

**COUNCIL
CITY OF PRAIRIE VILLAGE
July 6, 2004
-Minutes-**

The City Council of Prairie Village, Kansas, met in regular session on Tuesday July 6, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Ron Shaffer called the meeting to order with the following Council members responding to roll call: Al Herrera, Bill Griffith, Ruth Hopkins, Steve Noll, Greg Colston, Laura Wassmer, Pat Daniels, and Diana Ewy Sharp.

Also present were: Barbara Vernon, City Administrator; Charles Wetzler, City Attorney; Charles Grover, Chief of Police; Doug Luther, Assistant City Administrator and Lori Franke, Administrative Assistant.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor Shaffer introduced Kathleen Thomas, Director of Friends of Recovery.

Kathleen Thomas explained that she represents the local organization for the national Oxford House Incorporated. She is a licensed master social worker in the State of Kansas. Asbury United Methodist Church opened the woman's house on Mission Road in 1991. Currently, there are 13 Oxford Houses in Johnson County. Ms. Thomas introduced Lucas, a member of the new all male Prairie Village Oxford House, located at 4712 W. 68th Street.

Lucas explained that an Oxford House is a self-run and self-supported recovery house. The House is democratically run with three main rules: A resident is not allowed to use drugs or alcohol, they must pay rent, and no disruptive behavior is allowed. Potential residents go through an interview process before being accepted into the House. The residents meet weekly to discuss issues in the House. Lucas added that the Oxford House program has changed his life for the better.

Pat Daniels asked how the residents of the Oxford House would communicate with their neighbors and could the residents of the Oxford House confidently assure the neighbors that there would not be any problems. Lucas stated that someone from the House would attend neighborhood meetings. He added that there are no guarantees that there would not be any problems.

Bill Griffith stated that he attended a meeting of 40-50 immediate neighbors on July 1, 2004. The neighbors had a list of questions they would like answered.

- 1) What is the track record of Oxford Houses nationally and locally regarding public safety and the impact on the neighborhoods?

Ms. Thomas stated that a study was done by DePaul University. The study indicated that those who lived next to an Oxford House, versus a block away, had significantly more positive attitudes toward recovery homes of substance abusing individuals.

- 2) From the DePaul University study on Oxford Houses, what percent of residents were convicted of selling drugs, burglary, sexual assault or any criminal activity? How does that compare to the Kansas City metropolitan Oxford Houses?

Ms. Thomas stated that the DePaul University study is a representative sample of the United States. The DePaul study asked questions about people who live in an Oxford House and the percentage given is for people who are sober before their recovery. The study stated that 15% of men and 3.1% of woman had engaged in residential theft prior to their recovery.

Laura Wassmer inquired what the definition of recovery is. Ms. Thomas stated that individuals must be sober 30 days.

- 3) Are there any percentages in the 12 houses that make up the Kansas City metropolitan area that correspond to the DePaul percentages?

Ms. Thomas stated that no study has been done in the Kansas City area.

- 4) Describe the relationship between Oxford House and Friends of Recovery?

Ms. Thomas stated that Friends of Recovery is the advocacy organization for Oxford Houses. She added that a typical day for her includes speaking to churches, AA groups, politicians, and attending House meetings.

- 5) What is the process for starting an Oxford House? Are any permits needed? Who comes up with the idea of starting a House? What start-up rules must be fulfilled? What must be fulfilled to get Friends of Recovery's support?

Ms. Thomas stated that a chapter approaches Friends of Recovery when they wish to open a new House, generally when all of the current houses are full. The process begins by looking for rental property that meets certain criteria, i.e. house big enough, on a bus line, and close to employment. Once the criteria are met, the chapter will fill out a form requesting a \$4,000 start-up loan from Friends of Recovery. This loan is part of the federal block grant. Ms. Thomas added that under the Kansas law, Oxford Houses do not qualify as a group home and do not require any license or permits.

- 6) Who bears ultimate liability for any problem that may happen at the house and is there specific insurance for actions of members of the house?

Ms. Thomas stated that Oxford Houses are the same as any other rental property.

- 7) What is the average longevity of an Oxford House?

Ms. Thomas stated that Oxford Houses in the area have survived as little as two years and as long as 12 years.

