

Alley closing to aid lumber yard stalls

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
A motion to vacate an alley between Fidele Electric and Woodcrafting and the old cafe on Main Street died for lack of a second at the Oberlin City council meeting last Monday night, but the plan could come up again.

Councilman Stan McEvoy, who was standing in for the mayor, made a motion to approve vacating the alley with the stipulation that if Greg Fidele, who owns the two buildings, were to sell the property, the alley would revert to the city.

Mr. Fidele told the council he wants to store lumber in the alley and in the old cafe to the south,

which he bought and is renovating. He plans to rip the north wall out of the building and use it for storage, so he wants to put gates at each end of the alley.

Councilman Patrick Pomeroy and Mayor Ken Shobe were absent. Councilman Joe Stanley had said at the previous meeting that he would not be voting on the issue.

The council began a public hearing about the alley vacation at the meeting Thursday, April 18. They decided to adjourn the hearing until the Monday night meeting to wait for more public comment.

Mory Zodrow, with Raye's Grocery; Carolyn Burtis, owner of

Council may try again

The Oberlin City Council will meet with members of the Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development Corp. about a proposed alley vacation downtown at 6:30 p.m. Thursday night.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the council will get a report on test hole drilling proposals the council asked for at its meeting on Monday, April 5.

He said there will also be a discussion about declaring a water emergency.

The council will consider two appointments to the Housing Authority, Lee Ploussard and Joyce Ploussard.

The meeting is open to the public in the meeting room upstairs at The Gateway and will be on local access cable channel 7.

ald; were all at the meeting last week.

Mr. Stanley said he talked with 10 people who said they didn't think the alley should be closed, but none of them gave a real reason.

Councilman Ray Ward said he talked with six to eight people, including some business owners, and none of them was in favor of the closing.

Mr. McEvoy said he got one call on his answering machine from a person who said they didn't want to see the alley closed because it is "historical."

He asked if Mr. Fidele sold the property, would the alley be open

again? City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the city can't do that in the vacation order, but could have an agreement with Mr. Fidele that if the property was sold, the alley would be re-opened.

Mrs. Burtis said her office is near the alley and Mr. Fidele's store. She said she doesn't see any problem with it being vacated. She said she liked the idea of putting it in the agreement that if the property sold, it would be re-opened.

Mr. Zodrow said he doesn't have a problem with the vacation of the alley, especially to help a business in town. He said he owns a business (See ALLEY on Page 10A)

Weather waters wheat

Crop still alive gets wet boost

Crops and lawns all over the county got a drink this weekend from a slow-falling rain and then wet snow.

Friday morning, the sky was overcast and a light rain fell a good part of the day. It seemed like a drizzle, but was enough to make things look a little more green.

Again on Saturday, it was overcast and chilly, cold enough that the Oberlin Lions decided to postpone the annual Easter egg hunt.

On Easter, the skies opened up again for a good afternoon rain.

Earlier last week, forecasters said it was supposed to snow over the holiday weekend. By Sunday evening, the area hadn't received any snow, but by Monday morning that had changed.

The ground was covered in wet, heavy snow. As the sun came up, though, the snow began to melt.

In all, the Norcat area received better than an inch of moisture, the Traer area around .30 points, the Jennings area half an inch and the Oberlin area receive around .60 points.

Fred Stasser, meteorologist from the National Weather Service in Goodland, said the area received the showers Sunday afternoon because there was a complex low pressure system in the area along with an upslope wind and favorable moisture.

Mr. Stasser said a disturbance coming north off of the northern plains pushed the snow in Sunday night. That associated with the cold air caused snow to fall.

He said there isn't any moisture in the forecast for the foreseeable future. It is supposed to start getting warmer, he said, with highs in the lower to mid 70s by today and the 80s by Friday.

Ty Gerlits, an agronomy specialist with Agriliance, said the moisture was great for the wheat crop. He said the area will need more before harvest because there isn't a whole lot of subsoil moisture, but what we got will help.

Mr. Gerlits said there is a danger of freeze damage if the temperature gets below 24 degrees for four hours or more. With the ground temperature warmer because of the warm weather a week ago, he said, there is a chance there might not be any damage. He said they will just have to wait and see what happens.

Raising their voices at Cedar Living



BOYS AND GIRLS in Kick Kids from St. John's Lutheran Church performed for the residents at Cedar Living Center at the end of March. The kids included (from left) Tyler Shields, Cassidy Shields, Christian Rittman, Kaylee May, Hayley Schiessler, Baron Green and Lara Zodrow.

