

Council tables decision to buy foreclosure lot

The Oberlin City Council talked briefly about buying a vacant lot at 107 N. East Ave., but tabled any decision until the meeting Thursday so the members can look at a list of other vacant land the city owns.

The property is owned by Francis Wahrman, said Mayor Joe Stanley. The city tore down the house on the lot last spring, he said, and is still owed some outstanding expense from that, around \$1,600.

The property, said City Attorney Steve Hirsch, is in the county tax sale. It would probably be better for it to be back in private hands, but there are some options.

Councilman Ray Ward said the council has talked about community growth and the idea of giving vacant property to someone who could build a house on it.

The city does own other properties, said Mr. Hirsch.

The council needs to decide if the city should buy the lot, said Mayor Stanley. If so, then the council can go into closed session to set a price.

How many other properties does the city own? asked Councilman Bill Riedel. The shorter answer is more than anyone thinks, said Councilwoman Rhonda May.

The council decided that it could make a decision at the next meeting since the sale isn't until Monday,

Council Roundup

At a meeting Thursday, May 7, the Oberlin City Council:

- Talked with a volunteer from Northwest Kansas Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, who asked the council to give \$500 or more in the next budget year. Story on Page 10A

- Talked briefly about using the money from the Bremer Estate to build a motel. Story below.

- Talked about the buying solar-operated circulators for the lagoons at the city's sewer plant, but didn't make any decisions. Story on Page 10A.

- Discussed purchasing property at 107 N. East Avenue to recoup some of the expenses, but tabled a decision until the meeting Thursday. Story at left.

- Talked about painting the exterior of The Gateway, but didn't make any decisions. Story on Page 10A.

June 8. Mr. Ward said he would like to see a list of what the city owns.

A mighty kick...



DURING GYM CLASS on Monday, Donovan Inman went to kick the ball and lost his shoe. The second graders played kick ball on the playground during the class, each taking their turn kicking and fielding the ball.
— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Lengthy agenda possible

The Oberlin City Council plans to meet Thursday night with a somewhat lengthy agenda, including a piano and rules for The Gateway, money for Sappa Park and aerators for the new sewer lagoons.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said he was working on the agenda Monday, but wasn't sure if all of the topics would stay on this week's agenda. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

Teachers Susan Nelson and Cheryl Metcalf have asked about replacing the piano at the civic center. Mr. Gilley said the women said the piano has been having problems, and they would like to see the city buy a new one.

Mr. Gilley said the council also needs to talk about money to pay for expenses at Sappa Park. He said that Rick Pauls with Pheasants Forever has asked for money for a permit application for the wetlands.

It's a confusing process, he said. Is the wetlands a city project or a Pheasants Forever project? It might be easier for the city to give the money to Pheasants Forever so that the administrative process isn't confusing.

At the last meeting, Mr. Gilley said, the council talked with Chris Miller, an engineer with Miller and Associates, about solar-powered water circulators for the lagoons at the new wastewater treatment plant. At that time, Mr. Miller said he wouldn't suggest them. Since then, he received a letter from Mr. Miller suggesting that the city buy the solar-powered circulators.

The council will get another drawing for a proposed circle drive at The Gateway, the administrator said.

Also, the council might do good to look at policies for the building. There's a collection of memos and a few scattered policies left from previous years, he said, adding that it would also be good to address the delinquency policy on utility bills.

There's a land lease renewal for Baker Petrolite, which leases a building, not a hangar, at the city airport.

Mr. Gilley said he would like some action on the administrator ordinances that were talked about at a past meeting.

In his report, he also has questions on mowing procedures, direction on the sewer appeal board, since the ordinance talks about a board that doesn't exist, a little about the budget process and an update on the water hydrants at Sappa Park. Mr. Gilley said they did buy a spring-loaded shutoff for the hydrant near the shelter house.

Pool opens a week late

The Oberlin city swimming pool will not be opening this weekend because of a pipe break.

Administrator Austin Gilley said the pool was supposed to open on Saturday, but the break somewhere under the concrete deck will delay the opening by a week.

Mr. Gilley said the pool should be open by Saturday, May 30.

The crew believes the leak is under the decking, he said, but as of Monday morning they hadn't nailed down the location.

Councilwoman asks about motel

The Oberlin City Council talked briefly about using money from the Bremer Estate left to the city for The Gateway to build a motel.

At the meeting on Thursday, May 7, Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer pointed out that there has been some talk about the Bremer money and what kind of interest it is earning in the bank.

At an airport committee meeting recently, she said, the group talked about using it to attract industry and other things. Needing and building a motel was brought up; so was putting the Bremer money towards the motel, she said.

The idea is that The Gateway will benefit from another motel. It seems the city has run into a brick wall with building a new motel, said Mrs. Lohoefer.

Mayor Joe Stanley said his first thought is that can't be done because the Bremers specified that the money be spent for The Gateway.

Actually, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, it said for the benefit of The Gateway. She added that she doesn't think the city should build and operate a motel because they would be lousy running that kind of business.

Mrs. Lohoefer said she just wanted to throw the idea out.

There was no decision made.

