

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor John Althoff and Council Members Morris Mattson, Bill Duncan, Derek Lundell, Mary Jill Bringgold, Matt Montgomery, and Steve Gesme. Also present were Dave Maroney, City Administrator; Lanell Endres, Finance Director/Assistant City Administrator; Jeffrey McCormick, Police Chief; and Mike Althoff, Fire Chief/Public Works Director.

- Call to Order Mayor Althoff called the City Council meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- Roll Call All members were present.
- Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Althoff led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Approval of Agenda A motion as made by Council Member Lundell, seconded by Council Member Duncan and unanimously carried, to approve the Agenda.
- U.S. Census Bureau
Presentation Mayor Althoff introduced James Accurso, representative of the U. S. Census Bureau. Mr. Accurso provided information on the community partnership and engagement program for the 2020 Census. He provided background information on the history and importance of the Census. He also provided information on the changes for the upcoming Census. He discussed data security. He discussed available positions, qualifications, and the application process. Mr. Accurso summarized his presentation and provided contact information. He expressed appreciation for assistance in recruiting for the positions and encouraging participation in the Census.
- Mayor Althoff asked if there was a deadline for forming a Complete Count Committee. Mr. Accurso stated that this committee could be put together at any point but emphasized the earlier, the better. He stated that the Census Bureau would be happy to supply the committee with promotional information to hand out at events. He reviewed the timeline and the process that would be undertaken after the committee was formed.
- Council Member Bringgold inquired about funding that was allocated based on the Census and requested examples of this funding. Mr. Accurso provided examples of entities that would be provided funding based on the Census. He again emphasized the importance of everyone being counted in the Census and discussed the responsibilities of local Census workers.
- Council Member Duncan asked how many questions the Census form will contain. Mr. Accurso noted that there will be 10 or 11 questions, with the final questions still to be determined. Council Member Duncan asked whether a question will be asked regarding

citizenship. Mr. Accurso stated that this has not yet been determined. He reiterated the goal is to count everyone.

Council Member Mattson asked whether every city would form a committee. Mr. Accurso provided examples of cities that have already expressed interest in forming a committee. He also noted that if Cannon Falls does not form a committee, the Census Bureau would still work with the City to get the word out about the Census.

Mr. Accurso expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak to the Council.

Sustane Natural
Fertilizer, Inc.

Mayor Althoff introduced Mr. Blaize Holden, Vice President of Operations at Sustane Natural Fertilizer. Mr. Holden referenced past discussion of concerns and provided background information. He reviewed steps that have been taken to try to reduce odor emissions, including investigation, research, corrective work, and identification of best management practices. Mr. Holden stated that this was a difficult problem involving multiple variables. He noted that progress was being made to minimize the problem, with the scope and impact of the odor being significantly lower than at this time the previous year. He discussed the implementation of odor monitoring and complaint response procedures.

Council Member Duncan stated that a resident who lived approximately two miles from the plant had mentioned to him that prior to two years ago he had never had a problem with the odor but over the last two years he has had an issue. He noted that this resident stated that he felt that whatever Sustane was doing to fix the problem did not appear to be working. Council Member Duncan also noted that he has heard from a couple of other people that they are concerned that these issues could adversely impact their property values.

Mr. Holden expressed understanding of the concerns. He noted that two years ago the burner was replaced and that the change-over process contributed to substantial odor generation, especially last year at this time. He stated his belief that over the last year there has been significant improvement. He stated his opinion that elimination of the problem for an extended period of time will eventually change public perception.

Council Member Duncan noted that he has also received reports from a business in the industrial park that occasionally the odor gets so bad that employees have had to go home sick. Mr. Holden stated he

had no knowledge of this particular issue, adding that the company would take these types of complaints seriously. He noted that Sustane was the longest-running business in the industrial park and realizes that they need to be a good neighbor and do their best to improve this situation.

Council Member Duncan expressed agreement that everyone does want to be a good neighbor, and he stated he felt that something needs to be done to reconcile this situation.

Council Member Mattson asked whether there were other facilities similar to Sustane. Mr. Holden stated that Sustane was a unique operation.

