

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 7, 2007, 5:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The City Council of Newton, Iowa met in regular session at 5:30 P.M. on the above date in the Council Chambers at 101 West 4th Street South. Mayor Allen presided. Present: Council members Morgan, Foreman, Morris, Mullan. Absent: Ewing. Hansen – Via telephone had a previously scheduled meeting that conflicted with the change of this council meeting date.

At citizen participation Jim Skokan asked the status of the liens. David Watson stated this would be discussed in an upcoming closed session.

Kim Didier, Executive Director, Newton Development Corporation presented an overview of her quarterly report.

A request was made by the Newton Board of Realtors to lower the county residents septic disposal rates.

Motion by Foreman, seconded by Mullan to approve the consent agenda items four and five.

4. Approve October 15, 2007 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
5. Approve Class C Beer Permit, Sunday Sales, Kum & Go, 405 First Avenue East

AYES: Five. NAYS: None. ABSENT: Ewing. Consent agenda items approved.

Moved by Hansen, seconded by Morris to Introduce a Resolution Approving The Purchase Of A Utility Tractor, Cab, And Snow Blower For The Parks Department. Hansen stated he had previously visited with the City Administrator about this purchase, and requested David Watson, City Administrator to explain to the other Council Members what he had shared with him. David Watson stated the reason he was supporting this resolution was the parks department provides the service of snow removal from City and Park pedestrian walkways. The old equipment is twenty-one years old; it makes more sense to buy new rather than to try to fix the old equipment. We are proposing to take 60% out of the general fund and 40% from the North Central TIF District. Hansen made the suggestion for the upcoming budget to make a line item for emergency equipment purchases. AYES: Five. NAYS: None. ABSENT: Ewing. Resolution No. 2007 – 134 adopted.

Moved by Hansen, seconded by Mullan to Introduce a Resolution Approving An Engineering Services Agreement With Clapsaddle-Garber Associates, Inc. For The Apron Expansion Project For The Newton Municipal Airport. Foreman asked if this was just for engineering. David Stewart, Public Works Director stated that it was. The FAA has agreed to reimburse the City 95% of City's cost of the entire project up to a total of \$276,000, making city's net expense for engineering as follows: fixed fee of \$2,275, testing of not to exceed \$275, and construction observation of not to exceed \$600. AYES: Five. NAYS: None. ABSENT: Ewing. Resolution No. 2007 – 135 adopted.

Moved by Foreman, seconded by Mullan to approve a Class B Beer Permit, Five Day Effective November 16, 2007 for Westgate, LLC, 1611 First Avenue West. There was a discussion on the building is required to have a sprinkling system, however, if this is only a one time event the Fire Marshal could let the sprinkling issue go, so long as all emergency lighting is in order and all fire exits are kept cleared and there is one employee assigned to stand by each fire exit throughout the entire evening. Another issue was security, it was noted at the meeting the Newton Police Department could not provide that service to the event. The last issue that was brought forward was Levi Pence, stated he would be contacting Hy-Vee to see if it was possible to use their parking lot for the event and the grassy areas on his property would also be utilized for parking. The motion was made by Foreman, seconded by Mullan to approve license conditioned that the coliseum combat is one time use; and all emergency lighting is in order and all fire exits are kept cleared and there is one employee assigned to stand by each fire exit throughout the entire evening and applicant stated he would comply with all requirements of the Iowa Athletic Commission regarding this event, including the present of active certified law enforcement officers and the City of Newton will impose

the same requirements. AYES: Three. NAYS: Morris, Morgan. ABSENT: Ewing. Motion failed. Further discussion ensued. Clarification that the liquor license would allow the sale of beer only. There was a motion to reconsider by Hansen, seconded by Foreman. AYES: Five. NAYS: None. ABSENT: Ewing. Motion to reconsider passed. Discussion centered on the sprinkler system and public safety. Motion by Hansen, seconded by Foreman to pass as discussed. AYES: Three. NAYS: Morgan, Morris. ABSENT: Ewing. Motion to approve permit was denied.

Bryan Friedman, Community Development Director presented an overview of the TPI Composites approval update and changes to the 28E Agreement For the County Urban Renewal District.

Under new business Council Member Mullan stated what I am about to say reflects my thoughts only, and is not meant to be mean spirited. My intention is to provide constructive criticism and another perspective.

Last week, while working on a job in Norwalk, I listened to KCOB. While listening to "Feature Scope", I hear and now paraphrase what the speaker said: "...four members of the council meet outside of regular council meetings and make decisions prior to the scheduled public meetings." I asked my wife, working beside me, if she had just heard what I did. She replied, "Yes."

