

Hills City Council Meeting
October 23, 2023 / 7:00 PM / Hills Community Center

The regular Hills City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Kemp at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 23, 2023 at the Hills Community Center.

Present: Council members: Hill, Hudachek, Knebel, Sommers, Volk. Absent: None. Also present: Pantel, Public Works; and Frembgen Kesner, Deputy Clerk.

Consent Agenda: A Motion was made by Volk and seconded by Sommers to approve the consent agenda; approving the agenda, minutes from the October 9, 2023 Council Meeting, scheduled list of claims, and receipts from October 7, 2023 through October 20, 2023. Ayes 5. Motion carried.

Public Comment: J. Slaughter reported two dogs from 204 Oak St attacked his cat. Cat required surgery. He considers the dogs dangerous and asked the City Council to take appropriate steps. The Mayor responded it was on the Agenda. S. Henderson asked whether the Council had received the community cats paperwork. The Mayor responded yes; it was on the Agenda. D. Strabala questioned how many unrelated persons are allowed by City Code to live in a single-family residence, specifically in reference to 204 Oak St, and believing that 204 Oak St was in violation of the Code. (The Code allows three.) The City will follow up with the landlord. B. Dutka inquired as to the status of the new school in Hills. The Mayor responded that the Iowa City Community School District has not updated the City recently; last heard, the ICCSD was in discussions with a landowner regarding purchase of property. C. LaGrange introduced himself and L&R Dumpsters to the Council, requesting that they be kept in mind when the City's trash services contract was up for renewal. J. Bailey commented that there has been a recent increase in aggressive dogs at large, stating people are scared. M. Huff reported she was traumatized by a headless chicken that had been attacked by dogs at large. M. Mellecker stated she believes it to be necessary to accompany her small dog outside, in her own yard, to protect the dog. Recently, she had just come inside with her dog when two dogs from 204 Oak St ran into her yard.

Business:

Resolution 2023-41 was presented authorizing Gingerich Well & Pump Service to repair Well #1. A Motion was made by Sommers and seconded by Hudachek to approve Resolution 2023-41. Roll Call: Ayes: Sommers, Hudachek, Hill, Knebel, Volk. Absent: None. Resolution 2023-41 approved.

Resolution 2023-42 was presented authorizing Electric Pump to upgrade communications at the water treatment plant. A Motion was made Knebel and seconded by Hill to approve Resolution 2023-42. Roll Call: Ayes: Knebel, Hill, Hudachek, Sommers, Volk. Absent: None. Resolution 2023-42 approved.

Council discussed the dogs at large issue. Volk asked what was achieved by the recent impoundment of one of the dogs from 204 Oak St. The Mayor responded that the owner paid the shelter fees and retrieved the dog. The Mayor explained to the residents in attendance that City Code requires two attacks on a domestic animal or fowl within a 12-month period to declare an animal dangerous, and that not all the chicken attack incidents had been reported to the City. Hill explained to the residents in attendance that the evidence from the chicken attacks that were reported was circumstantial, whereas the attack on the cat was witnessed by the cat's owner. The Mayor stated he and city staff would meet with a Johnson County Sheriff's representative to ascertain what documentation they had. Hill moved that the City charge the residents of 204 Oak St with a municipal infraction and fine them; and that the residents be given a short window to take care of the dogs or face a forced removal of the dogs. Sommers seconded the Motion. Ayes: 5. Motion carried.

Council discussed whether to reimburse residents for veterinary costs (Iowa Humane Alliance) incurred for TNR (trap-neuter-release) of three feral cats. Council concluded that feral cats are community cats, and not the responsibility of homeowners. Hill moved that the City reimburse the residents' costs and Knebel seconded the Motion. Ayes: 5. Motion carried. The Mayor stated the Council would discuss a establishing a formal TNR program in FY2025 at the upcoming budget retreat.

Reports:

Attorney: No report.

Fire Chief: Pantel reported that a fire truck will be out on Halloween between 6 and 8 p.m. distributing candy to trick or treaters.

Maintenance: Pantel reported that the Community-Wide Bulky Waste Clean Up day was a success; 42 residents took advantage of the service, with some bringing multiple car- or truckloads. Fifteen appliances were collected, and two 30-foot roll-offs were filled. He thanked Jerry McBride and Tiffany Pantel for working the event.

Sewer: No report.

Water: No report.

Administrator: Frembgen Kesner summarized the results of the East Central Iowa Council of Government's Regional Planning Affiliation 10 survey regarding residents' opinions on non-motorized travel, the 29 respondents indicated wanting more sidewalks and bike trails; reported being contacted by Birds Friendly Iowa as a result of the City receiving an Iowa DNR REAP grant; and reported the new Community Center parking sign was installed.

Mayor: No report.

Council Comments: Hudachek reported an overgrown lawn at 251 Sierra Park; Sommers commended Jerry McBride and Tiffany Pantel for their work at the Community-Wide Bulky Waste Clean Up day.

A Motion was made by Knebel and seconded by Sommers to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Ayes: 5. Motion carried.

Tim Kemp, Mayor

Tam Frembgen Kesner, Deputy Clerk