

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 16, 2011

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Raeanne Danielowski, Lori Kampa, Duane Langsdorf, and Mike Wallen. Also present: City Administrator Scott Johnson, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Community Economic Development Director Jim Thares, Senior Planner Katie Larsen (arrived at 6:00 p.m.), Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Liquor Store Manager Jan Kostrzewski, and City Engineer Brad DeWolf of Bolton & Menk, Inc.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Langsdorf motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda. Seconded by Council Member Wallen, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

4. BUSINESS

4A. Violations of Snow Removal on Sidewalks

Mike Goebel reviewed snow removal procedures the public works department follows when sidewalk maintenance violations occur. Goebel noted that his department is seeing a need to establish a more efficient procedure for enforcing sidewalk snow removal ordinances as trends are showing violations occurring up to three weeks after a snowfall event. Council has previously indicated that clean sidewalks are important and has directed staff to enforce these ordinances aggressively. Council has also directed staff to work with owners of developments where there is little development. These conflicting procedures have become controversial and confusing. Goebel asked for clarification on enforcement of snow removal relating to aggressive enforcement and adoption of a procedure that exempts sidewalks on less traveled areas.

Council discussed allowing exemptions with signage postings, the benefits of sending out reminder letters at the beginning of the winter season, promoting the City's investment of our sidewalk system and the importance of encouraging outdoor exercise. Council also discussed the need for residents to understand the sidewalk ordinance and to take responsibility for clearing the sidewalk area adjacent to their property. Council directed staff to continue evaluating the process for violations and to bring this item back to a fall Workshop for further discussion.

4B. City Professional Services Review

Scott Johnson reviewed the city's current professional services that are done through contracts with our consultants. Johnson informed Council that the City currently employs 10 firms that provide banking, insurance, auditing, fiscal, engineering, legal, building inspections, planning, payroll, and utility billing services. Johnson summarized comparisons of surrounding communities and what they pay for their City Attorney and City Engineer contract rates. Council Member Backlund questioned invoices submitted by Bolton and Menk relating to survey work completed on NSP homes. Brad DeWolf reviewed the grading, drainage, and survey plans that were completed and informed Council that he will be resubmitting the invoice with more detail of the work performed. DeWolf also discussed his commitment to the Big Lake area and the donations that Bolton and Menk has made to various Big Lake organizations and event.

Council discussed the importance of retaining long-term, cost-effective consultants and directed staff to continue with our current professional service agreements. Council also directed staff to designate a schedule for surveying various service costs paid by surrounding communities to ensure that our consultant fee's are in-line with what other communities are paying.

4C. Lakeside Park Parking Fee Discussion

Scott Johnson discussed the current fees paid by residents and non-residents for annual parking stickers at Lakeside Park. Johnson also reviewed expenses incurred by City residents and noted that the park is financially supported only by City tax papers. Johnson also reviewed surrounding community fee structures for resident/non-resident use of their community centers. Council discussed the financial contribution made by City taxpayers and the consensus of the Council was to continue with the current fee structure for parking passes and daily fees at Lakeside Park.

4D. 2011 Council Goals and Priorities

Scott Johnson reviewed a draft of the 2011 Council Goals and Priorities that were discussed at the January 29th Goal Setting Session. Council directed staff to place this item on the regular agenda at the February 23rd meeting. Council also discussed community garden/farmers market ideas and directed staff to contact the Chamber of Commerce to see what their role could be in organizing these events. Council also discussed the option of holding a community open house to take feedback from residents. Scott Johnson noted that staff will be working on a community survey that could be done along with a community open house.

4E. Strong Towns “Curbside Chat” Presentation

Representatives from the Strong Towns Organization presented a “Curbside Chat” for local officials and key community leaders. Group discussion followed the presentation which centered on business retention, job creation, high amenity areas, services the city provides, and infrastructure guidelines.

4F. “Soul of the Community” Report

Katie Larsen reviewed the “Soul of the Community” report which was recently published by the Knight Foundation. The report summarizes the results of 43,000 surveyed citizens across 26 cities nationwide asking them what emotionally attaches people to a community. Larsen noted that communities across the nation are struggling with budget cuts, business retention/expansion efforts, and fluctuating tax bases. Creating an environment in which people want to live, work and play is a critical factor in stabilizing the economy. Larsen indicated that the report clarifies that the more attached a person is to their community, the more time they spend there and the more services they use. The report provides information about why people live where they do and what is important to them. This information can be used by decision makers in setting goals, developing budgets and creating a community vision.

5. **OTHER** – No other.

6. **ADJOURN**

Council Member Langsdorf motioned to adjourn at 7:44 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Wallen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

02/23/11
Date Approved By Council