- 8) The residents of the house vote on the acceptance of a new member. Who supplies the names of eligible members to the Oxford House and what criteria or qualifications are considered?

Lucas stated that most individuals learn about Oxford Houses through treatment centers. There are no specific criteria or qualifications when considering members.

- 9) What background checks are done on potential residents, and how many have criminal records or does the City has access to those records to review?

Ms. Thomas stated that some Houses do background checks through the Access Kansas website, but it is not required. Lucas added that during the interview process, candidates are asked if they have any legal trouble or are on probation.

- 10) What specific problems have other Kansas City Oxford Houses had? Was there an incident with the Hyde Park Oxford House?

Ms. Thomas stated that the Hyde Park Oxford House is located in Missouri and she did not have any information. Problems that may arise usually are due to personality differences and financial problems.

- 11) Who do residents contact if there are problems with the Oxford House, the owner of the house, police, or Friends of Recovery?

Ms. Thomas stated that the neighbors could contact the owners, police or Friends of Recovery. An open house is planned in the future.

- 12) Who on the outside monitors the house, and what is the 24-hour phone number that would be answered in person?

Ms. Thomas stated that there is not a 24-hour phone number, if a situation is urgent; she encourages the neighbors to call the police.

Lester, who is a resident of an Oxford House in Kansas City, Kansas and also the State Chairperson was present to assure the neighbors that many of the residents living in the House are only looking for a safe, clean environment to call home.

Mrs. Sharp asked Lucas to explain his typical day. Lucas stated that he goes to work, attends various meetings, and does chores around the House.

Mrs. Sharp inquired if the residents of the House have family support. Lucas stated that the majority of the residents do have family support.

Greg Colston questioned how long a resident stays in an Oxford House. Ms. Thomas stated the average stay is 18 months.

13) Who will supply the names and car license plate numbers of the 68th Street Oxford House residents to the neighborhood watch program?

Ms. Thomas stated that they would not do that.

Pat Daniels questioned the rate of recidivism. Ms. Thomas stated that the national average is based on time. If someone has been in an Oxford House 15 months they have a 75% or greater chance to successfully stay sober for the next five years.

Chief Grover added that historically the Public Safety department has not had any problems with the Mission Road Oxford House. The Department does not plan on policing the 68th Terrace Oxford House any differently than any other residential house in Prairie Village. Ms. Thomas asked if there was a community police officer in that area. Chief responded that there is a crime prevention officer for the City, but not one community officer in that area.

Ruth Hopkins noted that residents near the Mission Road Oxford House have had no problems, and are very pleased with the situation.

Charlie Wetzler questioned if the City would be notified, if for some reason the charter for this house was pulled and the House was no longer an Oxford House. Ms. Thomas stated that charters are rarely pulled, but Friends of Recovery would notify the City should that happen.

CONSENT AGENDA

Al Herrera moved the approval of the Consent Agenda for Tuesday, July 6, 2004:

1. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes – June 21, 2004
2. Approve Claims Ordinances #2527 through 2529
3. Deny a short-term special use permit to Sean Thompson with the Juice Stop, 6974 Mission Road for a promotional banner to be hung on the west fence near the concession area of the Prairie Village Pool during the pool season
4. Ratify the appointment of Fielding Norton, III to the City's Insurance Committee
5. Approve termination of the following appointments on the Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Standards (CACCS): Mark Zinn, J.J. Wenrich, Chris Thomas and Elaine Perilla

A roll call vote was taken with the following members voting "aye": Herrera, Griffith, Noll, Hopkins, Colston, Wassmer, Daniels, and Ewy Sharp.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VillageFest

Diana Ewy Sharp reported on the success of VillageFest. She stated that this VillageFest was unique because families came and stayed for the whole day instead of coming for an hour or two. The Committee is estimating that 4,000 – 5,000 people attended the celebration. The entertainment was excellent, especially The Marching Cobras. She acknowledged the Council, staff and committee members for their support and work.

Laura Wassmer added that she felt it was the best VillageFest she had ever attended.

Mayor Shaffer asked Ms. Sharp to convey our thanks to the VillageFest Committee and to Ann Lilak, our appreciation for a job well done.

