

Back to "normal"

The month of September started to trend back to normal, at least for 2020. With most of the storm debris picked up (another round is coming) staff and council settled in a bit this past month to focus on regular business. Let's get you caught up on items that impact you.

To start off, most likely the most important news for everyone, *especially the kids*, is **Halloween in Ely will continue as "normal" in 2020!** Trick or Treating will be on October 31st from 5-8pm. If you would like to participate please turn your porch light on during this time. Additional recommendations will be given by the city via social media outlets to make this event as safe as possible for everyone involved.

First off, a public hearing was held declaring city surplus property and equipment. An open-bid process will take place on all items with a minimum amount set for each item. A list of items, and details on how the bidding process will work, will be posted soon on the city website and shared on city social media. Please check these areas out if you are interested.

Second, council discussed a city-wide mask mandate due to other cities within Linn County recently passing similar mandates. While most council members agreed with the need for masks when social distancing is not achievable in public, no action was taken on the item as concerns about enforcement, amongst others, were considered. Masks are already required in enclosed public facilities such as City Hall, the Public Works Building and the Library.

Third, a public hearing was set for the voluntary annexation of Axeland Acres. This is approximately 25 acres of land on the northeast corner of Ely Road and Mabie Road. A public hearing will take place at the October 5th council meeting.

Fourth, a radio water meter reading plan was presented by staff to council where, over a 4 year period, the current meters would be converted to radio meters on every property in Ely. This will allow staff to collect meter readings from a city vehicle driving up and down the streets versus manually reading each meter. This upgrade will reduce the time it takes to read meters from 32 hours a month down to just 2. This cost for this project will come out of the utilities budget and will not increase the cost of

residents' water bills. With the savings in labor costs this upgrade will pay itself off in 7-8 years and the new radio meters have a life cycle of 20 years.

Fifth, the project list for the Capital Improvement Plan was presented to council for review. The list can be viewed by the public [HERE](#). Initial discussion on the items will take place at the October 5th Council Meeting. I strongly encourage residents to review the project list and give feedback to staff and council members as to which items have the most value to you. The goal is to create a priority list and start to incorporate projects into the budget planning for FY 21/22 which starts in January.

Sixth, staff presented a plan for right-of-way tree trimming in the City. The plan is for staff to notify residents who have trees that do not meet the height requirements for the street and sidewalk clearance. The residents will then have the choice of trimming the trees themselves, hiring their own service or utilize a contracted service the city partners with. Initial evaluations will take place in October and November.

Lastly, Library Director, Sarah Sellon, presented a plan for the 1st Phase of the Library Expansion project which includes contracting with a project developer and the creation of the initial designs to expand the library. Council voted to approve the initial cost of \$15,000 to get the project started.

Thanks for taking the time to get caught up. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions or comments.

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