

## Minutes

### Tecumseh Town Hall Meeting – 4/7/16

Tecumseh Town Hall meeting was held at the Utility Building Conference Room on April 7, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Sixteen people were in attendance at the meeting.

Lisa Beethe, City Clerk, welcomed the guests and explained the purpose of the meeting. She reviewed the Leadership Community Certification that took place five years ago and explained they need to update and review the survey results from 5 years ago and update the priorities. Ms. Beethe reviewed the 14 community issues voted on in 2010-2011. The top 5 priorities were 1) Downtown Historic Square Infrastructure (Streets, Water, Sidewalks, Storm Drainage); 2) Demolition & Site Clearance of Derelict/Abandoned Properties; 3) Sanitary Sewer/Waste Water Collection System; 4) Street Conditions (other than the Historic Square); 5) Swimming Pool. She also reviewed the ranking of the additional topics from the survey. The survey results were reviewed with the public at a town hall meeting in February 2011. Additional topics for the Leadership Certification process were also discussed – including: Communications, Healthcare, Housing, Education, Employment, and Recreation/Tourism. After discussion Employment replaced Sanitary Sewer/Waste Water Collection System as the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest priority.

Ms. Beethe reviewed the progress on each of the 14 community issues addressed in 2011.

1. Historic Square – A CDBG DTR grant for \$350,000 will be used for water main/valve work (the bid is under review now). The Transportation Enhancement grant from NDOR is still pending. Expect the street, sidewalk, and infrastructure work to begin in 2017. Lighting around the square was addressed with an Energy grant, and about \$75K has been spent on building façade improvements over the past 5 years.
2. Demolition and Site Clearance – 19 structures have been demolished in the past 5 years – about \$65K has been spent on these activities. Housing rehab grants are also helping improve some housing.
3. Employment – The City has been working continually with NioCorp on the prospective niobium mine south of town. It has the potential of 300-400 permanent jobs and 1,200 construction jobs. Tecumseh Poultry has expanded and is looking for additional employees. Tecumseh State Correctional Institute continues to need additional staff. Economic Development staff continues with business retention visits and has been funding some business startups – including the fitness center, Hwy 50 Bar & Grill, and TNT BBQ restaurant.
4. Street Conditions (other than Historic Square) – 6<sup>th</sup> Street has been improved, the City has armor coated about 60 blocks in the past few years and will be doing the remainder in 2016, the 1<sup>st</sup> & Calhoun paving project is pending (bids about to go out).
5. Swimming Pool – the City has spent \$80K to re-line the pool. Completed some caulking and replaced some pressure relief valves. The pool has had many leakage issues and is running on a year to year basis at this point.

6. Sanitary Sewer/Waste Water Collection System – some sewer lines have been replaced (about \$36K spent in 2015), \$20K+ spent to camera the lines for problems in the past 3 years, and manhole covers replaced. Replacing sections at 10<sup>th</sup> and Clay/Webster and at 9<sup>th</sup> and Broadway/Jackson are planned for this year.
7. Abandoned Vehicles – tickets are issued as necessary. Most violations are handled personally.
8. Drinking Water Distribution System – New well installed in 2015, rehabbed well #6, new screen installed on Well #5 to improve pumping capacity, Variable Drive put in well #2 is in process, and rehab of well #4 is in process.
9. Accessibility to City Hall – no progress at this time. It will be addressed with the downtown project.
10. Parks & Rec Facilities – park equipment upgraded, ADA accessibility trail installed, old restroom demolished, new restroom is pending, new rubber matting/crumb rubber placed around all equipment.
11. Appearance of Homes – Housing rehab grants have helped eligible homeowners improve their homes (\$25K available per house). 2009 grant improved 10 homes. 2014 grant is still underway – money for 10 units is available.
12. Sidewalk Conditions (besides the Square) – the City repairs/replaces sidewalks when doing street projects, otherwise it is the property owners responsibility to maintain the sidewalks.
13. Storm Water Drainage (except Square) – a culvert was installed to improve drainage at 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and a detention cell was installed in Shawnee Ridge Development to address runoff issues.
14. Community Building Improvements – new restrooms and a new heating system were installed. Air conditioning, electrical upgrades, and kitchen upgrades are currently pending – bids will go out shortly.

Ms. Beethe also reviewed the progress on the additional topics covered for the Leadership Certification process.

1. Communications – US Cellular has improved coverage in the area, and internet fiber is now available in town (through Windstream, Unite Private Network, Time Warner).
2. Healthcare – a new health clinic was built onto the hospital, a new CT scanner was purchased, a new Physical Therapy clinic was built on the clinic/hospital, MRI upgrades, and a new surgical unit is pending construction in 2016/2017.
3. Housing – Housing rehab completed on 10 units from the 2009 grant and 10 additional units are pending rehab from the 2014 grant. 19 units have been demolished in the past 5 years. No new developments are being worked on at this time.
4. Education – building/facility improvements include a new parking lot, replacing entry doors, tuck pointing, roof replaced, secured access installed, HVAC work, and renovating restrooms. A new Reading Street System is being used to improve reading, a Team Mates Chapter has been started, an alternative school has been started, and the Thunderbird Way behavior model has been put in place. Upcoming goals for 16-17 year include assessing long-term facility needs,

developing an after school program, holding annual open houses, develop a parent advisory group, consider use of a mental health practitioner in school.