OLD BUSINESS

74th Terrace Parking issue

Chief Grover outlined the history of the 74th Terrace parking issue. In 1976 the City Council created parking restrictions on West 74th Terrace west of Mission Road due to citizen requests. In 1989 the City Council moved the “No Parking” sign in front of 4014 West 74th Terrace to the east property line of that address. It was discovered in 2003 that several of the signs along 74th Terrace did not have the same verbiage. New signs were erected that were consistent. Upon the placement of the new no parking signs, the Department began receiving complaints from residents regarding the signs. Based on those complaints, Sgt. Curt Winn began to research the City archives to determine their history. He discovered the aforementioned Council items in 1976 and 1989. A directive was authored that restored the “No Parking” signs to the placement provided in the 1989 City Council meeting. On September 19, 2003, a petition was filed requesting the City Council consider a restricted residential parking district for 74th Terrace. At the November 17, 2003 City Council meeting, the petition for a residential parking district was withdrawn and therefore the Council denied the request.

Chief Grover added that he agreed with City Attorney Charlie Wetzler who prefers to pass future restrictions as ordinances. Approving restrictions by this method clearly establishes a better documentation process in the future.

Chief stated that he believes changing old effective signs for the sake of consistency is not warranted from a public standpoint, and may create neighborhood issues that can only be addressed in a City Council setting.

Mayor Shaffer stated that if the Council kept the verbiage on the signs to read 9:00am, the issue would be finished.

Ruth Hopkins asked for clarification if the Public Safety Department would be comfortable keeping the signs as they currently read.

Chief Grover answered that the Department would be comfortable with the current signs. He added that the residents and students have learned to live with the signs.

Steve Noll stated that Lockline is vacating their current facility and questioned what would happen with the parking district. Chief Grover responded that he felt the Council should wait to see how the building sells. If there is ample parking for the new tenant then the parking district should be dissolved.

Pat Daniels stated that he appreciated the research Chief Grover had done on this issue.

Diana Ewy Sharp stated that Council needs to remain consistent with the 1998 and 1976 ordinances.

Somerset School issue

Bill Griffith questioned if there was any progress toward a solution for the 75th Street & Belinder school crossing.

Barbara Vernon stated that staff planned to submit the Council's questions to the school district. Staff, the Mayor and appropriate representatives from the Council would meet with the school district to develop some options for resolving the problem.

NEW BUSINESS

Steve Noll moved the Council authorize City Staff to begin negotiating a contract with Store Financial for a City-wide gift card program to be in effect by the end of 2004 with \$15,000 from the contingency fund for marketing. The motion was seconded by Laura Wassmer.

Bill Griffith stated that he would vote against the motion, as more time is needed to decide how much money should be spent on marketing. Ruth Hopkins agreed.

Doug Luther explained that staff will need to get initial steps in place and come back to council with a revised marketing figure at the next council meeting.

Pat Daniels asked if input from the area merchants would be included.

Mr. Luther stated that he plans to sit down with Donna Potts of the Prairie Village Merchants Association to discuss how they do their marketing.

Laura Wassmer withdrew her second. Steve Noll withdrew his motion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee meetings scheduled for the next two weeks include:

Planning Commission	07/06/2004	7:00 p.m.
Sister City	07/12/2004	7:00 p.m.
Park and Recreation Committee	07/14/2004	7:00 p.m.
Council Committee of the Whole	07/19/2004	6:00 p.m.
City Council	07/19/2004	7:30 p.m.

The Prairie Village Arts Council will feature an watercolor exhibit by Marie McKee in the R. G. Endres Gallery during the month of July. The opening reception will be held on July 9, 2004 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

The Prairie Village Pool is open for its 2004 season. Swimming Pool and other recreational program memberships are on sale in the Municipal Building. Information & applications for all recreational programs can be found on the City’s website www.pykansas.com.

The pool complex will close July 8 & July 15 at 5:00 for swim meets.

The second Moonlight Swim of the season will be held on Friday, July 16th from 8:30 to 10:00 p.m.

The 50th Anniversary books, **Prairie Village Our Story**, are being sold to the public.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Lori Franke
Administrative Assistant