

September 16, 2013

13-21 wksp.

A Workshop meeting of the Caribou City Council was held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 16, 2013, in Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Gary Aiken, Deputy Mayor Kenneth G. Murchison, David Martin, Philip McDonough II, Joan L. Theriault, David R. Genthner, Sr., and Aaron P. Kouhought.

Austin Bless, City Manager and Tony Mazzucco, Assistant City Manager.

Natalie De La Garza, representing the Aroostook Republican and Time Warner covered the meeting.

_Item#1: City owned Parking Lots

Mayor Aiken reminded the Councilors that they need to be recognized by the Mayor before speaking.

The Mayor provided a brief review of events leading up to this evening's meeting.

Mayor Aiken started the meeting asking the opinion of each of the councilors on this subject.

- In favor of making changes to decrease parking lots maintenance cost: P. McDonough, D. Genthner, and D. Martin
- In favor of keeping things as they are: K. Murchison and A. Kouhought
- Undecided: J. Theriault

The Mayor wonders if a parking lot study should have been done.

Councilor Theriault suggested that the City sell the lots located on Hatch Drive, between Vaughn Place and Collins, American Legion, and Water Street to abutters and to keep North and South Mall parking lots plus the lot next to the Caribou Movie Theater.

Councilor Martin agrees with Councilor Theriault except he would include selling for one dollar the theater parking lot to the owner of the Caribou Movie Theater.

Councilor Murchison is in favor of the status quo. In his opinion, it is worth the monies to maintain the parking lots and to retain them for future economic development.

If the choices are to sell parking lots only to abutters or the City retains and maintains the lots, the Mayor wonders why any abutter would want to purchase a parking lot.

Councilor Kouhought stated that selling the parking lots is short-sighted and not thinking of the future. The City needs to work to fill the parking lots.

Council discussed enforcement of the City's parking ordinance plus whether or not the City should repeal the parking ordinance. The Mayor wants to see the parking ordinance enforced or repealed. Manager Bless commented that the parking ordinance is being enforced.

Councilor McDonough wants to sell the parking lots plus wants the parking ordinance enforced or eliminated from the Code.

The Mayor asked if there was consensus: to approach the owners of the buildings around the smaller lots and offer to sell the lots to them. No one disagreed.

Councilor Murchison offered that the Council is creating a problem where there isn't a problem.

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Councilor Theriault would think that the building owners would want to purchase adjoining parking lots.

Councilor McDonough noted that parking is part of the Site Design review process.

Councilor Genthner supports selling the lots when the building owners would have a need for them. He questions if it is fair for other Caribou business owners that must maintain their own parking lots while downtown business owners have the use of parking lots maintained by the City. Councilor Genthner spoke about City taxes and wondered where the budget could be cut.

The Mayor asked if there was consensus: to approach landowners to purchase the parking lots.

Councilors Murchison and Kouhoupt do not support approaching landowners.

Mayor Aiken stated that this issue is to be placed on the agenda for the next Council meeting and if the lots are retained then the Council should consider placing snow removal out to bid.

Meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary