



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Mattherw R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager
FROM: Matt Chesmore, Building Official
DATE OF MEETING: October 7, 2024
ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Building/Code Enforcement

DISCUSSION:

Building Department:

In the months of April and May, 70 Permits were issued.

7 - Building, 1 - Deck, 1 - Concrete, 1 - Demolition, 1 - Driveway, 3 - Fence, 4 - HVAC, 3 - New Construction, 11 - Plumbing, 5 - Remodel, 17 - Roofing, 5 - Street excavation, 5 - Window replacement, 4 – Beer liquor, 2 - Sidewalk/patio

Note: The New Const. permit for 501 Green Haven Ct was a previously issued permit. It appears in this report because a permit must be issued through CivicGov to track inspections.

Construction of two new single-family residential homes continues to make progress.

Construction of one new single-family residential home began and continues to progress on 6th Ave SE.

Construction of one new multi-family home has begun in the “At The Pines” addition on Spruce Dr.

Code Enforcement:

19 Letters of Violations were sent in the months of April and May

12 In August and 7 in September

11 Violations were resolved. Others are ongoing, mostly junk and vehicle-related violation.

The most prevalent violation is overgrown grass and weeds in August. This is expected to continue throughout the growing season. A Notice was published in the local newspaper in April and posted on the City’s website. Once a high grass/weed concern is confirmed, I am sending through regular mail an additional Notice of Violation with a 7-day period to resolve the violation.

The City Manager and I are working on a parking ordinance that will be brought to the council for consideration. We plan on bringing this ordinance to a Council work session to allow each Council member to weigh in on the needs and elements of the ordinance. It was our intent to create an ordinance that addresses the parking of vehicles (as defined) on grass areas of a property owner parcel by prescribing the parking surface a vehicle may be parked upon and limiting the area of the parking area as compared to the required yard (front and side) areas. We also intend to address the habitation of recreational vehicles on the privately owned, residentially zoned property.

In summary, we hope that this ordinance will enable code enforcement to address certain vehicle parking issues that we see throughout the city and prevent any “long-term” occupancy, which could be perceived or considered “living” in a recreational vehicle.

812 10th Street NE – Derelict property

On or about March 24th, 2024, the City obtained ownership of this property utilizing Iowa State Code 657A, where the property was determined to be abandoned and had become unsafe.

Asbestos abatement has been scheduled for October 2nd and 3rd, with demolition commencing on October 14th, 2024.

The cost for abatement of this property is expected to be returned to the City once the parcel is disposed of. Please keep in mind that the expenses to obtaining the property, which includes legal fees, asbestos survey, asbestos abatement, demolition of structure(s), and general landscaping to make this a buildable parcel, typically will outweigh the property value and, therefore, the City will initially see a loss. However, a new home valuation and taxation typically recover the loss over time. I would support the sale of this property at a lower cost; however, only with a development agreement stipulating a new dwelling be placed on the parcel within 1 year of the transfer of title. If the parcel was to be sold without a development agreement, then it should be sold at fair market value.

Planning and Zoning:

The Planning and Zoning Commission met on August 6, 2024, where the board recommended the Council accept and approve a preliminary plat of survey for the MBH subdivision, a subdivision within 2 miles of the city boundary. Additionally, the board also made a recommendation to the Council to accept and approve a preliminary plat of survey for the Henderson Addition and recommend that the Council set a date for a public hearing regarding the rezoning of a parcel of land owned by Mr. Henderson for the purpose of constructing single-family dwellings.

On September 9, 2024, the City Council set a date for the first reading of an ordinance amendment that would consider the rezoning request. The first reading was originally set for September 23, 2024; however, due to a required absence of the Mayor and City Manager, the council meeting was rescheduled to September 30, 2024. A public hearing was held at this meeting on September 30th, and no objections were heard. The Council closed the public hearing, approved waiving the 2nd and 3rd hearings, and ultimately accepted and approved the request to rezone the Henderson parcel from A-1 to R-1.

After receiving legal advisement, the City will allow Mr. Henderson to begin constructing the public improvements and infrastructure in Phase I of the addition. If Mr. Henderson desires to sell and begin construction on lots within Phase I before having a final plat approved and public improvement dedicated, he would be required to post a performance bond for the incomplete public improvement portion of that phase.

Board of Adjustments:

No activity

Flood Plain Administration:

Training with multiple agencies regarding new flood mapping.

IDNR, Emergency Management, and the City are discussing the possibility of a FEMA buyout project for properties in the current flood plain. Emergency Management has submitted a Notice of Interest to the IDNR, and this is where we're currently at. We do not know at this time if we will have a project.