5. Employment – see notes from above
6. Recreation/Tourism – The City has started their own website and Facebook page. Welcome signs have been installed on the North and West entrances to town, wayfinding signage is planned with the Downtown Improvement Project, and new museum are opening and under construction now.

Ms. Beethe requested public comment on the 5 additional topics for the Leadership Certification process:

Cell service/internet – public felt both services were sufficient. The internet speed is fine.

Healthcare – public is very proud of our current facilities. We have a good number of doctors, physician assistants, and nurses to serve the area. Additional services desired would be psychiatric services and dialysis services.

Housing – Housing rehab and demolitions continue to proceed and address some housing issues. Would like to see more affordable housing, RV hookups for temporary housing (for mine workers), and affordable rental properties. It is important to have available single family homes.

Education – Would like to see more college credit courses offered through the high school. More technical skill courses offered, and mental health assistance available through the school.

Recreation/Tourism – It was noted that the west side of the museum will be open soon. Ideas to lease the billboard on the south end of town for more marketing was suggested. Adding miniature golf or disc golf was mentioned. Upgrading the basketball courts in the park was suggested. Noted that there are fishing opportunities in close proximity to town – just not any available in town. Bus tours of the 5 county southeast counties is being worked on by the P4P group to bring more tourism to the area.

The public then discussed the current priorities and whether they should continue on the list or be replaced.

Downtown Historic Square – the project has received grant funding – we are just waiting to get things started. Would like to see 2<sup>nd</sup> story housing in downtown (above businesses). This is something that could be pursued in the future. Would like to see more storefront façade improvements – City staff indicated that this will be focused on after the street/sidewalk project is complete – plans to pursue this are on the list. It was mentioned that building owners could look at tax credits for building improvements as well.

Demolition & Site Clearance – discussed the use of vacant lots around town. Many of the vacant lots are not large enough for new housing – they would not comply with current setback requirement. Some small lots will probably remain green space. The City continues to put funds in the budget for demolition projects – they try to do some clearance each year. It can be difficult to demolish buildings

that have occupants – the process is much longer when someone is living in the house. The Economic Development group provides \$3,000 incentive funds for volunteer demolition projects by owners.

Employment – the public felt that employment opportunities are adequate and businesses sometimes have a hard time filling positions that are available. The prison and poultry plant work hard to advertise and recruit employees. Our Economic Development group tries to find employment opportunities for spouses of employees who come here to work. We would like to see more restaurant/food services in town. We have more retirees moving back to the area.

Street Conditions (other than Square) – the armor coating that has been taking place is a short-term fix. Second Street will need new water mains at the same time any street work would be done – bringing the cost for this street improvement up significantly. Discussed grant opportunities for sidewalk repairs – none known for residential areas is known. Usually grants would only pay for sidewalks in a downtown area or other blight & substandard area. The City should be more pro-active about requiring sidewalks to be put in for new homes/construction.

Swimming Pool – Right now the pool is assessed each year as to whether it will open. Discussion about whether more money should be spent on the current pool or start looking at a new pool project. Discussed where a new pool might go if that were to move forward – could the current site be expanded? Also discussed the type of pool that would be considered – splash pads, water park, etc. Discussed some methods to pay for a new pool – could reserve a portion of sales tax to start saving, some grant funds could be applied for, would hope for some private fundraising also. The project would have to be bonded – which would take a vote of the people. Do we have enough support for this type of project. The group would like to form a committee to work on this project – start discussing pool options and look at what other communities have done with their pools. A new pool would have to include a zero-entry area for accessibility – lots of new rules will have to be addressed in a new pool. Some questions about whether this could be a joint project with the schools and/or county. Some discussion about an in-door facility that could be used all year with the school.

Other issues brought forward included:

ADA Accessibility at City Hall – as discussed earlier this will hopefully be addressed with the large downtown square project. There are grants available for ADA Accessibility issues.

Summer Ball Programs – would like to see more improvements to the ball fields and add another field. We are seeing a significant amount of kids from other communities participating in our programs, and we should budget for some capital improvements in the future.

Comments regarding our fire, police, and rescue squads. They are doing a great job and have a sufficient number of people at this time.

Final Priority Ranking – The group decided to leave the same 5 issues as the priorities, but completely turned the ranking around. New priority rankings are:

1. Swimming Pool

2. Street Conditions (other than Historic Square)
3. Employment
4. Demolition & Site Clearance of Derelict/Abandoned Properties
5. Downtown Historic Square Infrastructure (Streets, Water, Sidewalks, Storm Drainage)

The group wanted it to be clear that although the order of issues has been rearranged, that the significance of the downtown project is still very high – they just lowered it on the list since progress has been made with grants and work will be starting soon. They just want the swimming pool to be the next issue addressed.

The comments from tonight will be incorporated into the city's strategic plan, capital improvement plan, and budgeting process that the City Council will be working on. It will be used to complete the Leadership Community Certification process with NDED also.