

City Council Round-Up

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
Friday, 11 September 2015 07:27



The regular City Council meeting on Sept. 8 was smoothly handled by the mayor and councilors, with no feathers ruffled on either side. That doesn't mean it was boring though, as agreements were reached on several important items.

Street closures on Coal Avenue from 9th to 1st Streets - Sept. 18 for Miyamura High and Sept. 23 for Gallup High – for homecoming parades were quickly approved. Miyamura will begin their parade at 4 pm while Gallup High will start theirs at 4:15pm, respectively.

Another street closure request was made by the Gallup Film Festival 2015 of Coal Avenue between 2nd and 3rd Streets will last from 4 am Sept. 19 until 5 pm Sept. 20. This approval is contingent upon the issuance of insurance required by the city, and which organizer Knifewing Segura said at the meeting should be in-hand by Sept. 9. Red Rock Security will be on-site to handle the safety of spectators, entertainers, vendors and equipment, and water barrels will also be filled for potential fire dangers. This festival will utilize the Second Street Event Center

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and El Morro Theater and will feature a stage under the canopy for musical groups that will be performing.

Condemnation of a building at 705 W. Aztec was appealed by Terry Rocco, who holds the Power of Attorney for property owner Louis Rocco. The mayor and councilors agreed to table this item until Oct. 27 to allow time for the family to receive bids either for the necessary repairs, or for demolition. The family has set aside funds set aside for either alternative.

“I would rather the family take the responsibility for this, whichever way it goes,” said Mayor Jackie McKinney. “They have a plan of action and we need to allow them some time to pursue it.” The council agreed.

Terry Rocco had earlier described an operation on his ankle which had removed a bone, and said that he had received the Notice of Demolition the day after. His medical condition prevented him from being able to physically appear earlier before the council as he lives in Utah.

Another property, at 315 E. Pershing, was not as fortunate. The owner of record is the U.S. Bank, N.A., Trustee and they have not responded to the city’s demands. This property is not only a menace to the public comfort, health, peace, and safety, but is also becoming an illegal dump for other unwanted items of no value. C. B. Strain, the city’s planning director and Public Works Director Stan Henderson were instructed to immediately begin the demolition and removal of all items on this property.

Although not on the agenda, Mayor McKinney also instructed Henderson to talk to the construction crew of the Care 66 high rise on Coal, between Puerco and Strong. The city had obliged the construction firm in closing Coal while the exterior and interior construction was taking place, but that work has now been completed, the mayor and councilors want to keep the roadway open for vehicular traffic at all times.

Henderson relayed the information that the crew thought the building would be more secure, but councilors agreed that with sidewalks now in place, the building company should shift the fence to the north side of the walks and provide their own security. The single block of pavement was not to be used for parking the crew’s vehicles.

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Other action items were led by City Attorney George Kozeliski of a Grant of Easement for the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project, and by Henderson on two resolutions: Authorizing acceptance of State Aviation and Federal Aviation Administration Grant Funding to rehabilitate the runway at the airport, and also to submit the City of Gallup Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan to the state.

The final action item of the evening went to Henderson as he described a new and leaner infrastructure capital improvement plan to be sent to the state legislature during the next session.

Compared to the last ICIP in 2014, this plan had only 112 projects compared to the 320 sent in last year, and the funds being sought were more than \$530 million less. The staff eliminated any mention of Fox Run Golf Course since the city is using \$3.5 million in environmental surcharge funds for the irrigation and drainage improvements needed there.

The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration requires local governments to submit annually a five-year ICIP that defines development needs and discloses funding sources.

The first priority is \$400,000 in construction funds for the new skate park and the second is \$575,000 for construction of a park and playground in the Rocky View area.

The third priority is different from the first two, and is asking for \$350,000 annually for five years to replace Gallup Police Department vehicles. This type of funding would allow the city to use state funds instead of their own on these vehicles, a tactic that has been used successfully in other communities.

The fourth priority, \$400,000, is for the reconstruction of the alley between Coal and Aztec, and between First and Second Streets. The fifth priority of \$379,000 is for reconstruction of the Old Zuni Road Bridge, just off of Eighth Street, that passes in front of the Gallup Fitness Center.

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McKinney suggested the city should also add the proposed “quiet zone” in this package, but City Manager Maryann Ustick said the city’s lobbyist is still meeting with BNSF reps about how to pursue this. She said that it would be included in the conversation when the legislative priorities are finalized in October.

The next five items were also added to the “wish list” for the 2017-2021 ICIP being developed; Public Housing roadway reconstruction (Sky City/Vista Drive) \$630,000; Reconstruction of Runway 24, \$2.1 million; Country Club Drive re-pavement, \$74,750; Ford Drive and Aztec Avenue intersection concrete pavement construction, \$126,000; and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System upgrades, \$200,000.