

## **MAY 22, 2017 LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

3:30 p.m. Council Chamber. Members present: A. Hraban, Pearson, Stoneberg. Others present: A. Christianson, K. Gorsegner, A. Kenyon, A. Lobermeier.

### **Call to Order:**

Committee Chair Stoneberg called the meeting to order.

### **Open Burning:**

Chief Lobermeier opened this discussion by stating he had just witnessed a problem fire and talked with the fellow responsible about it. Seeing this made him think the complaint filed in District 3 has more merit than he previously thought. Copies of the City's current ordinance regarding open burning and a model ordinance prepared by WDNR were distributed for review. Prior to another meeting, those present will try to review a DNR model ordinance and make note of any contents they feel might be useful to add to ours.

Those present seemed to agree that the current 9 p.m. limit on end time for camp fires within the City is unrealistic and should be set back to 10 p.m. or midnight. There also seemed to be a consensus that leaf burning in the City causes an undue portion of smoke and should be prohibited. That the City operates a no charge leaf removal program there is no need to dispose of leaves by burning.

### **Urban Forestry:**

Copies of an urban forestry ordinance for Phillips, provided by WDNR, were distributed. It was also mentioned that ordinances from Amherst, Rhineland, Slinger, Whiting are on file.

Adm. Christianson indicated he feels our current ordinance creates obligations the City hasn't met and isn't well equipped to meet so should, perhaps, be stricken. On the other hand, the onset of Emerald Ash Borer might suggest keeping some Dutch Elm Disease era rules. He noted that, at the time (circa 1970) Dutch Elm rules were put in place, there was a belief that it could be staved off, or even overcome. Emerald Ash Borer, on the other hand, is thought to always be fatal.

A question was raised whether the City needs a tree ordinance for public spaces as the City can do what it feels necessary on property and right of way it owns. It was noted that residents often feel boulevard trees they like are theirs, but when these same trees need removal or other attention they don't. This led to discussion of public misperceptions about taxation and other matters. The City has wanted to have a news (Did You Know type) column to clarify some of these matters, but the L. News requires advertising fees be paid for these.

DPW Gorsegner noted that since the front page coverage of a tree along Corbett Ave. two property owners have flagged him down and a third has called to suggest that their neighbor's trees need to be removed.

### **Parks and Rec:**

There was discussion of perceived advantages to the City creating a Parks and Rec Dept. for purposes of resident recruitment and retention. For starters while there are a number of activities out there finding out about them doesn't seem to be so easy. As such one new role for a City Parks and Rec Dept. could be to serve as an information clearinghouse. The Dept. could use and, perhaps, help coordinate volunteer efforts. While Rusk Co. is also increasing its outdoor rec efforts, it does not appear to be doing anything with indoor recreation, which also needs support.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.