

Council Study Session Minutes, June 30, 2015

Call to Order

The Ely City Council Study Session was called to order by Mayor Novak at 5:30pm on June 30, 2015 at the City Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Council members A.Forsman, Kess, Debeltz, Omerza, D.Forsman, Mayor Novak (6)

ABSENT: Polyner (1)

ADDITIONS OR OMISSIONS: None

NEW BUSINESS

Permit Fees:

Paul Kess presented his proposal for the Permit Fees. Kess's proposal is to decrease the permit fees, and to make all residential permits 1% of the valuation of the fee. As the fees are now, smaller projects pay a higher percentage for the permit, while larger projects pay a lesser percentage. He stated that there may be other ways to reduce the costs of fees.

Mayor Novak stated that we need to work towards a goal of common projects at a flat rate. We need to look at repair and maintenance type projects and we can lighten up on those fees. Plan reviews for larger projects take a lot of time to go through and we need plan reviews so projects are done correctly.

Len Katauskas asked what the purpose of the fees are. Novak stated that the building code is in place for the safety of our residents and the people that go into businesses. We need to make sure that everything is done right and to code.

Katauskas asked what are the citizens getting from these fees? If the citizens are doing regular maintenance with a contractor what is the building official going to give the citizens? Do we get lower insurance rates?

Novak stated that if we don't regulate the building code the state will come in and take over the building code and will charge much higher fees.

Langowski stated that ISO does look at building code enforcement, our current and previous building officials have been working on the ISO ratings. In previous discussions we discussed how we could reduce office hours to reduce costs, right now our building official is averaging around 24 hours per week and it is working out good.

Omerza stated that she likes the mayor's idea to form a committee and move forward with the permit fees.

Al Forsman stated that we want to make it fair that the citizens get the best value for what they are paying for. It is best for our citizens to have a Building Official in town.

Kess suggested any project that doesn't change the footprint of the house to have no or low fees, besides electrical, mechanical, and plumbing. You would still need a permit for these non-structural projects but maybe no fees.

Al Forsman asked when the current Building Official contract is through. Langowski stated that the contract started on April 1, 2015 and is a one year contract with a 30 day clause for notice to cancel. Al Forsman stated that the current Building Official has been paid out \$45,612.47 according to the spreadsheet in the last 6 months for working 4 days a week. Forsman suggested to possibly having the Building Official as a city employee.

Novak stated that making the Building Official an employee would lead to higher benefit costs. Currently the Building Official is a contracted employee and pays his own FICA, Health Insurance, unemployment insurance, workers comp insurance, etc.

Omerza stated that we have a contract employee and we need to honor the current contract in place. We need to concentrate on the current costs in front of us and focus on the working group that has been suggested to go through the permit fees.

Novak stated they will bring it to the next council meeting to make it official to form a working group of council members, citizens and contractors to go through the permit fee schedule.

Mayor Novak adjourned the meeting at 6:24pm.

Casey Velcheff
Accounting Clerk