

TOWN COUNCIL OF LEO-CEDARVILLE
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 18, 2008

COUNCIL ATTENDANCE:

John Clendenen – Council President
Paul Steffens – Vice President
Mike Young
John Eastes
Gordon Liechty, Jr.

Pamela Spannuth – Clerk-Treasurer, Peggy Garton – Town Administrator, Jim Lauer – Town Engineer, Pat Proctor - Town Attorney

MINUTES – The March 4, 2008 meeting minutes were approved as written.
AGENDA – Agenda accepted as distributed.

EAST ALLEN COUNTY COMMUNITITES – The Cedar Creek Township Trustee and members of the advisory board were present to discuss the status of the East Allen Communities efforts. The council entered into lengthy discussion regarding the proposed plan for the reorganization of a large geographical area including several townships, towns and a city in east Allen County. Due to the recent passage of HB 1001, the commission needs to examine the economic impact of this proposal on the area. Many different opinions, views and concerns were heard on the subject.

Mr. Steffens stated he feels it is much too soon for Leo-Cedarville to resolve to merge with the proposed East Allen Communities. He recommended that Leo-Cedarville and the other entities first consider consolidating with smaller governmental units vs. the entire region merging all at once. An example cited was Leo-Cedarville merging with Cedar Creek Township.

Mr. Liechty agreed that merging on a smaller scale would be a safer way to proceed if Leo-Cedarville were to choose to proceed merging with any other entities.

Mr. Young expressed his concern and apprehension about creating another layer of government.

Mr. Clendenen acknowledged that the East Allen Communities proposal has its benefits, but the benefits to Leo-Cedarville are difficult to measure without additional financial impact information. A merger would protect the town from a Ft. Wayne/Allen County merger, but Mr. Clendenen agreed that smaller steps would be a more appropriate way to go.

Mr. Jack Bridges spoke in favor of the communities of East Allen County exercising their powers as given by HB 1001. He feels that the longer the communities wait without consolidating in a proactive manner, the more likely that they will become landlocked by a future Ft. Wayne/Allen County merger. He feels that by waiting, the town will likely be limited to its existing boundaries in a few years.

Mr. Eastes inquired as to the timeline of the proposed East Allen Communities agenda. He also expressed the importance of having hard data to examine in order to better understand the impact to Leo-Cedarville.

Mr. Proctor, town attorney, strongly cautioned the council not to proceed with moving forward with the proposal. He feels that the EAC may be “operating under a misconception” If the town were to merge with EAC, Leo-Cedarville’s COIT, CEDIT, MVH, LRS, Park, and other funds, would go to this organization. EAC would have control over the parks, the zoning code, law enforcement, etc. The ultimate control of the town and all of the other entities within this proposal would be in the hands of EAC. He cautioned that the legal entities ultimately forming EAC would cease to exist. Mr. Proctor shares in the concern of a future City of Ft. Wayne/Allen County merger, but feels that the town should explore proactive annexation efforts vs. merging with EAC.

Ms. Jan Linn stated that the idea behind EAC was to protect and bring equality to the areas in east Allen County. She agreed that Leo-Cedarville should try to annex, and recommends that Grabill and the other outlying areas do the same. Annexation would have similar effect while preserving the towns involved. Interlocal agreements between the communities could help reduce costs by sharing capital resources.

Brief discussion ensued relating to the obligation the town has to newly annexed areas. If the town had municipally owned utilities, annexation would be more of a challenge than it may currently be. The town would have no current obligation to extend utility service to outlying areas. Mr. Proctor referenced HB 1362 and the restrictions placed on annexations.

Mr. Bob Lee, Allen County Treasurer was present at the council meeting. He is currently a candidate for State Representative in District 85. He recognizes there may be a push from Ft. Wayne in consolidation efforts, but said there is also a push from the state government.

Leo-Cedarville has not made a final decision on whether the town will go forward with the resolution presented by EAC.

PRESENTATION BY NORTHEAST FIRE & EMS – Mr. Steve Herman, Chief of Northeast Fire & EMS, was present to familiarize the council with the services the fire department provides to the community as well as discussing the department’s current budgetary needs. Tyler Witmer was also present to help address any questions. Northeast Fire & EMS was formed in 2005 when Cedar Canyons and Grabill Volunteer Fire Departments merged. He urged people to visit the department’s new website at northeastfireems.com. The administrative structure of the department was explained as well as the department’s annual income and expenses. Mr. Herman also provided the council with a breakdown of annual fire and EMS runs. He reviewed the fundraising efforts but noted that there is a budget deficit with the current capital needs of the department. The department has also encountered an increase in expenses such as fuel, utilities, and paid crew expenses. He stated that it costs well over \$2,000.00 to outfit one person. The department needs new gear, radios, and equipment. The department currently runs basic life support (BLS) on the trucks, but would like to go to the next step of advanced life support (ALS). This upgrade would cost