For too long, members of this and past council have heard such comments made without offering a rebuttal. Allowing comments such as this to go unchallenged, and when repeated and unchallenged over time, gives the impression to the general public that the charge is true. Well, it is false!

Since becoming a member of the council, I can state the following: 1. If four council members are meeting as such, I have not been one of the four. 2. I never know in advance how others on the council will be voting, nor have I ever asked them how they intend to vote. 3. I have visited occasionally, via e-mail or telephone, with colleagues on the council, only to gather clarification, or incite on an issue facing the council. I believe the team approach to problem solving is far superior to one person's decision making.

On another note, statements such as, "things are going through the back door which should not be", or "we need to cut the wasteful spending," or "campaign dinner on a beer budget," or "the watchdog on the council," beg a response.

#1 where is the evidence that "things" are going through the back door which should not be? What "thing's" are we alluding to here?

#2 could we be more specific on what is considered to be "wasteful spending"? Define wasteful.

#3 all council members are legally held responsible for the fiscal stability of the city's financial house. Our CEO & Chief Financial Officer, David Watson, gives us his professional advice, advice based on knowledge and experience. If we are headed into a financial problem, he lets us know where we stand and makes recommendations, prior to voting. We are taxpayers, too. So, why on earth would we make a decision, which might jeopardize the future of our community? In short, we are all watchdogs on this council; we do keep tabs on the budget; and we are just as concerned about keeping taxes within reason while maintaining sustainable city functions.

Later in the week, on page 6 of the Newton Daily News's opinion page, I read the following, addressing Craig Trotter's run for the at-large seat on the council: "If you just look at his campaign contributors, the largest is Stan Clement and right up the toward the top is Brad Manatt. Also on the list is Steve Mullan and Jon Ewing, two of the fab 4 council members. It looks to me like most of his money comes from the upper crust business and Newton Promise promoters." The writer then gives a web site to anyone who wishes to check out the list of contributors to a specific campaign.

Well, I tried using the site listed and couldn't find the information alluded to, so I obtained the following web site from the County Auditor, a site that is easy to use:

www.state.ia.us/ethics/ and then click on “viewed filed reports” and follow links to “Jasper County: and than to the “city” in Jasper County in which you are interested. All candidates who have filed “disclosure statements” will be listed. Click on the candidates’ name, and all contributors to that campaign will be listed, including amounts given.

Running for any office is expensive: signs, door hangers, ads in the paper and radio don’t come cheaply. Since all contributions above \$750 must be disclosed, the public record on the web site I just mentioned shows that Stan Clement contributed \$200, Brad and Mary Manatt \$100, Jon Ewing \$25, and Mary and Steve Mullan \$50. In short, 57+ citizens have contributed towards Craig’s campaign as of October 27th. His contributors come from all areas of the community. I’m sure that most people give, with no strings attached, to assist a candidate in spreading his/her message. We gave to Craig’s campaign, because we like his position on issues, because he brings youth to the council, and because he is a friend who wants to do well for the community by putting his time and talent to work. By the way, Mary and I also gave \$50 to Jean Morgan’s campaign. Jean, a kind, thoughtful person who really cares about her clients, is also a former neighbor and good friend. Mary and I have not placed any demands on Jean or Craig, should they be elected. We would expect them to do their very best for the community.

As to the label “One of the FAB 4,” if the writer mean Focus About Betterment (FAB), than the writer is absolutely correct. I happen to prefer “FAB 6” better. Other labeling, appearing in the letter, such as “upper crust business,” “Newton Promise Promoters,” and the implication of “Us vs. Them,” “Haves vs. Have Nots,” really don’t contribute to the general healthy well-being of our community, but only tend to divide, and lead to disharmony. We are better than this. When a community comes together good things happen.

This council does not expect everyone to agree on all decisions made. As a matter of fact, we welcome constructive criticism and divergent thinking from the loyal opposition. But the key word in what I have just said is “loyal.” Are we, in voicing our opinions being loyal to “self-interests,” or, to “what is best for the common good?” It is no wonder that many good candidates for public service shun stepping into the arena, knowing that such a move often brings unwarranted baggage into our lives.

My hope, in closing, is that the rancor and the divisions separating us, can be narrowed and that our collective energies can be focused to work together on matters that affect us all. The council does listen to those we represent. We just need to hear from a wider spectrum in our community. Our council packets are now published on the city’s web site, so all can be better informed in advance of council action. Our e-mail addresses and phone numbers are listed on the web site, too. So, please stay in touch, so we can stay in touch.

Foreman stated he would continue to keep the citizens informed.

Moved by Morris, seconded by Foreman to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m.
Motion unanimously carried by voice vote.

Charles Allen, Mayor

Candice Van Zee City Clerk