

EAST BETHEL TOWN HALL MEETING

NOVEMBER 20, 2014

The East Bethel City Council met on November 20, 2014 at 6:00 PM for a Town Hall Meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob DeRoche Ron Koller Tim Harrington
 Tom Ronning

MEMBER ABSENT: Heidi Moegerle

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Davis, City Administrator
 Craig Jochum, City Engineer
 Nate Ayshford, Public Works Director
 Mike Jeziorski, Finance Director
 Colleen Winter, Community Development Director
 Nick Schmitz, Building Official

1.0 The November 20, 2014 City Council Town Hall Meeting was called to order by Mayor DeRoche at
Call to Order 6:00 P.M.

2.0 **Motion by DeRoche, seconded by Harrington, to approve the agenda. All in favor.**
Adopt Agenda **Motion carries unanimously.**

3.0 It was noted that the Council and staff had introduced themselves to those in attendance.
Introductions
and Program
Outline

4.0 It was noted the Council and staff had met with members of the community in the Community
Individual Center to hold individual discussions at 6:00 p.m.
Discussions

5.0 DeRoche, "Good evening everybody. We're going to open it up to questions and answers. We
Council actually opened the meeting up next door at 6 o'clock. So if anybody has any questions, now's the
Chambers time to ask. Or, comments? None?" Koller, "Opinions?" DeRoche, "Come on Diane, you can
Questions and start. Heck, don't be shy." Diane Jacobson, "Do I got to tell you where I live?" DeRoche, "Yup."
Answers Diane, "Oh."

Diane Jacobson, 20628 East Bethel Boulevard NE, "First of all, I want to congratulate the people that did win the election. Sorry for yous that lost but..." DeRoche, "I didn't lose, I think the City did." Jacobson, "Well, that's in your words. But, I really do not think that you should have berated Steve and the paper about the Council 'being a joke.' You know, sometimes I watch the Council meeting just because I do need a good laugh because of how things are being carried on in here. And, in fact, I'm not the only one. People that don't even live in our City have called us. Or, when we've seen them, have said, 'What is going on with your City? It is so funny.' That's where I'm coming from. When you hear from out of the City. So please conduct yourselves accordingly.

And, Bob, you stopped Heidi from adding on an agenda item or changing the item about a month ago. I don't know why you did because you and Heidi and Richard Lawrence already have set a precedence by totally changing the agenda when you first came on the Council. And the people did not have a chance to review it nor the former Council people who were up there with you, had a chance to review it or see it or anything. So, that was wrong on your part."

DeRoche, "Well, let me stop you here. What are you talking about? I mean, you're making
5.0 accusations..." Jacobson, "Oh no. No, no." DeRoche, "Well, what are you talking about?"

Jacobson, "Well, look at it. Um, Heidi wanted to add something to the agenda or I can't remember if it was take, or adding to it, or taking off the agenda, the total agenda, or change something. And you said, 'No, we can't do that because that would be setting a precedence, and we don't do those kinds of things.'"

DeRoche, "No, I don't think..." Jacobson, "I think you better go back a couple meetings and look at what you said." DeRoche, "Well, I'm going to ask..." Jacobson, "Yes, I think you'd better. Also..." DeRoche, "Jack, do you know what she's talking about?" Davis, "No." Jacobson, "Yeah, well, you all better go back and look. Because it was in there."

Jacobson, "And, another thing is you are always, everybody that's ever been on the Council since, um, for the last four years have always been blaming the last Council for all this mess. So, what I want to know is, while you're blaming people that are not here, what do you think your actions were perceived into the general public when the three of you, you Bob, Heidi, and Richard Lawrence, walked in here and totally disrupted the City by firing the City Administrator and replacing him with, well I don't want to describe him too much. The Administrator that didn't even know what FEMA was? What do you think that did to the public's image of the City? It didn't do it any good."

DeRoche, "Do you want me to answer that? In the first place, let's get something straight here. What the Council did prior to us was commit the City to about a \$74 million debt. They walked out, no means to pay for it, no ideas for development, and the people that were behind that were let go. Okay? Now, Richard and Heidi's not here. I'll take the brunt of it because, Diane, all I've heard for four years, you come in and complain, complain. I've never seen your name on a ballot. I've never seen you come in here an offer up any suggestions or anything that should be changed. I would be more than willing to sit down and say, 'Here, you read through all this documentation and you get as much information as I've got.' And then you look over the last couple years as to what we've gained, especially in the last ten months." Jacobson, "Yeah, the last ten..."