Council Member Bringgold commented that the odor problem seemed to depend upon which way the wind was blowing or how much it was blowing. She asked if that was actually the case, or if that is what people perceive to be the case. She asked whether practices could be altered according to how the wind was blowing. Mr. Holden stated that this was something they have struggled with, and they were aware that the weather played a substantial role in the conditions. He stated the company's desire to manage this issue in the best way possible to minimize any issues. He noted that long-term solutions were being sought that would not depend on the weather or operator functions.

Mayor Althoff commented with regard to residential development, adding that a development project has been put on hold until a remedy is found for this situation. He expressed his opinion that if remedies were started last year, they did not appear to be working very well. He stated that he would like Sustane to continue working with their consultants to see what can be done to improve the situation. Mr. Holden expressed agreement with this approach.

A member of the audience stated that her residence was present before Sustane built in their current location. She referenced a promise that this would be a very clean business. She stated she does not feel that this has been the case. She commented that there are days that she cannot breathe in her house, adding that this has been going on almost 30 years. She noted that promises have been made that this problem will be taken care of soon, but she is still having issues.

Mr. Holden expressed understanding of the concerns and stated that the company takes complaints seriously. He stated that Sustane is

committed to finding a solution to the problem.

The audience member also stated they were told in the beginning they would only operate during the day, and they are currently running 24 hours a day. Mr. Holden stated that production has increased over the years. He noted he was not familiar with the promises that were made in the beginning. He stated that Sustane is committed to improving the situation as much as they can, as quickly as they can.

Laura Bremer, 28860 Highway 20 Boulevard, Cannon Falls, commented that she has always wondered why the facility was placed in a valley. She stated that she felt this was a bad decision due to the type of facility this is. She stated there are times that they have to run inside and close the windows because the odor is so bad they cannot breathe. She noted that their home has been there many years before the facility was built. She also noted that they have trees that are starting to die off in the woods around them. She stated that she is not sure if this is a direct result of the pollution, but she stated she felt this should be looked into. She stated that she agrees that this is a very serious problem.

Council Member Bringgold asked Ms. Bremer if she felt that the problem is getting worse. Ms. Bremer stated she cannot see that things have improved. She noted she does appreciate the fact that they are trying, but she does not feel they have seen any improvement. She commented that she came to the meeting tonight because she feels this issue is important and needs to be looked at seriously. She expressed appreciation that Sustane is trying to improve the situation.

Council Member Lundell asked how many times Mr. Holden has addressed the Council regarding this issue. Mr. Holden estimated the number of times at approximately four. Council Member Lundell stated that he was able to find some of the earlier notes and feels that a lot of the same things are being said now that have been said before. He expressed concerns for the people that are living in close proximity to the plant and stated that they cannot be living under these conditions, even once a week or once a month.

Council Member Lundell stated that something needed to be done. Mr. Holden expressed understanding.

Council Member Bringgold commented that she remembered when the Pine Bend Refinery had an odor issue, but now that seems to

have been rectified. She wondered about ways to scrub the emissions or install some filters to make things better.

Mr. Holden agreed that there should be simpler solutions, adding that there are multiple factors. He discussed the problem at the Pine Bend refinery, noting that Sustane has limited resources compared with the refinery.

Council Member Bringgold expressed frustration regarding the multiple concerns that have been raised by members of the community.

Mr. Holden stated that Sustane realizes that it is in their best interest to resolve the problem and is committed to doing so. He stated that Sustane appreciates hearing from residents directly, so that it can respond quickly.

Council Member Mattson asked Police Chief McCormick about odor monitoring equipment. Chief McCormick discussed the use of this equipment and referenced past discussion of an odor ordinance.

Mr. Holden commented regarding Sustane's willingness to work with the City and cooperate with regard to any ordinances. He stated a preference for allocating resources toward eliminating the problem. He commented that the situation has been frustrating but expressed hope, based on the investigative work and engineering recommendations, that the problem can be solved.

Public Works Director Althoff asked about a timeline for this plan, Mr. Holden stated there are several things in the works and things currently being implemented. He stated that he would be happy to provide an update in three months. Director Althoff suggested a tighter timeframe for updates.

Tim Dehmer, Cannon Falls, asked about the percentage of time that people are affected. Council Member Bringgold stated that this is a personal issue and asked whether Mr. Holden had this type of data available to him. Mr. Holden discussed the challenges of quantifying the tracking concerns. He reiterated the goal of becoming odor free.

