

Angled parking wins out

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 26 July 2012 14:05 -

GET OUT THE BARBECUE SAUCE

Champion barbecue teams are expected to bring their grills and smokers next April when a nationally sanctioned contest comes to town. Gothenburg City Council members gave local Chamber of Commerce representatives a complimentary night of camping at Lafayette Park. Teams signed up for the Pony Express Barbecue Challenge will also use the pavilion and perhaps other buildings in the park. The event, set for April 27-28, will bring in competitors from all over the country, said Chamber of Commerce members John Burka and Mark Eberly. Burka said they plan to have other events such as mutton busting, blow-up slides and shooting sports for children and other vendors who will sell food. Barbecue samples will also be available. Eberly, who judges barbecue contests, said judging will likely be from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 28.

Resolution passes despite objection

Angled parking on downtown city streets shall prevail except on a portion of the west side of Avenue D where parallel parking is allowed.

That's what Gothenburg City Council members decided at their July 17 meeting when they passed a resolution to include a cul-de-sac west of Avenue G on Ninth Street.

Re-stripping of parking spaces on downtown streets brought the matter to light, said city administrator Bruce Clymer.

Parking stalls in front of a residence owned by Jason Fiese, at 612 Ninth Street, were to be striped as diagonal parking but the notification was met with resistance, Clymer said.

"So we decided we'd better do a resolution," Clymer said.

Local attorney Steve Windrum, who was employed to represent Fiese on the matter, said he thought perhaps a neighbor or property owner had complained about his client's parking.

Windrum suggested there might be a different forum to resolve the matter rather than by a resolution.

Parking perpendicular to the curb, which Fiese has done, uses less space than diagonal

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parking, he pointed out, and backing a vehicle to the curb takes up even less room.

Windrum said he thought space should be a consideration because of congestion with Hicken Lumber next door.

He noted that backing a truck perpendicular to the curb makes it easier for his client to unload items.

Council members said they had no problem with perpendicular parking if someone needs to load or unload temporarily.

Enforcing a parking resolution and getting a conviction would be difficult without a resolution designating the type of parking allowed, Windrum said.

Council member Gary Fritch said there isn't designated "back-end" parking in other areas of town and asked whether the city should identify different areas of parking throughout the downtown.

Without designated parking, Mayor Joyce Hudson said there would be no uniformity to vehicles parked.

"It's public parking and a public street, not just for the people there," Hudson said.

In addition to approving the resolution, the council decided to ask the city attorney about designating areas to load and unload items.

On a related matter, resident Tom Shea said he didn't think a special use permit issued to Fiese in 2011 had been met.

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Fiese was granted a special use permit for living quarters on the ground floor of his home at 612 Ninth St., in the downtown commercial district, if he reserved a minimum depth of 12 feet across the front of the building for commercial space.

Upon the sale of the property, the permit will expire.

Clymer said he didn't know whether the requirement had been met or not.

Hudson said officials need to verify that conditions have been met or revoke the permit.

For future purposes, council member Tim Strauser said city officials need to know if guidelines for special use permits are met.

"And if not, what we can do about it," Strauser said.

Fritch said the council should expect the same cooperation from Fiese as he received from the council when the permit was approved.

The councilman noted that Fiese profited monetarily from the designation.

Property taxes and utility rates are often less for residences than for businesses.

The council plans to discuss the issue with the city attorney at the Aug. 7 meeting.

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In other business, the council:

chose RJ Meyer & Associates of North Platte for city auditor services at a cost of \$8,700 in 2012, \$9,000 in 2013 and \$9,300 in 2014. A single audit, which city officials said would likely be needed this year, would cost \$2,500.

The Meyer contract was higher than the other bidder, Contryman Associates of Scottsbluff, but council members said they were more familiar with RJ Meyer of North Platte, who has done the audit in the past.

Contryman bid \$8,500 for 2012, \$8,700 for 2013 and \$8,900 for 2014.

renewed a contract with Nebraska Municipal Power Pool Energy of Lincoln to do an electrical cost of service study for the City of Gothenburg.

JK Energy Consulting of Lincoln also submitted a proposal for \$6,250 compared to NMPP's bid of \$2,930 in four installments that totals \$11,720.

Clymer said he'd prefer to stay with NMPP Energy, who has done the study in the past and who he described as a good resource.

reviewed and accepted changes in agreements with haulers of solid waste. One of the major changes is that Mike's Sanitation will get paid \$2.50 per trash container for picking up waste in downtown receptacles.

adopted, by resolution, a Central Platte Natural Resources District Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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Such a plan is encouraged by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for communities to assess risks and vulnerabilities should a natural disaster occur. If that should happen, Clymer said the city has a better chance of getting federal funds with a plan in place.

voted to pay \$292,985 to Paulsen Inc. of Cozad for Lake Avenue paving improvements.

On a related matter, the council will pay \$3,294 to Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers of Kearney for observation and management of the same project.

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