

MINUTES
SMITHS GROVE CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
SMITHS GROVE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2011 7:00 PM

All Members Present: Mayor Higginbotham, Commissioner Martin, Commissioner Varner, Commissioner Pierce, Commissioner Stiffey

Also present: City Attorney Wes Milliken

Mayor Higginbotham called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
All present recited the Pledge to Allegiance
Mayor Higginbotham welcomed all of the special guests in attendance at the meeting.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of Regular Meeting (March 25, 2011)
Meeting minutes approved by unanimous consent.

REPORTS

Treasurer Report (March 2011)
Report approved by unanimous consent.

Public Works Report
No Report

Police, Public Safety, Health and Welfare Report
Commissioner Martin read the police report for March, 2011. He asked Chief Suoy if there was anything to add. Chief Suoy reported that Ms. Ashley Simpson was applying for a COPS grant on behalf of the City of Smiths Grove. This grant would provide for funds to employ a full time policeman to the City for three years if the City funded the position for the fourth year. The awarding of the Grant will not take place until 2012 per Chief Suoy.

Cemetery Report
Commissioner Pierce read the Cemetery Quarterly Financial Report prepared by Martha Watt. The Cemetery has funds totaling \$90,613 as of March 31, 2011. Of this amount, \$80,229 is in perpetual funds with the remaining \$10,384 in the Cemetery Checking account.

Code Enforcement Report
Commissioner Stiffey reported that property on Higgins Alley that has been a problem in the past may be cleaned up since the property is going to be occupied in

the near future. Mayor Higginbotham urged all meeting attendees to drive by 510 Cave Street to view how poorly that the property appears.

OLD BUSINESS

Oakland Police Patrol – Mayor Higginbotham reported that he, Commissioner Martin and Chief Suoy attended a meeting with Oakland Mayor Mansfield and Oakland Commissioner Tim Hunt. Pending Oakland Commission approval, the City of Smiths Grove will be receiving funds from Oakland to help defray some of the fuel expense necessary to patrol the City of Oakland by the Smiths Grove Police Department.

NEW BUSINESS

Building Permits

Commissioner Pierce began a discussion regarding the methods and procedures by which the City of Smiths Grove issues building permits. Currently, building permits are issued by the City Clerk the same day as the application is completed. Commissioner Pierce would like to explore the possibilities of having a different process to building permit issuance. Smiths Grove Planning and Zoning representative Albert Rich will be contacted by Commissioner Pierce to begin any discussions of changes.

Cemetery Matters

Mayor Higginbotham made a video presentation concerning issues at the Smiths Grove Cemetery. Included in his presentation were images of tree damage to both monuments and the rock fence at the Cemetery. The removal of seventeen trees has already been approved by the Commission. However, Mayor Higginbotham stressed to those in attendance that the Cemetery is not able to financially sustain itself without continuous contributions from the City General Fund. Also, current regulations and ordinances in place are not being enforced. Commissioner Pierce suggested forming a Committee consisting of Commission members, Smiths Grove citizens and others who have a vested interest in the Cemetery. Committee members selected are as follows: Mayor Higginbotham, Commissioner Pierce, Martha McGuirk, Bob Rankin, Gay Rankin, Velta Rose Smith, Fred Wurst, Chief Tom Suoy, and Josh Mills. The Cemetery Committee will explore current procedures and practices and suggest to the full Commission any proposed changes necessary.

The Ordinance currently in effect giving the City of Smiths Grove the authority to charge and collect a ‘maintenance fee’ to property owners at the Cemetery is not now nor has been enforced for at least twenty years. City Attorney Wes Milliken questioned the legality of enforcing that same ordinance going forward since it has been so many years since the Ordinance was last enforced. Mr. Milliken stated that he was afraid that a precedent had been established when the enforcement of that Ordinance ceased.

The final two agenda items regarding the Cemetery were deferred to the newly formed committee by Commissioner Stiffey.

Mayor Higginbotham reported to the Commission the Warren County Judge Executive Mike Buchanan informed him of \$3,500 in grant money available to the City of Smiths Grove for Capital Projects. Ms. Ashley Simpson of BRADD will be working on this grant on behalf of the City of Smiths Grove.

Mayor Higginbotham informed the Commission of the need to have a special meeting sometime by the middle of May. The primary function of this special meeting will be to establish the 2011-12 Smiths Grove City budget. The date and time for this meeting will be mutually agreed upon and posted to the public with proper notice.

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Higginbotham adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

APPROVED _____
BERT E. HIGGINBOTHAM, MAYOR

ATTEST _____
DANIEL C. JONES, CITY CLERK

DATE _____