City resumes search for more water

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
The Oberlin City Council decided to get bids to drill test holes around one of its under performing wells at a meeting last Monday night, hoping to find some more water by summer.

The city has put users on water restrictions the last three summers, ordering people to limit outdoor use to three days per week and water only during cool times of the day. Now, council members say, the city can rely only on a couple of its wells, and if one fails, the town would face a shortage.

Over the last five years, the city tried to find new wells farther from town, but came up with mostly dry holes. A water project included a line to tie in and mix water from a

City Roundup

At its meeting last Monday night, the Oberlin City Council:

- Decided to get bids for test holes around well No. 9, which is pumping less than 150 gallons per minute, so it can make plans to redrill the well. Story to left.
- Took no action on a motion to vacate the alley between Fidele Electric and Woodcrafting and the

old cafe. The issue may come up Thursday. Story at top of page.

- Received a bid for a new truck for the city crew, but decided to keep looking. Story to come.
- Discussed when the city should go on water restrictions and decided to put the item on the agenda for Thursday night's meeting. Story below.

contaminated well, but it was never hooked up.

Thaniel Monaco with Miller and Associates, provided the council

with a report of the quantity and quality of water available for Oberlin.

The city has four wells, he said.

No. 6 south of the ball field can't be pumped because it is high in nitrates. It was supposed to be the source for the mixing system. No. 9, east of Creative Dimensions, pumps less than 150 gallons per minute, No. 10, east of Creative Dimensions pumps 450 gallons per minute and No. 11, south of town by the Oberlin sign pumps 300 gallons per minute.

Mr. Monaco said well No. 9 cannot reliably produce 150 gallons per minute for any length of time. The city is being served by wells No. 10 and No. 11 but that only produces 750 gallons per minute. Another well was lost when it wasn't pumped for several years.

He said the city has three options: either re-drill No. 9, rework No. 6 or drill a new well on the city property

southeast of town.

As far as water quality goes, he said, No. 6 is high in nitrates and uranium, No. 9 is high in arsenic and uranium, No. 10 is high in arsenic and uranium and No. 11 is OK. Mr. Monaco said well No. 11 is the only one the city can count on using for a long period of time.

The water supply problem has become a lot more tricky in the last couple of years with new, much tighter federal standards for drinking water. Uranium was never a problem around here until the new standards, nor was arsenic.

Mr. Monaco said the city could do a pilot study for water treatment, which would cost \$2,000 to \$6,000 per month for two months. The city (See WATER on Page 10A)

Councilman asks for water cutbacks

The Oberlin City council will talk about water restrictions at its next meeting on Thursday.

At the meeting last Monday, Councilman Joe Stanley asked if they should start talking about water restrictions and possibly start them before summer starts.

Willard Perrin, with the water department, said the city is pumping 400,000 gallons of water a day right now. Summer peak use is about 1.1 million gallons per day, even with restrictions.

Mr. Stanley asked when the city started water restrictions last year. When the city started to pump 1 million gallons a day, replied Councilman Stan McEvoy.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the city policy has been when pumping reaches a certain threshold, 1 million gallons a day, the city goes on restrictions, then the mayor declares a water emergency.

Mr. McEvoy asked that the discussion on water restriction be put on the next agenda.

Economic development officials from threes states gather at Gateway

The annual Tri-State Initiative conference, "Windows to the World," will start at 8 a.m. next Thursday, April 22, at The Gateway, featuring presentations on tourism, creating businesses and international corridors.

Lt. Gov. John Moore, secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce and chief economic development officer for the state, is the main speaker.

The night before, members of the economic development group will meet at the LandMark Inn for dinner and their annual business meeting.

The initiative has members from Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado. The group meet quarterly, said Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., but the conference is held only once a year. Last year it was in Nebraska and the year before, Colorado.

At every conference, the group has talked about tourism, she said. It is the easiest topic with which to cross state lines.

On Thursday, there will be a presentation, "Bringing International Tourism to Rural America." Ms. Grafel said people who are inter-

ested in tourism need to attend and talk with Scott Allegrucci with Kansas Travel and Tourism. There will also be a presentation on agritourism.

Ms. Grafel said members all come from communities with the same interests and issues, including loss of population and water problems.

Carolyn Applegate, director of the Sherman County Economic Development Council, said the common bonds give them some legislative presence. The rural areas in each state are more like each other than Oberlin is like Wichita or (See GROUP on Page 10A)



OBERLIN POLICE OFFICERS shared the office for a few days last week with eight rattlesnakes found in an aquarium in an Oberlin man's car. —Oberlin Police photo

Snakes a bit much for city rule

Eight rattlesnakes were found in an aquarium in an Oberlin man's car last Thursday. The man got a ticket, and the rattlers got a trip to a museum in Oakley.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said Valentine Richards had been cited last year for keeping the reptiles in his home. The chief said he received a report a year ago that Mr. Richards was keeping poisonous snakes. At that time, he said, police asked him to remove them.