Council Member Duncan made a motion, seconded by Council Member Bringgold, to revisit this odor issue with Sustane during the first Council meeting in September and for the Council to establish how the City will want to monitor this prior to the next Council meeting.

Council Member Montgomery inquired as to how progress will be measured. Mr. Holden offered suggestions with regard to how progress could be measured.

Council Member Bringgold asked if Sustane maintains a log of complaints. Mr. Holden stated that complaints are logged and referenced a hot line for the public to call after hours. Later in the meeting, he provided the hotline phone number of 651-347-1827.

Council Member Duncan asked Chief McCormick about using the odor monitoring equipment to take readings on a regular basis. Chief McCormick suggested refresher training and calibration of the equipment. Mr. Holden commented that everyone has a different sense of smell. He agreed with establishing a baseline using the Nasal Ranger equipment. Chief McCormick discussed the process and potential costs. Council Members requested that Chief McCormick provide additional information to the Council in this regard.

The motion was reviewed, a vote was taken, and the motion unanimously carried.

Consent Agenda

- A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending May 15, 2019
- B. Meeting Minutes for May 7, 2019, City Council Meeting
- C. Approve Contract with CEDA for Professional Services, Project #2, Data Center Site Certification
- D. Resolution 2426, Vacating Part of Colvill Street in the City of Cannon Falls
- E. Hire of Pool Employees and Wages for 2019 Season
- F. Invenergy Sewer Credit
- G. Sale of John Deere Lawn Mower

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Gesme and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The spelling of Colvill Street was clarified.

Council Business:

There was no Council business to be discussed.

Staff Reports

City Administrator Maroney summarized the last Planning Commission meeting. He stated that the Planning Commission voted to recommend the rezoning of the Hardwood Estates (Mulvihill). He stated this item was not in front of the Council tonight due to

additional comments that have been received from adjacent property owners, the developer, and the owner of the property. Pending further conversations between the parties involved, the Planning Commission's recommendation will likely not come before the Council until these issues have been addressed.

Mayor and Council
Reports

Council Member Montgomery provided information on the Park Board's last meeting. He also stated they had unanimously approved the demolition of the concession stand. He referenced discussion about who had approved lighting at Veteran's Park. He suggested developing a procedure for these types of decisions. He referenced discussion of the park on the west side of town, currently being referred to as Mayo Park.

Council Member Duncan provided information on items that were discussed during a recent Public Works Commission meeting. He stated there was a large turnout due to the Invenergy sewer credit discussion. He noted that there has been an issue with an alley where semi-trucks are coming through so signs will be posted. He also noted that due to the fact that the conference room is so small and there seems to be larger attendance, future meetings will be moved to the Council Chambers starting next month.

Public Input

Mayor Althoff reviewed the public input procedure.

Babe O'Gorman, Cannon Falls, expressed appreciation for the Census Bureau's presentation. He asked whether the League of Minnesota Cities could provide a presentation on the Charter and ordinances, which he feels the Council has been in violation of for several years. He also asked why the City Attorney did not attend Council meetings as required by the Charter.

Mr. O'Gorman expressed concerns about statements that were made by Council Member Duncan regarding his communication with City employees. He also expressed concerns about information that was included in a newspaper article. He requested a written response to his concerns.

Tim Dehmer, Cannon Falls, referenced the process to be followed during public input in terms of public comments being respectful. He commented that he felt things could be much more civil. He cited quotations from a meditations book and referenced past Council discussions. He stated that he is still seeking a resolution with regard to his concerns.

Kyle Paulson, President of the Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, commented there are 43 baskets of flowers that are ready to be hung along Mill Street, Fourth Street, and Highway 19 as soon as the weather warms up. Ms. Paulson encouraged everyone to attend the next Fun Fest on June 13, noting that there will be a lot of new vendors.

Laura Bremer, 28860 Highway 20 Boulevard, Cannon Falls, stated that, as a driver for seniors with disabilities she felt that handicapped parking areas need to be better maintained, especially on Mill Street.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Mattson and carried unanimously, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 4th day of June, 2019.

John O. Althoff, Mayor

ATTEST:

David Maroney, City Administrator