DeRoche, "And then you come back and you point fingers or do whatever you wish." Jacobson, "When you say you haven't seen my name on a ballot, I think 32 years from one family giving to this City, donating their time, I think is plenty enough. When you can say you and your family have given 32 years, then, and then, you don't need to put your name on a ballot."

DeRoche, "Diane, that was then. This is now." Jacobson, "Exactly." DeRoche, "You were never faced, we had five law suits facing us when we took office. You have no clue what it was about. You have no clue about any of it and how it's been resolved."

Jacobson, "And, why don't we have a clue?" DeRoche, "Well, that's a good question because you know what? Everything is put out there. The meetings are on line." Jacobson, "Why don't we have a clue?" DeRoche, "After January, these City Council meetings, and I go and still deal with people from the County, okay, these Council meetings went from three and four hours of turmoil to most of them are now 58 minutes or less. Okay? A lot of business got done. We got Mike who is a heck of a finance guy that came in here, at least got the City going in the right direction. A lot of people's taxes now went down. At least now, there is a plan to try and pay for this sewer/water system without putting the burden the taxpayers. Maybe you and some other people can afford it, but I know some people in this City, elderly folks, that are on Social Security. And you know what? When the 'crap hits the fan' and the City has to really start paying, there's going to be a lot of people that's not going to be able to afford that."

Jacobson, "So, what are you saying when you say the City really has to pay? What are you telling us?" DeRoche, "We're in debt on these bonds for \$50 million. We're in debt to Met Council for \$25 million. Doesn't that number register?"

Jacobson, "Oh, yeah, it registers a lot. But, when you decided that you were not going to go through with this program, what did it cost the City to get back into it?" DeRoche, "I have no regrets about

voting against it. I'd do it again in a heartbeat because it's not that a person's against sewer/water but you might want to have some way that you're going to pay for it without sticking it on the backs of the people. You might want to have a plan before you commit. Okay? Look around at some of the other cities that Met Council's been involved with and look what they're going through right now."

Jacobson, "Oh, yeah, I can't believe..." DeRoche, "You've got to open your eyes." Jacobson, "I can't believe any City'd get involved with the Met Council." DeRoche, "Well, they are." Jacobson, "And, we did not, when I was on Council." DeRoche, "We didn't when I was on because I had nothing to do with it." Jacobson, "Oh, okay, whatever."

Harrington, "Can I just add something? Because you were asking, you know, what we're going to pay. In 2020, our principal is going up to \$530,000. Right now, we're paying interest until 2020. So, in 2020, we'll be paying principal and interest so you're looking at over \$800,000, what the City's going to have to pay for."

Jacobson, "Okay, I want to know why are you just paying interest? Why are we not paying principal?" Ronning, "That's the way it was set up. That's the way the bonds were sold. I have the amortization schedule with me, anticipating questions like that. I'd be more than happy to give you a copy or share it with you or if anybody else is interested after the meeting." Jacobson, "Okay."

Ronning, "The bonds were, I commented about that at the April 25, 2012, Open House, and the amortization schedule doesn't lie." Jacobson, "Okay." Ronning, "But, that's the reason for the interest only. Huge expense."

Jacobson, "Okay. You know, we have camping trailers that were parked on City lots. That seemed like that was a dropped issue. How come? They're illegal. They're not in a campground." Davis, "It's not a dropped issue. There just has to be some ordinance changes before those can be really enforced. And, those will be taken up shortly. We've had some other Code enforcement issues that had higher priorities."

Jacobson, "Yeah, like the chickens." Davis, "No, that wasn't Code enforcement, that was a proposed ordinance change."

Jacobson, "I can't believe you guys spent that much money, that much time, on the chickens when you could have been on more productive issues." DeRoche, "You maybe need to address that with one of the people that's not here tonight." Jacobson, "Oh, I probably will."

Jacobson, "But, anyway, you know when you folks are out in the public like in the back room, whatever, don't you have nametags that you can wear? So, people aren't going, 'Who's that? Who's that?' Do they have nametags?" Davis, "They do. You don't have nametags?" Koller, "We never got one." Davis, "Okay, then they don't have them." Jacobson, "It would be nice if you did wear nametags so that people would recognize you and who you are. And my last, in closing here, thank you for the tax break. I do appreciate that one. And, yes, I am a senior on a fixed income so I appreciate this. Thank you."