Chief Lockhart said he thought the snakes had been removed, but then a report came in from a city employee who had been out reading meters. Chief Lockhart said it is illegal to possess any poisonous fanged animal in the city of Oberlin at any time.

Last Thursday, Mr. Richards entered a guilty plea in city court. He was fined \$100 and court costs.

Chief Lockhart asked for the right to inspect Mr. Richards' house, and the man wasn't too keen on the idea. The police agreed to give him an hour before

going to the house.

Chief Lockhart said after the hearing, he sent officers to Mr. Richards' neighborhood and they watched him take an aquarium out of the shed and into the house, and from the house to his car.

The officers pulled Mr. Richards over and found the snakes in the aquarium. Mr. Richards was cited again for keeping rattlesnakes.

Chief Lockhart took the snakes and kept them in the police office until Saturday, when a man from the Prairie Dog Museum in Oakley arrived. Chief Lockhart said he could have destroyed the snakes, but decided to give them to the museum.

He said he wasn't sure how long the snakes were, but a couple of them were two inches in diameter. He said he thought they were healthy prairie rattlers.

He said Mr. Richards said he was keeping them not as pets, but to use to make hat bands and belts.

"We can't tolerate having something like that in the city," the chief said. "It is a safety issue."

* Water search starts with plan to redrill well

(Continued from Page 1A)
would have to provide power to the pilot site, a water line from the well to the test unit and security for the equipment.
Right now, the city is pumping well No. 10, he said, and it produces up to 500 gallons per person per day. That is pretty low, especially during peak use, said Mr. Monaco.
Well No. 6 could take a lot of revamping to get a significant amount of water out of it. Because it is high in nitrates, it hasn't been pumped.

Well No. 9 pumped 710 gallons per minute when installed in 1966, but Mr. Monaco said its flow has dropped over the years.
The city can re-drill No. 9, either close to where it is now or farther away, he said, or the city could drill near the irrigation well on land it purchased south of town. The existing well on that land is high in uranium, he said, but a new well might have less.
When the city looks at treatment, said Mr. Monaco, the water may need both pre-treatment and treatment, but they won't have to

treat all of the water from every well.
Mr. Monaco said if he was choosing, he would do the pilot study near the irrigation well, which would also help with capacity.
The quickest solution to the capacity problem is to re-drill No. 9, he said. That could cost anywhere from \$80,000 to \$150,000, depending on whether the city wants a well house, submersible well or variable-speed well. The well could probably go into service right away.
On the irrigation well, line work would probably range anywhere from \$100,000 to

\$150,000, and a new well out there would cost \$100,000 to \$150,000. The city could transfer the rights from No. 6 to a new well out there, he added.
Councilman Stan McEvoy said he thinks the city needs to move right away to get No. 9 re-drilled and also get the irrigation well into system.
Mr. Monaco said they already have everything they need. The biggest unknown is treatment, which will be a major investment for the town, he said.
City Administrator Gary Shike said he

thinks they need to do something quickly. Foreman Dan Castle said if No. 10 goes down, the city has no backup. He said he thinks they need to re-drill No. 9.
Mr. Monaco said he can get a proposal out to drillers and usually get it back in five days. They could have the well done, if everything falls into place, in 60 days, said Mr. Monaco.
The council agreed to have for Mr. Monaco get proposals for hole testing to re-drill around No. 9. He said he also will put together information on treatment.

* Group to meet in town

(Continued from Page 1A)
McCook, like Lincoln.
Ms. Applegate said the conference is open to everyone and covers topics from how to do business on the Internet, to communities putting incentives together to attract businesses. Cities and counties from all over will have the chance to share what they have done and what they do that works.
Registration is \$100, said Ms. Grafel, and that covers everything from the presentations to lunch and the banquet that evening. For those who just want to attend the banquet, the cost is \$25, with prime rib on the menu.
The conference, said Ms. Grafel, is for everyone, including economic development people, Chamber directors, elected officials and business people, especially those thinking about e-commerce or international sales.

Ms. Applegate said the towns involved in the conference are all trying to hang onto their youth and give them some ownership in the future.
At 10:15 a.m., the conference will have a presentation, "The Youth Perspective Through Windows to the World" and "Where In the World is McCook, Nebraska?" The second presentation will be given by a panel of young people from McCook.

