

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting

February 19, 2019

Ward Chamber of Commerce

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

- Thank you to those who braved the elements to attend. Despite the heavy rains, 26 people attended my first Town Hall meeting.
- There were a lot of great questions asked that led to very informative and interactive discussion.
- The following slides are a recap of the questions asked and summaries of my responses, and additional information.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Questions-

- What is the possibility of putting permanent fencing around the soccer field, to keep people from parking on them?
 - This is a great idea and definitely something to look into in the future.
 - Our Parks and Recreation Director is constantly on the search for new and better ways to serve our community. She also searches for new grant opportunities and is currently working on one that could pay 2/3 of our advertising costs for next year's Fishing Derby and 4th of July celebration.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019 -Questions Continued-

- What are your thoughts on live-streaming council meetings?
 - I have no problem with live-streaming council meetings; in fact, some citizens are already doing this. However, if the city decides to do this, it will have to be determined how to store them, while also making them available and accessible as defined by FOIA rules. The retention period will also have to be researched.
- What about using YouTube to host the videos?
 - This is a good question and will need to be researched. I will look into this.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Questions Continued-

- Any news of new businesses coming after the Medical Marijuana Dispensary bowed out?
 - There is a donut/sandwich shop coming soon, and there is some talk about other businesses coming to town, too. We also have the fairly new Hibachi restaurant in town. However, these businesses have to be supported in order to survive.
 - Shortly after it was announced that it was coming, there were several calls asking about land availability in the area; however, those interests may have changed now that it has moved locations. I was very disappointing when the relocation of the Dispensary was announced, but there was absolutely nothing the city could have done to prevent it. It was a real estate deal gone bad. I am really optimistic that something bigger and better will come, perhaps something that will bring more jobs and better economic development.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Questions Continued-

- Is there really a stop light coming to the Hwy 367/319 intersection?
 - Yes. The project, originally drawn over 12 years ago with a roundabout (which was later removed), is once again being reengineered. According to AR Dept of Transportation, the project should break ground by the end of this year. When complete, there will be traffic signals on Hwy 367 and one on the other side of the RR tracks, on Hwy 319. They will be synced to ensure no one is caught near the tracks when a train is coming. Turning lanes will also be added to aid in smoother traffic flow. Hickory street will remain closed.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019 -Questions Continued-

- The ditch behind Windamere is in need of cleaning. It backs up every time it rains.
 - I will contact our Street Department Superintendent and ensure we get that on our list to address.
 - Lately, our Street Department has been very proactive in getting in and cleaning drainage ditches that are within our utility easement. Those on private land are maintained by the owners.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019 -Questions Continued-

- The street light near my house works sometimes and sometimes not. What can be done?
 - The Street Department Superintendent periodical drives around at night, identifying street lights that are not working. He then notifies First Electric Co-Op of any outages or issues.

Anyone can call First Electric Co-Op (888-827-3322) to report light issues/outages. You will need to let them know the pole number (found on the pole), and they will come out and resolve it.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Questions Continued-

- Is the City considering moving to LED lights for the street lights?
 - If I remember correctly, a study was conducted several years ago to determine the cost and savings if we changed to LED. At the time, it was determined it would have been too costly to convert to LED. However, prices have dropped over the years, so we need to look into it again.
 - We pay, on average (because there are multiple wattage bulbs), \$9.21 per pole. Our monthly electric bill is over \$3,000 per month.
 - We are converting all the lights in City Hall to LED, as the old ones fail.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Questions Continued-

- Can we get curbside recycle pickup?
 - At next month's City Council meeting, I will be forming an ad-hoc committee to begin looking at what we might want to have in a new Sanitation Service contract. The current contract expires in September. This committee will look at all the options and make recommendations to the full Council. With those recommendations, we can request bids for a new contract.

Bear-in-mind, curbside recycling will be an added cost for all, if approved by Council.
 - The current recycling area on Hwy 367, at our Water Maintenance Shop, is being moved to a new location on Front Street, near our Street Department Shop. More information will be provided later.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Questions Continued-

- What are the Humvees in back of City Hall for?
 - Those were obtained from the DOD and are to be used as needed, in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. They are not for everyday use.

Mayor's Town Hall Meeting-February 19, 2019

-Additional Information-

- One resident commended Brian Frady and Tony Reaves for their outstanding work to keep the vacuum wastewater system up and running. (Mayor's Note: All our water and wastewater guys work hard to keep the system running properly.)
- We are applying for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to remove 17 homes off vacuum. The estimated cost is \$227,000. More information will be provided later.
- **The next Mayor's Town Hall meeting is scheduled for May 2019. Date/Time will be announced later.**