DeRoche, "Come on up. Now's your chance."

Dan Butler, 20332 Austin Street NE, "Just a reminder to everybody, there is a hockey game on tonight for those of you who are interested in that sort of sport. Two things. I just wanted to thank the City Council for their service this last year. It's been a difficult year transitioning through some difficult issues. And, for the integrity you all use in approaching those issues. I appreciate that. And, I wanted to wish the best to the incoming City Council and the new Mayor. That's it."

DeRoche, "Thanks Dan. Doug? Anybody?" Doug Tierney, "Why me?" DeRoche, "Well, I'm asking if you want to speak."

Tierney, "I haven't talked to you for about a year and half because I didn't think it was worthwhile. I just come up to listen. That's all I'm wanting to do and I normally only talk to people that I think will listen and you usually give me a 'rash of crap.' And if you were smart, you'd have just left me alone to sit here and listen. Thank you."

DeRoche, "Well, you're not hurting my feelings Doug." Tierney, "I'm not trying to hurt your feelings. I'm just trying to put...(inaudible, off mic). Listen, that's all I've..."

DeRoche, "And, for the record, I have absolutely no regrets for any way that any meeting's been ran up here, especially in the last ten months, for promoting the City. And outside of this little circle here, I think people need to go out and talk with people from the State and the County and just see what my reputation is. I mean, if you've got a 'personal beef,' that's fine. But, everyone talks about negativity and let's be positive and then you come in a public forum and you make the City look even worse."

Tierney, "I said I'd be quiet. I didn't say..." DeRoche, "Doug, I'm not addressing this to you. I'm addressing it to anyone that's out there that thinks, you know, nobody out here's 'walked a mile in my shoes.' No one has had to deal with the issues and certain personalities that I have. And, I have no regrets about the way that I did it." Tierney, "Since you want to have an argument, I come here at a public forum...well, I'll do it right."

Doug Tierney, 4610 Viking Boulevard, "I come here on public forum when Richard Lawrence was the mayor. I was talking about water quality. I happen to know a few things about it. I did Secchi disk readings for 16 years. I done one of the lake level monitors for 17 and I brought up the deal with phosphorus. My illustrious UAW member up there interrupted three times before Richard says, 'It's public forum. He's got a right to speak.' He later apologized because he was telling me you have to drive to Wisconsin to get it. I went 11 miles down the road, took pictures at Fleet Farm, and your comment was, 'Don't be theatrical.' I wanted to make sure he knew. And, I was sitting there watching one other, City of Plymouth, I shoot trap in Plymouth. They had an issue on lakes. Anything on water or lakes, I watch. They take, some guy bought five feet of land and he was trying to put a dock on it. On public forum, they gave him five minutes, not two. They promise not to interrupt like Tom did or like you like to do at times. They don't call people out. And I come down here tonight, just to sit and listen to see if there was something new or interesting. And, you've got to 'light me up.' When you talk about you, you're right. You're a pain."

DeRoche, "Well, that's okay Doug. Except since I've been, or took over, or put into Mayor, you've never come up before me in a public forum. You stated you came up before Richard. And, I'm curious, you said your address is 4619 Viking Boulevard?"

Tierney, "Outside of this Chambers we've had confrontations. And over a year and a half ago, I come in, like I come in the room next door. I went out of my way. I wanted to talk to Ron about water issues. I go talk to him. I talk to Tim about congratulating him. I had something to say to the two of them, I did. And, I go out of my way to avoid you. Because I moved into 19533 East Front Boulevard, April 28, 1968, I've been here a little while. And, I have been a former employee of the Village of East Bethel. And, I was a full-time resident for 22 years. I have never met anybody as combative as you are. So what I do is I just stay away from you."

DeRoche, "Just for clarification. You say your residence is 4619 Viking Boulevard?" Tierney, "I was a resident at 19533..." DeRoche, "No, no, no. Earlier in your conversation when you introduced yourself and you said your residential address was 4619 Viking Boulevard?" Tierney, "I didn't say residential, I said address, 4610 Viking Boulevard. That's the address of my lot and garage, which I built with a legal permit. It was all done properly. My residence, the only residence was three houses down, which was 19533. That's when I moved in, in April 28, 1968, and I lived there for 22 years. Are you through 'prodding the animals?' Thank you."

