previously backed it. Commissioner Martin asked if Springcreek School is included. Mr. Schmiesing explained.

Golf Course Fees

City Manager Huff stated he was providing a brief informal update on the Golf Course Fees.

Golf fees will not be increased this year; there are plans for marketing other events at the Golf Course. New membership options will also be available along with the implementation of

weekday membership and group discount rates being offered. The plan is to try and attract new players to the course, and bring back some of the players who have left for other courses.

Commissioner Wilson inquired if they have had any of the players offer their opinions on what they would like to see at the course, or what type of services they would like to have, or any other suggestions or information regarding the Club House or other things they would like to see implemented? City Manager Huff stated he was told several of the greens are in need of repair or maintenance, and mentioned several of the local area organizations have stated they are considering helping with improvements to the Club House. It was mentioned that the Golf Course has lost some business to other local courses over the last few years. City Manager Huff stated he and Economic Development Director/Assistant City Manager Bill Murphy have spoken with the Chamber of Commerce on ways to utilize the Golf Course for other events, and are getting a lot of good feedback on it. Commissioner Wilson asked if the Golf Course had the necessary facilities and services needed to be able to accommodate other venues. Commissioner Martin asked if it would be possible to provide a feedback card to all of the players to receive their input on what that would like to see at the course in the future. City Manager Huff stated that is something we can certainly look into doing.

Speed Limit and Parking on Park Avenue

City Manager Huff stated he would like to hear from the City Commissioners on the direction they would like to proceed with on this issue.

City Planner Chris Schmiesing gave a power point presentation beginning by explaining the terminology used in the report. Intersection Sight Distance (ISD) and Stopping Sight Distance (SSD). The existing data evaluation was gathered from public records, citizen observations/comments, available studies and accident reports. Mr. Schmiesing explained the difference between the stopping distance from a side street at 25 MPH and 35 MPH. Slides were shown of existing intersections on Park Avenue at the intersections of Madison, Lincoln, Virginia, and Walker where there is less than 100 feet. Mr. Schmiesing stated the ISD recommended sight distance conditions are to be 160-200 feet of parking restriction on each of the four corners. Typical ISD recommends sight distance conditions results in the elimination of 6 to 8 parking spaces on each of the four corner intersection as indicated on the slide. In 1993 a study was completed on the Park Avenue, State Route 185 and some of the same issues were brought up at that time, including the speed limit and the parking restrictions. In 2000 the city addressed other issues on Washington Avenue involving speed limits.

Commissioner Terry stated she could see problems with eliminating parking spaces on Park Avenue at this time. Commissioner Wilson stated he would like to get more information on removing 1 space at each corner and reducing the speed limit to 25 MPH if possible first. Commissioner Terry stated she had previously lived on a corner on Park Avenue and stated the vehicles are quite a bit larger now than they were back then. There was a lengthy discussion concerning various aspects of removing parking spaces and reducing the speed limit on Park Avenue. It was noted there are a lot of shrubs and bushes at the corners of the intersections that need to be addressed. It was also mentioned to possibly look city-wide at all of the intersections for site problems, and was this something that could be done in house, and if not what could be done. City Manager Huff stated he would look into the items brought up and bring the information back to the Commission at a future work session.

Russ Fashner, Forest Avenue, expressed his opinion on making the changes to the speed limit on Park Avenue, and inquired if there is any type of reports on accidents on Park Avenue available?

Several suggestions were made regarding the speed limit on Park Avenue, 25 MPH from Washington Avenue and Park going east, 35 MPH the rest of the way on Park Avenue. Another is Washington Avenue east be 25 MPH and removing 1 parking space. Commissioner Martin stated he is not in favor of moving six parking spaces at this time. It was noted that Clark Avenue has some of the same problems, and the lowering of the speed limit on Washington Avenue seemed to help eliminate some of the problems there.

Brad Boehringer, Mound Street, voiced his opinion on the speed limit issue on Park Avenue.

Jim Cruse, Co. Rd. 25-A voiced his opinion on the previous study stating there have been a lot of changes since that study was completed. Mr. Cruse voiced his concern about the 35 MPH speed limit on top of the hill in regards to safety issues due to the fact there is a school located at Park and Sunset.

Mr. Fashner voiced his concern about the 35 MPH speed limit on Park Avenue, stating there is still a lot of truck traffic on Park Avenue.

City Manager Huff stated he would like to have some direction on what the Commission would like to do, and will speak with each of the Commissioners to get this done.

Vicious Animals – Part 1

Police Chief Bruce Jamison stated after the vicious attack of a local resident by several pit bulls the city decided to look at the current vicious animal ordinance. Chief Jamison gave a brief update on the current ordinances, state laws and current practices by the Health Department, Miami County Animal Shelter, and the Police Department concerning vicious animals. Ordinances include: Piqua City Ordinance No. 90.28, Ohio Revised Code Chapter 955.11 Dangerous and Vicious Dogs- includes as vicious “belongs to a breed that is commonly known as a pit bull dog”. Vicious dogs are a hot topic in other cities also stated Chief Jamison citing several other cities are enacting new regulations and laws on vicious animals. One of the concerns is if the ordinance should be breed specific or non specific. Certain breeds are labeled vicious but other animals can also become just as vicious, thus the reason for the discussion of the breed specific versus the non-specific, stated Chief Jamison.