The women said conference sponsors include the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., Midwest Energy, Aquila of Colorado, the Bank of Oberlin, Farmers Merchants Bank of Hill City, Sunflower Electric Power Corp., Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, SBC Corp., McCook Community College, Nex-Tech, Rural Telephone Service Co., the Northwest Kansas Travel Council, Northeast Colorado Association of Local Governments, Northeast Colorado Travel Division, Cambridge Telephone and Pinpoint Communications, S&T Telephone and the Sherman County Economic Development Council.
Ms. Applegate said there will be booths at the conference from the Northwest Kansas Travel, Colorado Travel, the Kansas Department of Transportation and others.
Reservations can be made by calling The Gateway at 785-475-2400 or 1-800-658-4348 ext. 8122 by this Thursday.

Group giving scholarships

Three high school students, one each from Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado, have been selected for the Tri-State Initiative for Economic Development Scholarships.
Each student will receive \$250 and a plaque during the luncheon at the group's conference Thursday, April 22. The students will read their essays during the luncheon and talk about their career plans.
The winner from Kansas is Andrea Sis from Atwood, who plans to attend Colby Community College, sponsored by First National Bank.
The Colorado winner is Katie Scott of Julesburg, who plans to attend the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, sponsored by Worth Trust of Colorado.
The Nebraska winner is Megan Grunden of Curtis, who plans to attend Fort Hays State University, sponsored by anonymous donors.



MONDAY MORNING, Willard Perrin used a back hoe to dig a hole at the intersection of Commercial and York so the city crew could replace some water valves.
— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

Old valve the target of crew

The Oberlin city water crew has dug two holes at the intersection of York and Commercial so they can replace old water valves sometime this week.
City Foreman Dan Castle said they started the project last week and hope to get the new valves in this week although they aren't sure what day they will finish.
He said when the crew fixed a leak recently in the 100 block on S. York, they discovered that they couldn't shut the water off because the valves at the end of the block were inoperable. The city crew used a device to shut the water off, since the valves were not working.
The crew plans to remove the old valve on the south side and then put in a new one on the north side of the street to replace it. The city will also replace an old one on the north side.
Mr. Castle said the crew will have to shut the water off about half way up York Avenue and then everyone in that area will be off for about three to four hours that day until the crew gets the new valves in.

* Alley closing draws little support from council

(Continued from Page 1A)
lumber yard again and people wouldn't have to drive to another town to get boards and supplies.
If Mr. Fidele can expand his business, said Mr. Zodrow, it will help people in town. They won't have to go to Selden or McCook to buy lumber, and it will keep business in town.
Mr. Ward said he would hate to see the alley issue cause problems for Mr. Fidele, but he doesn't feel good about giving property away that doesn't belong to the city.
Mr. Stanley asked if the city doesn't vacate the alley, if Mr. Fidele is still going to put in the lumber yard. Mr. Fidele said it depends. He said he hasn't bought anything, just the building. People want economic development, he said. The city has already closed other alleys for businesses to expand. If he puts in the lumber yard, it will keep people in town to shop. Mr. Fidele said he wants to knock out the north wall of the building for lumber bins and is worried about the security. He would put gates at either end of the alley, but they will be open all day and people can walk through.
Dr. Anderson asked if Mr. Fidele had talked to the Chamber of Commerce or Oberlin Business Alliance for support. Mr. Fidele said he hadn't, but he has worked with the Economic Development Corp. to get his loans. He said he doesn't have to expand; people can go to McCook or Selden. It is up to them. He said he would be providing a ser-

vice to people here.
Mr. McEvoy said he feels strongly about saving the businesses Oberlin has and bringing new ones to town.
"Is there a reason we shouldn't promote the growth of existing businesses," asked Mr. McEvoy, "just based on the fact that people just don't want it closed?"
Mr. Haynes said he felt the council should do what they feel is right to help Mr. Fidele.
Although Mr. McEvoy made a motion to allow the alley vacation, no one spoke up with a second. The issue can be brought up again at a future meeting, however.

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Runaway caught; car found

A 16-year-old who ran away from Sappa Valley Youth Ranch at the end of March was found in Kansas City last week.
Oberlin Police Chief said the juvenile was taken back to his home in Scott City, where he led officers to a station wagon that turned up missing the night after the he escaped from the ranch.
The car, belonging to Mary Lemman, was in a carport in Scott City. Chief Lockhart said the boxes of glassware she had left on the back

seat were still in the vehicle.

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