Water usage restrictions also on table

The city is a step closer to setting boundaries for any sexually oriented business wanting to locate in Gothenburg.

At their Nov. 20 meeting, Gothenburg City Council members introduced a measure that gives the city some control over where such businesses can operate, how they can operate, license terms and more.

The First Amendment protects such businesses but council member Gary Fritch, who brought the issue to the council's attention, wants to be proactive if a sexually oriented business wants to come to town.

Fritch brought his concern to an earlier meeting after an all-nude juice bar caught Minden officials by surprise when it announced plans to open near the city square.

At the time, there were no ordinances on the books to prohibit adult entertainment within city limits.

City officials there are now working on restrictive ordinances for such businesses.

Location restricted

In the local proposal, sexually oriented businesses could only operate in areas zoned light industrial. That would put the business at least 1,000 feet from schools, residences and churches.

The council also discussed keeping such businesses away from stores that sell alcohol but realized, that in an industrial zone where they would have to locate, that might not be possible.

According to the restrictions, a sexually oriented business could only locate in an industrial area near Fourth Street and Frito Lay.

Council members wondered what effect the proposal would have on stores that already sell magazines and wanted more direction on license application procedures.

City attorney Mike Bacon will clarify those questions.

On third reading, the ordinance will become law.

Water usage considered

In other action, the council decided to move ahead with a city water restriction ordinance.

With the 16th Street well closed down and increased water usage last summer because of the drought, city administrator Bruce Clymer said he wanted to discuss such a measure with council members.

City services director Shane Gruber explained that the city has a daily four million gallon water pumping maximum.

During July and most of August and September, Gruber said the city pumped 3.5-3.8 million gallons daily.

Normally, he said that amount ranges from 1.5-2 million gallons daily and drops to about 500,000 gallons a day during the winter.

In the ordinance, the city would establish three classes of water uses—for domestic, commercial, industrial and agricultural and non-essential such as watering lawns.

Different stages suggested

Different stages of water usage would also be established such as a water watch when the public could be asked to reduce water usage.

Others stages could include a water warning and water emergency—the latter when only essential water use might be allowed.

Council president Jeff Kennedy said he thought the ordinance was a good idea and suggested that including The Groundwater Foundation officials to educate the public about appropriate usage would be a good idea.

In other business, the council:

scheduled another cleaning of the city's water tank with Liquid Engineering in 2013.

An interior tank inspection, provided through a video and on-site evaluation, and exterior review showed the existing paint system to be in good condition.

okayed a maintenance agreement with the Nebraska Department of Roads to maintain Highways 30 and 47 where they pass through town.

approved a request for a special designated license for O & K Bottle Shoppe to provide alcohol at a Gothenburg State Bank business-after-hours event on Dec. 13.

gave the go-ahead for Terry Jessen to extend his property 50 feet to the north in Terry's Business Park, near the northwest quadrant of Interstate 80. Jessen is planning to build a restaurant on the property.

tabled a decision to hire Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers to complete an American With Disabilities Act accessibility analysis of city-owned public buildings.

The fee for the analysis is not to exceed $10,000 but council members decided to look at it again when considering the 2013-14 budget.

decided to join a Municipal Electric Interests Group (MEIG), a group of small rural towns, to work with the Nebraska Public Power District on rate setting and policy decisions. City administrator Bruce Clymer will be the city's representative in the group.

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