approximately \$33,500.00 to properly outfit one ambulance ALS. Mr. Herman is requesting that the town council consider providing the department with the funds for this upgrade. He also discussed the age of the grass rig that has been taken out of service. Discussion ensued regarding the option of purchasing used equipment, but due to NFPA guidelines, equipment purchased by a department must be NFPA compliant on the date of purchase. Existing department equipment is considered “grandfathered,” but when sold, the purchasing department is held to current NFPA standards. This can make purchasing used equipment cost prohibitive because of the upgrades needed.

The request for \$35,500.00 for the department to upgrade to ALS service will be on the next council agenda for further discussion. The town does have \$20,000.00 appropriated in 2008 in the town’s cumulative fire fund.

FINANCIAL REPORT – The final disbursement of over \$75,000.00 from the Francis Schwartz Trust has been made to the Leo-Cedarville parks department. This generous donation to the parks department will greatly enable the further development of the Riverside Gardens Park.

2008 CAPITAL STREET PLAN – Mr. Lauer was present to present his 2008 road work proposal to include, crack filling, chip & seal recommendations and road resurfacing recommendations. Due to the present composition of the road, Mr. Lauer recommended that Lochner Road receive chip & seal vs. asphalt. He estimates a cost of \$25,000.00 to chip & seal Lochner Rd. A total cost of \$225,000.00 was estimated for resurfacing various roads and chip & seal on Lochner Rd. The estimate includes engineering expenses.

Mr. Lauer further discussed the proposed Alta Vista/Sunnyside storm relief project. He estimated a cost of \$400,000.00 if the area is reconstructed to Michael Drive standards. He discussed another option that would be more attractive than ditches. The proposed project includes underground storm sewers with inlets to be located in each yard. Swales would run parallel to the road to guide water into the inlets. An 18” storm drain tile would lead to the Michael Drive tile. Property owners could re-grade their land to guide storm water runoff to the inlets if needed. Mr. Lauer recommends that the road base be pulverized and compacted; a new asphalt surface would then be added. Driveways will be cut and patched to allow for the underground storm tile. A total cost estimate of \$130,000.00 was provided including engineering fees.

One homeowner expressed that they do not want sidewalk to be included in this project; another spoke in favor of having a sidewalk. She expressed her opinion that the council is putting a price on the lives of children by not placing a sidewalk in the area due to cost. The engineer estimated a cost of \$12,500.00 to install a sidewalk down one side of the street.

Discussion ensued pertaining to the high estimated cost of crack filling in addition to the storm drain plan and road resurfacing. Mr. Lauer recommended that the council continue crack filling the roads annually as this will help lengthen the life of the roads over time. The council has \$25,000.00 appropriated

for crack filling the roads. Mr. Steffens moved to proceed with crack filling as proposed. Mr. Eastes seconded for the purpose of discussion. Mr. Clendenen recommended that the motion include “not to exceed \$25,000.00”. Mr. Steffens and Mr. Eastes agreed. Motion passed unanimously.

The council discussed the best way to proceed with choosing the scope of the resurfacing project in addition to the Sunnyside/Alta Vista project. Mr. Steffens recommended that the council seek bids for the entire proposed project, to include multiple roads; a road could be eliminated if needed to bring the project into budget. He further recommended that a sidewalk plan/policy, be developed in the meantime.

Mr. Eastes moved to prepare and put to bid the proposed resurfacing plan and Witmer Park stormwater plan. Mr. Young seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Further discussion ensued relating to how the town should proceed with preparing a sidewalk plan. The council considered addressing this topic at their April 15th council meeting. A special meeting may be held to discuss any concerns that Witmer Park residents may have. Present issues as well as future visions for the Witmer Park area could be discussed.

Mr. Clendenen moved that a minimum of a quorum of the council members be authorized to hold a special meeting to open bids for crack filling and award to lowest responsive bidder. Mr. Steffens seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting will be noticed as soon as quotes are received.

PART TIME MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE – Ms. Garton requested permission to begin seeking part-time seasonal help for the maintenance department. The council discussed the hourly rate for this position and the number of hours that are needed. Mr. Clendenen moved to increase the part-time maintenance hours by 20% (from 2007) and pay \$10 p/hr. Mr. Liechty seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

VOUCHERS – The March 18, 2008 line item voucher form was approved.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

John Clendenen
Council President

Pamela Spannuth
Clerk-Treasurer