Health & Sanitation Director Amy Welker provided various statistics including the number of dog bites from 2000 – 2011, which included over 600 bites. Part of the problem is that on the bite report the breed is not always specified, or is just listed as a mix with an average of 52 bites per year. Chief Jamison stated the Police Department received over 1300 animal complaints in 2011 including barking dogs and animal bites. Chief Jamison stated he reviews all of the bite reports, and only 5 dogs were declared vicious in 2011. There is no legislation that we could have had in place to prevent the incident with the Piqua resident in 2011, the animals resided outside the city limits and came into town.

Ms. Welker stated the Health Department only gets involved when a bite occurs, and contracts with the Miami County Animal Shelter. The Miami County Animal Shelter has 4694 dogs licensed at this time. Several questions were raised including how many dogs are there in Piqua that are considered vicious dogs. Chief Jamison stated at this time there are no vicious dogs in Piqua, but at one time there were 5 and they are no longer in town. The incident with the Piqua resident prompted the City to look into the vicious dog ordinance more thoroughly. The criteria for labeling a dog “vicious” was explained by Chief Jamison, and he further stated he has spoken with the Law Director on the need to possibly update our ordinance to include the owner being

required to carry insurance for keeping a vicious dog. There was discussion on breed specific versus the non-specific breed, and whether or not to go by the individual incident rather than just a dog bite or an attack. The trouble when this happens is that you are taking a beloved family pet away, stated Chief Jamison. Law Director Stacy Wall stated it is the really the owner's responsibility not the dogs when an incident occurs, and owner must take that responsibility as a go owner. Some question was raised over the need for notification of the neighborhood where a vicious dog is living in the area, and the procedures that occur when someone is bitten.

Commissioner Vogt commented there are also a number of wild animals such as coyotes, skunks, and raccoons living in the city, what can be done about them? City Manager Huff stated the Department of Agriculture is responsible for wild animals and is contacted as needed. Ms. Welker stated dog rabies has almost been eliminated with only one case being reported last year, and that report resulted from a dog coming in contact with a raccoon that was infected with rabies.

Power Plant Dam Chronology

City Manager Huff stated there have been a lot of questions raised on what is going to happen to the Dam. At this time there are no plans to take the dam down as they are looking at various solutions.

City Planner Chris Schmiesing provided a brief power point overview of the Low Dam Modification, citing the current dam was built in 1937. In 2009 the Ohio Department of Natural Resources conducted a study. Findings from this study concluded the gates in the dam are obsolete and are in need of repairs, along with a high maintenance cost for the dam. Discussions to date include the Power Plant Urban Waterfront Redevelopment, OEPA Presentation to CAC, Application for a 319 Grant to study the feasibility of the dam, and conversations with the US Army Corp of Engineers regarding the dam.

Vice Mayor Vogt read a letter received from Jerry D. Lanich, a former Piqua resident now residing in Hamilton Ohio, encouraging the City to keep the dam in place. Vice Mayor Vogt also read a letter received from David Vogt a former Piqua resident and member of Piqua Boat & Ski Club residing in Florida. Mr. Vogt is also in favor of keeping the dam. Several members of the Piqua Boat & Ski Club were in attendance and asked several questions involving the dam and voiced their opinion on the fate of the dam in the future.

Power Systems Director Ed Krieger commented the EPA has stated the Great Miami River in this area is one the best rivers in Ohio. Mr. Krieger explained the benefits of keeping the dam, along with the cost of maintaining the gates that are a problem at this time.

Brad Boehringer asked several questions concerning the depth of the water surrounding the dam.

City Manager Huff stated this was just an informational update on the dam and nothing has been decided at this time.

Fluoride in City Water

City Manager Huff stated this is an important issue that was brought up by the City Commission.

Water Department Superintendent Don Freisthler gave a brief power point presentation on the pros and cons of water fluoridation in the City of Piqua. The key is to keep the action level below

1.5 mg/l, currently the maximum contaminant level is at 4 mg/L and the action level is at 2 mg/L. The US EPA is currently reviewing the maximum contaminant level and it is expected to be reduced, the current range the city is required to maintain is .8 –1.3 with the new range expected to be .7 – 12. There were questions concerning the amount of fluoride in other things such as toothpaste, are there any home water purification systems that take the fluoride out of the water. Several comments were brought up including that once fluoride is introduced into the water it must be continued, and the reason for lowering the level is the amount of fluoride that is in toothpaste may be causing concern for getting to much fluoride. The comments were explained.

City Manager Huff thanked everyone for attending stating he hoped the information presented was informative and helpful. If anyone has any other questions or they would like more information regarding the issues discussed City Manager Huff asked them to contact him.

Moved by Commissioner Martin, seconded by Commissioner Terry, to adjourn from the City Commission Work Session at 9:40 P.M. Voice vote, Aye: Terry, Wilson, Martin, and Vogt. Nay, None.

WILLIAM D. VOGT, VICE MAYOR

PASSED: _____

ATTEST: _____
REBECCA J. COOL
CLERK OF COMMISSION

