Harlowton City Ordinance Committee Minutes

January 25, 2022

Harlowton City Hall

6:00PM

**Minutes:** Minutes from the January 11. 2022 Ordinance Committee meeting were approved as written.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Updates on Previous Meeting Agenda Points:** None

**New Business:**

1) City Attorney Karen Hammel presented the committee with a revised Decay Ordinance to review. She had gone through 15-20 decay ordinances from other similar-sized Cities in Montana. She took good points from the ordinances and added them to the revised document and changed certain language to be clearer. Frank asked if the old ordinance would be repealed and this one would take its place. Karen said yes, that would be easier. Karen stated that the ordinance presented was very similar to Roundup’s Decay ordinance. Discussion took place regarding how well Roundup enforced their Decay Ordinance. Paul stated that he would check in with the Mayor of Roundup regarding this and get back to the Committee.

Discussion took place regarding word “permit” on page one. Discussion took place regarding the fact that Harlowton does not currently do building permits and that this statement would only apply to State required permits.

Extensive discussion took place regarding the term “permit” being removed from the sentence or if it were necessary for clarity of the passage. Karen stated that 6 different ordinances that she reviewed has similar wording.

Discussion took place regarding the word “hazards” in residential construction. Discussion took place regarding what a reasonable amount of time for construction completion would be.

Allison asked Karen if the terms decay and nuisance were the same. Karen stated that a nuisance would be parts of a house flying off in the wind or falling off. Karen reviewed the term “nuisance” and how it was defined in the revised ordinance.

Discussion took place regarding a specific house in town and how the ordinance would apply to this house.

Discussion took place regarding who would be considered the “inspectors” of the properties in question. Karen stated that the Public Works Director could file the complaint with the City. Frank felt that the PWD should not be required to have this responsibility. Frank stated that the Council should be the ones to “inspect” complaints.

Discussion took place regarding the weaknesses of the original decay ordinance and in what ways it was considered “unenforceable”.   
Frank asked Karen how to get ahold of a property owner that was “unreachable”. Karen stated that if all else fails with tracking the property owner down to send a certified letter, the City could reach out to the County to get the address used for property taxes.

The Public Hearing to get public input regarding this revised decay ordinance would be postponed until the committee could review the document further.

Items on the next Meeting’s agenda include:  
Continued discussion of the revised Decay ordinance document.

Meeting adjourned at 6:57pm

Committee Members present: Frank Brouillette, Allison Jones

Committee Members absent: Jack Runner

City: Paul Otten, Lara Brisco, Karen Hammel

City absent: Bob Schuchard

Sheriff’s Office: none

Public Present: none

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Frank Brouillette, Ordinance Chairman Lara Brisco, City Clerk-Treasurer