

Village Board continues to encounter dog complaints

Written by Wauneta Breeze
Wednesday, 17 July 2013 20:34 -

By Sheri Hink-Wagner

The Wauneta Breeze

Dog complaints continue to be a source of frustration for the Wauneta Village Board. A community member attended this month's meeting to formalize his complaints regarding barking dogs.

This complaint, in addition to the complaints seen over the past months, has added up to a larger discussion by village board members, seeking to better define the village board's means to enforce village ordinances.

Board Member Tony Cribelli stated, "We want our ordinances enforced." Fellow board member Page Johnston added, "Expediently."

Board members Cribelli, Johnston and Rick Einspahr, who were the three board members in attendance at the meeting, had a lengthy discussion with village attorney Arlan Wine, village superintendent Bill Bischoff and village clerk Evelyn Skelton regarding ordinance enforcement.

At the end of the discussion it was decided that when a complaint comes in it is to be shared with the village attorney.

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The village attorney will then ask village staff members or appropriate law enforcement officials to investigate the validity of the complaint and gather proof.

If the complaint is believed to be valid, the village attorney has been instructed to move forward with prosecution. If the complaint is not considered valid, village staff members will inform the individual who lodged the complaint of the findings from the investigation.

Board members felt it important to formalize the process of addressing possible ordinance violations to keep Wauneta's citizens as a whole protected by the ordinances that are currently in place.

Johnston explained that when a citizen lodges a complaint, the process established at the meeting will allow the village board to, "Assure him that we'll take his complaint under advisement and pursue it with due diligence and with timeliness."

He added, "And that we'll enforce our ordinances to the best of our ability."

The group reported back on the letters that were sent out last month to citizens who owned more than two adult dogs.

It was reported that one individual has come into compliance, one has moved out of town and that one has been in contact with the village and is making plans to find homes for their dogs over the allowed two adult dogs per household.

Owner Occupied Housing grant application

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The village is in process of applying for Community Development Grant Application (CDBG) grant funding for a project which would allow income eligible home owners in Wauneta to rehabilitate their homes with a 100 percent forgivable loan.

The board approved payment of \$3,500 to Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation (SWNCBC) to write the grant.

As part of the process of finalizing the grant, the village board reviewed proposals for the Housing Administrator and General Administrative Services for the Owner Occupied Rehab project.

The Housing Administrator will oversee projects and activities that have to do with the individual homes to be refurbished. The General Administrator will oversee items not attached to an individual home.

After review of the proposals and discussion, the board decided to hire SWNCBC to perform both administrative functions.

Amy Thelander with SWNCBC attended the July meeting to help finalize items for the CDBG grant application the village will submit for the Owner Occupied Housing Project.

Wauneta Water Project

Board members approved payment of \$27,977.35 to Pivot Electric for variable frequency drives and the SCADA system, which are part of the larger Wauneta Water Project.

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The board also approved a request to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality for \$25,384. The request asks the DEQ for loan grant funds that will be used to pay part of the Pivot Electric payment.

Village superintendent Bischoff said the project is all but complete.

The variable frequency drives and SCADA system were designed to slow the pull of water from the village wells in order to hopefully reduce the arsenic levels in Wauneta's water.

"It's going to have some bugs to work out, but right now it's going to be fine. It's doing what the engineers expect it to do," said Bischoff.

"It's only been running on low gallonage for 30 days, we will probably pull the first sample (to test for arsenic) in four months, he added. "We'll see if we're headed anywhere then."

Comprehensive plan

Michelle Stephens with People Oriented Planning (POP, a partner of JEO Consulting) was present at the July meeting to provide information on a potential bid for the village's comprehensive plan.

The focus of Stephens' presentation was that the best comprehensive plans should focus on community members' needs and desires.

She indicated that a "run of the mill" comprehensive plan that incorporates required elements but less community input runs approximately \$20-25,000 and that a plan which incorporates

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more community input would be more.

The village board has not reached a decision on what will be included in their eventual bid for a company to complete the comprehensive plan.

Staff reports

Village Clerk Evelyn Skelton reported the library underwent some recent renovations in which the stage area was removed. The project was completed for approximately \$550.

Skelton also conveyed a message to the board on behalf of Village Board Chairman Lloyd Sinner, who was unable to attend the meeting.

She said Sinner has had a utility customer approach him, stating that her electric bill has been too high for a number of months.

Skelton and Bischoff said the village staff is aware of the issue and has been researching the potential reason for the higher than expected energy bills.

Bischoff said the village staff has been gearing up for Harvest Fest by getting the park and main street ready for the influx of visitors.

He said that some of the village's streets will be armor coated and that staff members are working on repairs to the bleachers for sand volleyball.

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He also mentioned the pool recently passed its inspection with “flying colors,” stating that only two issues were identified on the inspection. One was the toilets in the women’s bathroom, which are in process of being replaced.