Residents may face fines next summer if they try to water lawns if usage is restricted.

Gothenburg City Council members, at their Dec. 4 meeting, introduced a water management plan to assure supplies of safe drinking water during drought and other emergency situations.

Under normal circumstances, there are no restrictions on water usage. Still, residents are asked not to water from 1-5 p.m. June 1 through Aug. 31 each year.

During a stage one water watch, triggered by diminished water levels of wells and the storage reservoir, the public will be asked to voluntarily reduce water usage for non-essential purposes like lawn watering or washing cars.

A stage two water warning means restrictions on water use for commercial, industrial or agricultural purposes.

Using water necessary only to sustain human lives and those of domestic pets and for hygiene and sanitation is allowed during a stage three water emergency.Uses of water allowed in the first two stages is prohibited.

Citizens caught violating water usage during stage two or three can be cited and may have a $100 fine added to their water bill.

Second-time violators will be assessed $100 for the next six months and face termination of water service.

Some exemptions of water use are allowed by permit such as for new turf sod or grass during a stage two water warning.

City administrator Bruce Clymer brought the plan to the council at an earlier meeting because of increased water usage during last summer's drought and the shutdown of the 16th Street well several years ago.

Normally, the city pumps from 1.5 to 2 million gallons of water daily in July and most of August and September.

This year, the city pumped 3.5-3.8 million gallons daily during that time period.

The available locations may not be prime but the city is close to having control over where sexually oriented businesses can locate.

At their Dec. 4 meeting, Gothenburg City Council members passed, on second reading, an ordinance that keeps such businesses in areas zoned for light industry and 1,000 feet from schools, residences and churches.

That places a strip club, or similar business, generally in an area in the southeast part of town and south of the railroad tracks.

As long as reasonable amounts of land are allowed, city attorney Mike Bacon said the community would be in compliance.

Gothenburg's proposed ordinance is fashioned after one used by the City of North Platte where sexually oriented businesses can locate in light industrial areas.

Clymer said North Platte's rationale is because sexually oriented businesses depreciate the value of other businesses around them.

Council president Jeff Kennedy said he wanted to keep them off the Highway 47 entrance into town.

The council, at prior meetings, had discussed whether or not to allow such businesses in commercially zoned areas but members decided they didn't want them at main entrances into the community.

The council wants a law, concerning such businesses, since the City of Minden was caught by surprise when a sexually oriented business announced plans to open near the city square.

When council member Jeff Whiting asked what effect the proposed measure would have on stores that already sell adult magazines, Bacon said it wouldn't since those businesses don't earn a significant amount of income from sales of such magazines.

Passage is required a third time for the ordinance to become law.

During community comment, resident Blaine Peterson asked that a bridge be replaced at Lake Helen so motorists could drive around the lake.

"While you're working on renovations, I'd like to see it put back in," Peterson said.

The bridge was removed because of safety concerns and it would be costly to replace with a box culvert which is needed, officials have said.

In other business, the council:

waived three readings and authorized Ameritas Investment Corp. to issues bonds, not to exceed $670,000 to pay paving, grading, curbing, guttering and sewer improvement costs along Lake Avenue, between the railroad tracks and Fourth Street.

agreed to a three-year agreement with The Public Alliance for Community Energy (ACE) to buy natural gas for the city. ACE has been the city supplier for several years and SourceGas the distributor.

decided to buy a small bucket truck for $112,905 from Altec in Birmingham, AL. Altec was the sole bidder for the new truck. Because only $7,000 was offered for a trade-in of the city's 1999 truck, the council decided to keep it for trimming trees.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com

308-537-3636