

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
January 2, 2007

President Judi Mitten called the regular meeting of Wooster City Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers and upon roll call, members answered present as follows: Ansel, Breneman, Griffin, Silvestri, Topovski, Ulbright.

President Mitten stated that the agenda would stand as presented except for one change – Ordinance 2007-1 would be sponsored by Mr. Breneman.

Mr. Silvestri moved, seconded by Mr. Ansel, to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2006 meeting as received. Motion carried.

The following people spoke to City Council during public input regarding the renaming of a segment of US Route 30 in the city of Wooster (comments were that it should be named for an historical person from Wooster or someone who had contributed in some way to Wooster): David Jones, 2242 Friar Tuck Circle; David Bowers, 3429 Batdorf Road; Jordan Tompkins, 4950 Cleveland Road.

Ordinance No. 2006-61 determining to establish the name of a segment of US Route 30 in the City of Wooster as Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, and appropriating funds for the signage thereof was read by title, being on second reading. Mr. Topovski stated that in answer to the gentleman in the audience (who spoke during public input), the cost of the sign was \$3700. Mr. Topovski pointed out the two sign design proposals that were distributed to council members and the only change would be to add “Dr.” to the sign. He had also asked Mr. Benson to amend the ordinance to reflect that change. Mr. Topovski stated that he had received several calls that reflected the opinions expressed earlier tonight regarding renaming the road to honor local people who have contributed to our community in some way. We also received in our packet information on the number of streets and roadways throughout the United States that have been named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was Mr. Topovski’s intention to leave this on second reading this evening. A short discussion followed.

Ordinance No. 2007-1 authorizing the transfer of property to the Wooster Growth Corporation, and declaring an emergency was read by title, being on first reading. Mr. Breneman explained that back in 2000, the City of Wooster purchased land known as the Besancon farm using additional income from golden parachuters from Rubbermaid retirees; and this land was purchased for economic development for the city. Of that purchase about 148 acres were transferred into Wooster Growth Corporation for industrial development. We all have a map which shows the Besancon farm and the piece in question was in orange; 16.89 acres east of the railroad tracks. This parcel of land is landlocked with the only access from our land being down across the railroad tracks and into that acreage. The land is lowland, swampy and very difficult to traverse by motorized means. There has been some interest shown in acquiring this land by some property owners in that area and that’s the reason it’s being brought forward at this time.

We feel it would be in our best interests to transfer it all to the Wooster Growth Corporation since it was landlocked and the only access being across land already in the name of the Wooster Growth Corp. A short discussion followed.

Resolution No. 2007-1 authorizing the Director of Administration to enter into a sole source contract with US Filter-Davis Process for the purchase of bioxide for the Water Pollution Control Plant, and declaring an emergency was read by title, being on first reading. Mr. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Ulbright, to suspend the rules and place on third and final reading. Upon roll call, motion carried. Mr. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Topovski, to adopt. Mr. Griffin stated that last year we made a similar purchase of bioxide, sort of a chemical crutch to get us through the plant renovation. When the aeration tanks are taken off line as they're upgraded and retro-fitted, it was necessary to introduce oxygen into the process so that the plant can operate within the standards placed upon it. Bioxide was a sole source purchase from US Filter-Davis and was a budgeted item in operations. Upon roll call, motion to adopt carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2007-2 authorizing the Director of Administration to advertise according to law and enter into a contract(s) with the lowest and best bidder for the purchase of certain materials for the Water Treatment Plant, and declaring an emergency was read by title, being on first reading. Mr. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Silvestri, to suspend the rules and place on third and final reading. Upon roll call, motion carried. Mr. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Breneman, to adopt. Mr. Griffin stated that this was a routine yearly purchase for our Water Treatment Plant to advertise for bids for these required chemicals for production of soft and safe water for the citizens. Mr. Breneman asked Mr. Kinney to give us a thumbnail update on how each of these components work. Mr. Kinney stated that lime and soda ash was used to soften; carbon dioxide was to stabilize the water; and sodium hypochlorite (chlorine) was used to disinfect the water. Upon roll call, motion to adopt carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2007-3 authorizing the Director of Administration to enter into a contract with GPD Associates of Akron, Ohio for professional engineering services related to the development of a traffic study pertaining to traffic patterns in the downtown area, and declaring an emergency was read by title, being on first reading. Mr. Topovski stated that there was some discussion about creating a campus in the vicinity of the new library and the art center on Walnut Street. Since there hasn't been a traffic study of the downtown area in quite a while and the proposed community campus would be a reason for eliminating the traffic on part of South Street, the engineering department was proposing a traffic study to see how traffic could be rerouted in order to accommodate closing a section of South Street. The engineering department doesn't have the staff to conduct the study of the entire area, so they are asking that we contract with GPD Associates of Akron who have performed many of these studies and were astute in compiling these studies. The idea would be to see what would happen in changes of traffic patterns if we do proceed with a community campus in the area of South/Walnut Streets and also to coordinate the timing of various traffic lights in the downtown area to help with the flow of traffic. He planned to leave this on first reading tonight.

