Harlowton City Ordinance Committee Minutes

February 23, 2021

Harlowton City Library Conference Room

6:00PM

**Minutes:** Minutes from the February 9, 2021 Ordinance Committee meeting were approved as written.

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

**Updates on Previous Meeting Agenda Points:** An update was given on the Marijuana dispensary topic. Mayor Paul Otten stated that he had contacted the Montana Department of Revenue for information on the revenue generated for towns/cities from Marijuana dispensaries. It is unknown exactly how much the City would receive. The dispensary must first have a medical marijuana license and then can apply for a recreational marijuana license in October. The Montana State Legislature is still “hashing it out” regarding details. Committee member Allison Jones asked Rob Elwood if he had looked into examples of Cities with dispensaries that were similarly sized to Harlowton. Rob stated that he had not yet found any examples to report.

**New Business:**

1) The topic of creating a fire pit ordinance was discussed. Committee member Jack Runner stated that the only current “fire pit” ordinance is regarding burn barrels. It is from 1977 and was written for people that burned their trash. Paul stated that an ordinance for recreational fire pits needed to be created specifically. The burn barrel one did not apply. Committee member Frank Brouillette stated that clear safety guidelines should be added to the new ordinance such as not having the pit by hanging trees, dry grass, should not be left unattended and have a water source nearby. Committee member Bob Schuchard also stated that a screen cover should be required to prevent embers/ash from flying.   
“No Burn” ban notices from the County and Fire services department would require any fire pit to be prohibited until the ban had been lifted. A discussion took place regarding whether the “No burn ban” included fire pits. Allison stated that from an insurance perspective, the liability for any fire damages would always fall on the homeowner/ person who started the fire. Rob suggested that the new Fire Pit Ordinance also include guidelines about fire pits in the Chief Joseph Park camping area. Allison stated that a “size limit” should be attached in the Ordinance. It was suggested that someone on the committee reach out to Chris Anderson, the County Volunteer Firefighters Chief. The Committee will continue to discuss the development of this ordinance at future meetings. They will then present it to City Attorney Karen Hammel for review.

2) A discussion took place regarding existing ordinances for dog licensing/vaccination proof as well as fines for not abiding by these ordinances. Committee member Frank Brouillette asked about cat licensing/vaccination verification. Paul stated that currently there is no verifying beyond the Sheriff’s office confiscating the cat and then verifying ownership. A discussion took place regarding the importance of cats having rabies shots because skunks can transmit rabies to them. A discussion took place regarding the stray/feral cat problem throughout town. Committee member Jack Runner suggested that perhaps the cats with owners should be licensed. Paul suggested that a collar be put on non-feral cats to distinguish between the two. Frank asked who would enforce these rules. Community member Rob Elwood stated that it is especially a problem on A Ave, where the feral cats live on the side of the hill by Chief Joseph Park. Jack stated that all the ordinances provided for review should be “digested” and the committee could come back to what needs updating.

3) A continued review of Chapter 15.20-15.49 of the “Rules and Regulations Governing Utility Services and Streets” took place. Paul stated that the rest of the chapter looked good. Jack stated that it should be accepted and the words “Big Timber” be changed to “City of Harlowton”. Rob stated that there should be a “soft copy” available on the City’s computer. City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco will look into this.

Items on the next Meeting’s agenda include:  
A continued discussion regarding of creating an Ordinance for Fire Pits within City Limits.

Continued review of Ordinances regarding dog licenses/ rabies vaccinations/ fines

Review Chapter 16 of the Ordinance Handbook

Meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

Committee Members present: Frank Brouillette, Jack Runner, Allison Jones

Committee Members absent: none

City: Paul Otten, Lara Brisco, Bob Schuchard

Sheriff’s Office: none

Public Present: Rob Elwood, (Bill Phillips)

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Paul Otten, Mayor Lara Brisco, City Clerk-Treasurer