Also at the airport committee meeting, said Mrs. Lohoefer, the group asked if the Oberlin Decatur County Economic Development Corp. and the city could each kick in \$100 to help pay for stamps and phone calls made for the project by former Councilman Jay Anderson. She said Dr. Anderson had been using his council paychecks to cover the expenses.

If the city needs a detailed report, she added, that would be fine. Mayor Stanley said he

would rather have the expenses brought to the council instead of just giving money.

Councilman Ray Ward agreed, saying he didn't see a problem with reimbursing the expenses, but the council needs to know what they are.

The tedious part, said Ms. May, is that he will have to highlight the phone bill.

Mr. Riedel asked if the city does this for other committees. Mayor Stanley said he didn't know.

This is a city project, but a community committee, noted Mrs. Lohoefer.

The committee has donated a lot of time and energy to this, said Mr. Ward. So has the Sappa Park committee and others, said Mayor Stanley.

In other business, the council:

- Listened to a Youth Action Week proclamation, which is a program that started with the Northwest Kansas Mayors Association. The idea is to get young people involved with the government as much as possible. Youth Action Week was May 4 to 10, said Mayor Stanley. He said he'd been in contact with Brenda Breth, the counselor at the high school, and junior Jacob Helm had been selected to join them for the association and possibly for some of the council meetings.

- Reappointed Steve Hirsch as the city attorney.

- Talked about the heating, ventilating and air conditioning units the city agreed to buy for The Gateway. The city received three bids, for \$48,440 from CB Heating and Air of Colby, \$54,166 from Trenton Electric of McCook and \$65,065 from Glassman Electric. The council decided to take the low bid from CB Heating and Air.

Vacation Bible School coming

Churches of Decatur County plan to hold a Vacation Bible School the first week in June at the Oberlin United Methodist Church.

Denise Abbey, who is helping organize the school, said the United Methodist, Lund and Oberlin Covenant, Faith and St. John's Lutheran and United churches plan to join for the week of fun.

The "Studio Go" Vacation Bible School will run from 9 a.m. to noon on Monday, June 1, through Friday, June 5.

Mrs. Abbey said students who

have completed kindergarten through sixth grade are invited to come study and have fun.

Organizers are requesting a \$1 donation from each child to go towards service projects. During the week, she said, they will be highlighting service work that can be done both here and elsewhere.

The workers will focus on teaching kids about service each day and having challenges, said Mrs. Abbey. There will be skits, music, Bible stories, snacks and more.

Registration forms are available

at the churches, the Oberlin City Library and Raye's Grocery.

Younger kids, those that will be 4 by September 2009 to those entering kindergarten, are invited to take part in God's Kids Pray Vacation Bible School the same week at St. John's Lutheran Church.

It will be held from 9:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. People wanting to register their kids can pick up forms at their church or contact Shirley Shields at 475-3293, Denise Abbey at 475-2698 or Norma Unger at 475-2560.

County pays construction company

The Decatur County commissioners paid Sappa Valley Construction for the first two loads of material for the new senior and recreation center building on Main Street.

Contractor Kevin Brown said the bill for the first two loads is \$80,849.

Instead of paying for just the first two loads, asked Commissioner

Stan McEvoy, why not pay for the second two now as well?

Mr. Brown said there should be another load of materials delivered on Thursday and another on Tuesday.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine said he was all for just paying the entire bill also.

Mr. McEvoy asked for the total figure. Mr. Brown said the next two loads should come to \$80,849 also, but he didn't have a bill.

The commissioners approved paying for the first two loads right away and then the next two next week.

Businesses plan to close on Monday

Most Oberlin businesses will be closed Monday for Memorial Day, including federal, state, county and city offices and all banks and financial institutions.

The *Oberlin Herald* will be closed. The paper will print a day later than usual next week, so copies may be picked up on Wednesday afternoon, with mail delivery mostly

on Thursday.

Deadline for the *Country Advocate* will be noon on Friday as usual. Deadline for news and advertising for the paper will be noon Tuesday.

Raye's Grocery will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday and Monday. Crossroads Express, D & M Service, Ampride, Pizza

Hut, Frontier Restaurant, A&W Restaurant and Coffee, Tea and Me, with their new patio behind, will be open on Memorial Day.

The LandMark Inn will have a breakfast buffet from 8 to 11 a.m. on Monday. The senior meal site at the Golden Age Center will be closed.

Recruiting committee looks for new doctor

The hospital administrator, clinic manager and two remaining physicians are working with a recruiting firm to find a new doctor for the Oberlin Clinic.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said they are working with Arlington Health Care out of Illinois to find another doctor after Dr. Obed Saint-Louis resigned in April. This is the same firm that helped find Dr. Saint-

Louis, said Mrs. Doeden.

The recruiting firm guarantees that the doctor hired will stay for a certain amount of time, which Dr. Saint-Louis did not. Mrs. Doeden said she didn't know how long that is.

Although there is a community doctor procurement committee, they haven't been involved with the current search yet.

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Public Notice

to Residents of Oberlin

The City Water Department will be Flushing City Water Mains Thursday - April 30 and Thursdays - May 7, 14, and 21 at approximately 10 p.m.

Please be aware that certain amounts of discoloration may appear in your domestic water supply.

Thank you for your cooperation
 Austin Gilley, City Administrator