DeRoche, "If I'd have known it was going to be a roast, I'd have gotten ready for it. Nobody else has anything else to say? Dick? Doesn't matter, good, bad, whatever. I mean, you know I'm a 'big boy.' When I took this office, I knew there'd be stuff coming up. Just can't take it personal. Anybody up here?"

Harrington, "Say Jack, do we have any information for the residents out here about anything going on, on 65 and 22 in the sewer and water? Is there any, you know, information? Businesses coming that somebody might want to know about?" Davis, "Just the fact that there's three projects that are hopefully somewhere in the stages of maybe materializing within the next year. Some of them have been in that phase for a year but we can't control what the developers do. We do encourage them and we think that there will be something, hopefully, break loose very, very shortly though."

Ronning, "For what it's worth, there's been numerous comments about what we'd like to see and all. I think it's universal. Everybody is interested in that. But when we talk about those things, one thing we have to remember is this is all private investment. It is not something where the City can say, 'Grocery store, you go there.' Or, 'We'll work with you to get you there.' It's all private investment and until that's interested in coming out here and getting a return on its investment, it's good to hear things like Jack is saying. Anything is good."

DeRoche, "Jack, you got anything you want to put in?" Davis, "We met with Met Council last week. Everybody asks us, 'What are you doing to get development in here? What are you doing to try to lower the cost?' We've done a number of things. One of the things we've done is we were able to refinance one of our major sewer bonds and saved about \$1.5 million and cut the payments down on that. We're trying to work on refinancing the other huge bond, the \$10 million bond. Hopefully we can make some progress on that to achieve some more savings. Staff met with Met Council last Friday and we're trying to negotiate some modifications in our Wastewater Agreement with them so that we don't pay charges higher than other cities do. While we don't have any guarantees that anything will happen, we are encouraged with the tone of the meeting and think it went well. We'll probably have another one some time in December to see how that goes."

We do work with a number of people and prospects that come in. Colleen Winter has done a very, very good job in that respect. There's been probably about ten businesses that have located in the City within the last two years that have brought about 200 jobs in most notably, Aggressive Hydraulics and North Country Concrete. She's working with a few other prospects now. Whether it's one job or ten jobs, they're all important. They're all 'part of the picture and then we just hope that we can do what's necessary to get some of these larger projects going: a housing project, hopefully a grocery store, a strip mall, and some fast food outlets. Also, we're working with the possibility of some senior housing projects, doing some extra investment down in the sewer district by transferring some road funds down there, exploring some other options to use City funds that are tied up in other areas and transferring those to stimulate more development and interest in that area. So, we're looking at everything we can do to attract development within the corridor and do it in a way that it minimizes the impact and doing it in a way that it's going to pay for itself."

Tierney, "Thanks Jack. That's what I come in here for, stuff like that."

DeRoche, "Got anything Ron?" Koller, "No." DeRoche, "Tim?" Harrington, "No, I'm good." DeRoche, "Jack? Anybody else in the audience?"

Davis, "I'd like to say one thing. I'd like to let everyone know that our staff is here tonight. They're all doing a heck of a job. I think everybody in the room...I can introduce everybody. But just for you that don't know, I do want to introduce the staff because everyone of them has done an outstanding job and if you ever need anything, don't hesitate to call them or me. We'll be glad to work with you in any way we can. Craig Jochum is our City Engineer, Nate Ayshford is our Public Works Director, Mike Jeziorski is our Finance Director, Nick Schmitz is our Building Official, Shelly Orlando is our Police Liaison, and Colleen Winter is our Community Development Director."

Council

Chambers

DeRoche, "And Mark DuCharme is our Fire Chief."

Questions and

Answers

DeRoche, "Should we go back next door? It's 7:30 p.m."

Harrington, "I've just got one thing to add. I just want everybody to have a happy and safe Thanksgiving." Ronning, "Yeah, ditto."

**6.0
Individual
Discussions
7.0
Adjourn**

At 7:30 p.m., DeRoche invited attendees to join the Council and staff in the Community Center for coffee and to continue individual discussions.

Motion by DeRoche, seconded by Koller, to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carries unanimously.

Town Hall Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

Carla Wirth

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.