

Written by Nemaha County Herald
Thursday, 30 August 2012 15:07 -

During the Aug. 13 meeting, Auburn City Council addressed a varied agenda which included paving issues and approving an addition for the Nemaha County Veterans Memorial located in Legion Memorial Park.

Becky Woltemath with the Nemaha County Veterans Memorial Committee reported on the effort underway to expand the memorial which was placed in the Auburn park last year. She said the stones which are part of the memorial and upon which names of Nemaha County veterans have been engraved, are already filled or will be with names submitted to the group.

Woltemath said the memorial currently has about 700 names engraved and about 70 more on the waiting list. To accommodate the additional names, the committee proposed to add two stones on the east side of the memorial. These two would accommodate about 300 more names and wouldn't include artwork.

She commented, "We are hoping to have as many names of veterans as possible, including those still living, by Jan. 1 of next year. The cost is \$200 per name submitted to help cover expenses incurred and to have the addition ready by Memorial Day 2013."

Council members approved allowing the memorial expansion as requested.

Mayor Scott Kudrna proposed and the council approved the reappointments of Gary Spear to the Auburn Housing Authority and Ed Johnson to the Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA), and the appointment of Dave Davison to fill a vacancy on the Planning Commission. About a dozen residents were appointed to serve on the City Recreation Committee.

The council okayed American Legion Post 23's request for a special designated liquor license for a beer garden to be held at the Nemaha County Fairgrounds on Oct. 12 for a wedding

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reception and dance.

Commander Dick Stich advised that the Nemaha County Agricultural Society had given its approval for the new open air building on the fairgrounds to be used as proposed. He also said earlier activities sponsored by the Legion Post at and near the fairgrounds during the Nemaha County Fair had not caused any problems. Auburn Police Chief Kris Baker concurred with Stich's report that earlier beer gardens sponsored by the Legion had gone smoothly.

An estimated 200 to 250 people may be attending the social function and proper security measures would be followed, according to Stich.

Jessica Mason gave a presentation on the placement of a handicap accessible swing at Legion Park. Mason had spoken to the Council during the July meeting and was asked to return with more information, including possible costs. The swing which she proposed purchasing would cost \$680 plus \$12 freight.

Councilwoman Mary Kruger said the Parks and Pool Committee had reviewed the handicap swing proposal and raised a question or two. Mason was directed to meet again with the committee to finalize details.

City Attorney Angelo Ligouri presented a legal opinion on a request submitted to the city to consider a lease for the municipal pool for water aerobics and/or other private activities. Ligouri said all Class A public pools open to private or public use should have a lifeguard(s) on duty at all times which the pool is in use. Mentioned specifically was a water aerobics class held recently which was said to have involved as many as 30 to 50 people at a time.

Councilwoman Kruger, who is Parks and Pool Committee chair, said water aerobics is a nice new program, but it needs to be regulated. Leah Wehenkel was manager of the swimming pool which was closed recently to mark the end of the swim season.

The council approved Fiscal Year 2013 dues assessment requests from Southeast Nebraska Development District in the amounts of \$2,125 for membership and \$1,038 for housing related

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services.

The council granted final approval of a plat for a simple subdivision in Brock 12, Sheridan Addition to Auburn, for property upon which Terry Fulton is building a small residence. Keep Auburn Beautiful had recommended and the Auburn City Council earlier awarded a \$10,000 grant to encourage building living units on property where dilapidated homes once stood. The property is located north of 11th Street and west of L Street. The subdivision was needed to reduce three lots into two for Ted and Joline Yager, Auburn, so they could sell the desired property to Fulton.

Council members heard a recommendation from the Planning Commission that south S Street be platted to the edge of the city's corporate limits in the abandoned CB&Q Railroad right-of-way. Jeff Jones is the Planning Commission Chairman and was present regarding the agenda item. He said there had been a request for a subdivision in this area, but the Planning Commission noticed this particular street hadn't been surveyed. The council passed a resolution to have the property inside the former railroad right-of-way surveyed.

North S Street Paving Discussion

Mayor Kudrna discussed future paving of north S Street from the intersection with Highway 136 on north to the Glenrock Addition. He described this street as very heavily used and one that has already been annexed by the city.

City Attorney Ligouri had spoken with an official on the state level about what methods the City of Auburn might or might not pursue to pay for paving this portion of street. Ligouri said an expert provided privileged information which basically means that there will be no paving assessments for landowners since the city wouldn't pursue gap paving as a way to pay for hard surfacing of the street.

Kudrna said paving this portion of S Street has been on the City of Auburn's One and Six Year Plan for several years and that highway allocation monies would likely be used for the project instead of gap paving.

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Councilman Larry Holtzman, who serves as Street Committee Chair, reassured those in the audience which included a number of residents who appeared to be interested in the subject, “We are no way near pursuing this yet. Nothing will happen for a while.”

Dennis Kimball asked the council, “How can you assess us [referring to a former gap paving project on S Street in south Auburn] and not those who own property out on north S Street?”

Kimball was advised that the city wasn’t going to pursue the new S Street paving in a way that the city didn’t have a legal right to do so.

Jeff Jeanneret told the council, “There will be lawsuits about this from others who were forced to pay for paving whether they wanted it or not.”

Kudrna said he believes paving should be completed as part of the development of property and not pursued after homes have been established.

Councilman Frank Critser said, “Let’s follow the statutes in place about developments and not allow exceptions.”

Other Council Meeting Business

Glen Hogue, City Building Inspector, was asked to comment about the presence or absence of sidewalks throughout the community. He said, “Developers of subdivisions were not required to have sidewalks built as part of the project.”

Kudrna next gave a preliminary budget presentation for the council and others.

The mayor said a committee needed to be formed to review the Employee Handbook

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(Personnel Manual). Councilwoman Katy Billings and Critser agreed to serve and will review the document to see if any changes are needed.

The council approved drawdowns for Downtown Revitalization projects in the amounts of \$14,237.50 for Carla Mason for work on property at 1213 K Street and for \$8,514.75 for Sue and Shane Charbonnet for improvements to property at 1409 19th Street. The drawdown for Mason is divided equally between a loan and grant, while the funding for the Charbonnets is entirely a grant which won't require repayment.

The council approved a \$283,815.97 payment to Pavers, Inc. of Waverly for 2012 street improvements, specifically asphaltic concrete overlay work involving both city streets and alleys.

The council accepted ownership and possession of real estate which had been deeded to the city regarding real estate at 721 11th Street and 716 10th Street. It was noted that the city had received a number of complaints on both properties which are located near the Valley View (High-Rise) Housing. Minter's house has \$1,469.28 in back taxes, plus \$109.50 that has been paid, and Kite's house has \$131.91 in unpaid taxes for the second half of 2011.

Building Inspector Hogue reported that both properties are basically condemned, unlivable and needed to be removed to improve the neighborhood's health and safety.

Reports and recommendations from department heads and committee chairs were also presented that evening.