Mr. Ulbright stated that way back when it was decided that North and South Streets would be one-way streets each in the opposite direction of the other, it had something to do with traffic flow. When you propose to close South Street between Grant and Walnut, do we really need to spend this money to look into a traffic study when pure logic told him that closing South Street was a mistake? How much of a traffic hindrance was it for pedestrians to cross intersections at the traffic lights there? He felt it was great to link these two community facilities together with sidewalks or something similar but this just strikes him as something we really don't even need to approach.

Mr. Griffin stated that he could see some value in closing the street and creating a walkway or boulevard for the safety of kids going to and from the library. The way he read this, there were some other benefits we would get from this study; it might generate some other traffic light or traffic solutions to problems in the downtown area.

Mr. Breneman saw merit in conducting the traffic study; the idea of having an area where you can create a green space or mall type of atmosphere in the downtown area holds a lot of merit. It's something our downtown does not have a lot of and it would be a nice addition for our town to create a mall type of spot. The first concern was what are we going to do with the traffic that already exists in that area? We do have Henry Street which could be changed to a one-way street to match North Street. He felt it was money well spent to find out how people move around our city.

Mr. Ansel asked if this was something being pursued by the library; do they feel it would have a positive impact on people enjoying the library? Mr. Sigg said absolutely. Mr. Ansel asked whether they should be asked to participate in some of this expense since they will benefit from this and in good partnership, should we approach them? Mr. Sigg stated that he had no problem asking that question.

President Mitten wondered how the engineering firm doing the study would determine the traffic pattern of the library; by circulation, by square footage? Mr. Sigg said that was correct – square footage, circulation and population of the area.

Miscellaneous

Erwin Riedner, 904 Forest Drive, asked when the traffic study would be done? Mr. Sigg stated that the idea was that it would be conducted now because the design of the entrance and parking area for the library would change based on whether South Street was open or closed. Mr. Riedner further stated that regarding renaming a segment of Route 30 to MLK Way, he had participated in the civil rights movement in the 60's and 70's and what he took from that was not the concept of just civil rights in the south but the realization that there were other communities and other people that he didn't know about; other values. What he brought out of the civil rights movement was that everyone's community was part of a larger picture of our own history and the meaning of that was we need to honor our history and all the communities that participated. He encouraged the adoption of this ordinance to rename the highway.

Lydia Thompson, 1672 Lemar Drive, commented on the renaming of part of Route 30 to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and her hopes that Council would adopt the ordinance to honor him in this way.

Mr. Griffin stated that he was a bit confused by the lecture; a few people spoke their minds earlier but council hadn't even voted on this yet. He commended Ms. Thompson on the work she and her committee had done to bring this forward; but he hadn't heard anything that was detrimental to Dr. King. The people who did have other suggestions for naming of the road had nothing but good things to say about Dr. King. He wasn't sure how to keep this issue from accelerating.

Mr. Topovski stated that he would be in touch with the two other members of the infrastructure committee to see whether a committee meeting was justified and he would let everyone know if that occurred.

Mr. Ulbright stated that he looked forward to voting to change the name of part of Route 30 to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and he was very touched by Ms. Thompson's comments. He had traveled to many places where streets and roads had been named for Dr. King – he was in Youngstown visiting his daughter recently and there was a road in a major metropolitan area named for Martin Luther King; he also travels to Detroit regularly for train shows and gets off from I75 onto MLK Drive/Blvd. He felt it would be noteworthy if Wooster became the first city in Wayne County to so honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and we would be setting a precedent in a rural setting by doing this.

Mr. Ansel stated that he would like to schedule a Laws & Ordinances committee meeting for January 15, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. here in Council chambers. Some of the issues pending are the EZ guidelines, the zoning code and the outdoor wood burning stoves.

Mr. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Topovski, to adjourn. Motion carried and meeting so adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Judith Mitten
President of Council

Sheila Stanley
Clerk of Council