

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
MARCH 27, 2019**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wallen called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Seth Hansen, Rose Johnson, Paul Knier, and Mike Wallen. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Police Captain Matt Hayen, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, City Planner Michael Healy, and Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Knier motioned to adopt the proposed agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

4. BUSINESS

4A. Discussion on Car Condo Development Idea

Michael Healy introduced Big Lake resident Richard Hinrichs who had requested to be allowed time at a Workshop to give a brief presentation regarding a development idea that would require PUD approval. Healy explained that Hinrichs is seeking an informal reaction from the City Council so he can determine whether it is worthwhile to prepare formal plans and submit an application for a Concept Plan Planned Unit Development (PUD) to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. Hinrichs provided information on his proposal to purchase a six acre vacant lot across the street from the Friendly Buffalo where he would like to construct a “car condo” community which would consist of up to six buildings. Hinrichs described a car condo community as a community of storage buildings that are designed for use by car enthusiasts. Each storage unit would be large enough to be converted into a recreational storage/hangout area, be privately owned as a condo unit, would be governed by a homeowner’s association, would include a community room, public bathrooms, and would have a display area for small car shows. Hinrichs explained that the intent of the development is to create an area where people can store their cars if they don’t have room at their houses, and to create a social hub for car enthusiasts. Healy noted that PUD approval would be required since there would be six principal buildings on a single lot, reviewed that the property is currently zoned I-1, but that the comprehensive plan steers it towards commercial use, and noted that going beyond the 50% metal exterior requirement would also require PUD approval. Healy also discussed the proposed layout of the development noting that special care would need to be taken to ensure that the façade along 198th Avenue remains attractive. Hinrichs provided information on other

communities that have allowed these types of projects. He is proposing a total of 28 units to start with, with seven units in each building, and to phase in the remaining buildings over a four year plan. Hinrichs reviewed potential designs of the complex, noting that he is anticipating modeling the Big Lake project similar to the Columbus design with some additional features. The price point would be comparable to other projects and would meet market according to our area.

Healy reviewed potential conflicts with the City Code and wanted Council to understand what a PUD could provide to the applicant in relation to waivers of Code requirements. Healy also clarified that the buildings would face internally with less focus on the street side. Hinrichs reviewed the proposed architectural design of the exterior, noting that the structures need to offer limited maintenance and offer affordability. Hinrichs assured Council that the exterior will not look like a pole barn.

Council discussed ownership of the buildings, with Hinrichs clarifying that each space would be privately owned by individuals in a condo setting. The general consensus of the Council was that they like the project and encouraged Hinrichs to continue moving forward with official applications.

4B. Discussion on Allowing Chickens on Residential Lots

Michael Healy noted that Council Member Knier had requested that the Council bring back the discussion of allowing chickens on city lots. At the March 13, 2019 Workshop, Council directed staff to bring back information to the next Workshop for further discussion. Healy reviewed past Council discussions on the keeping of chickens within the City limits. Currently, City Code only allows farm animals on properties zoned as AG and only if the property is at least 10 acres in size. These 10-acre properties are permitted to have up to three farm animals, with more being allowed with an Interim Use Permit. Healy clarified that chickens are currently prohibited on city lots. Healy noted that the City occasionally receives requests from residents to loosen the existing restrictions and allow a small number of chickens to be kept in back yards on city lots. The City Council has previously discussed this topic in 2013 and 2016 with both discussions resulting in a consensus to keep the existing ordinance as is. Healy reviewed pros and cons of allowing back yard chickens. Primary negatives associated with allowing any type of animal on a city lot are unwanted smells, issues concerning animal waste, and unwanted noise. Cities typically have enacted ordinances in an attempt to control these issues such as enacting leash laws, waste disposal rules, noise ordinances, limits on the number allowed per household, and dangerous animal laws. Healy reviewed potential nuisances specifically generated by poultry. Discussion was held on the importance of keeping their living areas cleaned frequently, the potential for high levels of ammonia which can be harmful to the birds as well as to their owners, and the need for safe handling and hygiene. Back yard chickens have sometimes been associated with salmonella cases and other diseases. Supporters of back yard chickens contend that allowing chickens increases interest in natural and local foods as well as humane treatment of animals, providing parents an opportunity to teach their children where food comes from and how to responsibly care for animals, and that by allowing chickens in city limits would attract potential residents to locate here versus other more restrictive communities. Healy reviewed potential regulations to limit negative effects.

Joel Scharf discussed the City's animal control contract that we have with the City of Monticello, noting that code enforcement for this type of animal would not fall into this contract. Scharf also discussed that there are properties that have been keeping chickens illegally and there have been very limited complaints filed. Matt Hayen reported on minimal complaints fielded in Monticello when he worked for Wright County.

Council Member Knier stated that he is in favor of allowing chickens, and would like to see the ordinance allow up to 8 chickens per household. Council Member Johnson stated that she likes the neighbor approval requirement, and Mayor Wallen noted that neighbor relationship issues could have a negative impact. Council Member Hansen discussed his concerns about the potential for diseases in relation to the keeping of poultry. Hansen stated that he would support allowing chickens but wants it capped at 6 chickens per residential property. Council Member Backlund discussed the positive impact it could have on families who own this type of animal. Mayor Wallen noted that the potential for complaints doesn't appear to be an issue, but wants to be sure the code would restrict the number allowed per property.

Council directed staff to bring this item back to an upcoming Workshop for further discussion. Council also directed staff to reach out to comparable cities who do allow chickens to seek out enforcement data. Council also discussed the need to limit the ordinance amendment to only chickens, with the possibility of allowing bees.

4C. New Ideas Discussion

No comments or questions were discussed.

5. OTHER

Michael Healy discussed a recent inquiry from a new resident seeking a permit for a backyard shed to house wild falcons during rehabilitation. The general consensus of the Council was that falcons are not considered as domesticated animals and are not allowed to be held captive in the City limits per City Code.

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Hansen motioned to adjourn at 5:43 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

04/10/19
Date Approved By Council