

VILLAGE OF SPARTA

VILLAGE COUNCIL WORK SESSION March 16, 2014

Held at Sparta Township Chambers, 160 East Division, Sparta MI

1. The meeting was called to order by President Kristi Dougan at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also present: Council persons Paul Hibbard, Bonnie Koehn, Jayne Paasch, Gale Taylor, William Taylor, Robert Whalen and Village Manager Julius Suchy.

2. Public Comment:

Gregory Peak (4504 13 Mile Rd NW) gave an update on the Sparta Recreation Authority (SRA) Project. He said they are planning on breaking ground in the spring. They have raised \$1,638,706.00 thru fundraising as of March 16, 2015. He was asking the Village to help them with maintenance of the park for a short time.

George Freeland (200 E Division St) had questions with how long would the park need extra money to support it, what is being projected per year to support and how much money would the Village need to spend now.

Larry Carter (68 Rogers Ct) supports the park and also asked how long the village would need to support it. He thinks it good is that both the Village and Township are working on a project together.

Jim Bossard (address) – Talked about the positive benefits the village will see from this park.

Tom Cheslek (88 E Division St) had a question about the money we used for Buth Field and Nash Field - could it be transferred to SRA for mowing since we would not be using those fields anymore?

Jim Lynema (291 Doris St) said that 60% residents voted no, he feels the Village should listen to the residents. The Township purchased the property they should be the ones to maintain it not the Village residents. Living in Sparta he feels he will be taxed twice for the park.

Paul Homrich (125 S State St) was asking about who would be paying for the water at the park, if it would be the Village then he feel that seniors in the Village should have their water/sewer bill reduced.

Todd Johnson (150 Lu Ru Lane) thinks it's a great project. He feels for the maintenance of the park the SRA Committee should contact the people that voted in favor of the park to come up with the maintenance money.

Richard VanEck (94 S State St) does not feel we should support it. Rockford is only 20 minutes away and we could use their fields. He asked if we would be charging for use of our fields.

Gary Moody (155 South St) agrees with Mr. Johnson, it should be a vote of the people.

Rob Steffens (4344 13 Mile Rd NW) supports the project.

Tim Driscoll (182 N State St) is head of Sparta Little League and supports the park. He feels our youth needs a place to be able to play sports all in one location.

At this time President Dougan answered some of the questions that were asked by citizens or provided SRA representatives an opportunity to answer.

3. Work Session Topic

a. Sparta Recreation Authority Park Funding:

Council Member Gale Taylor asked how many people would be needed to maintain the parks, he does not want any taxpayers money used to support the project.

Council Member Paasch asked about operational expenses. Village Manager Suchy handed out a Projected Five Year Operational Budget paper with the information provided by the SRA Operations Committee.

Rachel Shangle Sparta Township said they would put in their budget a line item to show support for the parks of \$25,000.00 but, they will distribute the money as needed to SRA.

Council Member Hibbard had asked about a line item in our budget to help the project.

Council Member Whalen asked where the Part Time SRA Director would be located and what would be their duties.

Council Member Koehn asked if the existing fields Buth and Nash would not be in use, what will the village be doing with the property?

President Dougan of the Council said this is a good investment in our community and we should be make this a successful project.

Village Council requested the Village Manager to bring back an educational plan to notify residents and then to bring options to provide the \$25,000 in-kind to the May meeting for review.

4. Public Comment:

William Hayes of 278 N Union St was asking about irrigation for the fields. SRA is considering dropping a well.

Todd Johnson asked Gregory Peak how much money they have in the bank. He said they have \$450,000. It would take 3 to 5 years in pledges for the full amount.

Gregory Peak wanted to thank the council for the workshop.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by President Dougan at 8:55 p.m.

Pam Buchanan
Sparta Village Clerk

