

CITY OF DECATUR
COMMON COUNCIL MINUTES
JUNE 4, 2024

The City of Decatur Common Council met on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, at 6:25 P.M. at City Hall in Council Chambers, 172 N. Second Street, Decatur. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Dan Rickord who then invited those present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll call was taken to show Jenny Bowers-Shultz, Matt Dyer, Tyler Fullenkamp, Scott Murray, and Abby Wilder were in attendance. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Kevin Hackman and City Attorney Anne Razo.

The Clerk-Treasurer had emailed the minutes from the May 21, 2024 meeting and Dyer made a motion to adopt the minutes of the May 21, 2024 meeting as emailed. Seconded by Wilder, the motion was adopted.

The first item on the agenda was Community Coordinator Jamie Gephart with an Event Form from the Homestead Addition for fireworks to be held on June 29, 2024. Dyer made a motion to accept the Event Form for the Homestead Fireworks on June 29, 2024. Seconded by Murray, the motion was adopted.

Community Coordinator Jamie Gephart reported the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) had reported that 30 banners honoring military veterans are now up. It was shared that they wish to add a larger number of banners next year if their request is approved. It was noted a donor has come forward to assist with funding. Dyer made a motion to approve the request for additional banners. Seconded by Wilder, the motion was adopted.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of pet welfare in the City. Shawn Braun, a resident addressed the Council regarding Chapter 90 of the local ordinances dealing with pets. Braun questioned why felines (cats) are not included in the ordinance. He noted people are slaughtering cats, running over them with cars, and shooting them. Braun accused the Decatur Police of not doing their job to which Chief of Police Kevin Gerber responded the report has been filled with the Prosecutor and it is currently under review. Braun even shared action should be taken to stop people from driving over cats. Mayor Rickord noted social media had been used to spread untruths which is upsetting. Braun angrily left the meeting, tossed papers on the floor, and as he left Mayor Rickord asked him to pick up the papers and not litter in the room. A police officer present returned Braun to the room to pick up the papers.

Cathy Hedricks, PAWS Board Member, appeared next. Ms. Hedricks shared she was under the impression that after a February meeting that the ordinance would be changed. However, Murray noted a February 23, 2023 meeting at which it was determined that a group would work with the City Officials to come up with the needed ordinance changes. However, it was shared that only one meeting was held over the 15 months and no

response requesting a second meeting came. Thus, it was felt there was no desire to work toward any ordinance changes.

Throughout the meeting, Mayor Rickord and various Council Members shared they were interested in the pet/feline welfare and willing to work to try to find a solution.

Miranda Mertz, also a PAWS Board Member, apologized to the Council for comments made on social media and noted her group is willing to work with the City to move forward.

Troy Kressley, a resident of the Stratton Addition, noted he was concerned about strong urine odor coming from a residence in closeness to his home which was so great he could not leave his windows open at night. Mr. Kressley shared he had called the Health Department regarding the issue.

Janelle Young of Fairway Drive shared it is the responsibility of pet owners to be more responsible for their pets. She noted she had to sign a contract when she adopted. Ms. Young questioned why dogs had to be leashed and why that couldn't also be necessary for cats.

The last speaker was Carolyn Sprunger who pled with the Council noting the animal control will not take feral cats. She noted she was 79 years old and she took in the cats as they were her babies.

City Attorney Anne Razo suggested the PAWS group apply for an Adams County Community Impact Grant which could be used to help catch the feral cats.

The discussion ended with the animal lovers in agreement and willing to meet with the City Officials to try to work on a solution.

Department Heads:

Jeremy Gilbert, Operations Manager, reported the summer employees, high school and college students, are actively working to spruce up the areas such as painting street curbs. Gilbert also shared the sidewalk program, 50/50 matching of funds, is going well with 21 contracts signed for this summer. Gilbert shared some funds are still available.

Fire Chief Jeff Sheets shared information regarding the summer youth tours offered each Friday from 8-11:30 a.m. through June 28, 2024. Chief Sheets noted this is a good time for the youth to meet firefighters, look at the truck up close, and enjoy a treat. Chief Sheets shared they have started taking applications for a full-time fireman.

Karey Fuelling, Wastewater Superintendent, shared that work in the CSO area is progressing and we should have results from the Dukes manhole study at the next meeting.

Council Input:

Bowers-Shultz shared she had recently been approached by a constituent regarding the 45 MPH speed posted on the south end of Mercer near the entrance of the Adams Memorial Hospital by the River Greenway Trail entrance. Mayor Rickord also shared concern about the speed limit at that area. Operations Manager Jeremy Gilbert shared the speed could be lowered one time by 5 MPH. However, to lower the speed more, a study would be necessary. With a study the speed limit could be lowered to 30 MPH. It was decided that Gilbert would do a study of the area.

Wilder shared that she and Bowers-Shultz had met with Curt Witte, Building and Zoning Superintendent, to learn more about the department.

Mayor Rickord gave an update on the improvements being made at the Decatur Skate Park located on Short Street near the City Pool. The mayor shared concrete ramps had been poured in the area and they are awaiting pieces of equipment. It is hoped the Park can be opened by mid-July.

Mayor Rickord also announced the possibility of a Fishing Camp for the youth sometime likely in July.

Murray made a motion to pay the claims before the City. Seconded by Wilder the motion was adopted.

There being no other business to be brought before the Council, Dyer made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Murray, the motion was adopted.

Adjournment was at 7:20 P.M.