

Council supports limits on campaign financing

The Richland Center City Council voiced support of a resolution supporting a constitutional amendment that would overturn a Supreme Court decision at its meeting Tuesday night.

The council voted, 6-0, with one abstention in favor of the resolution from the "We the People" movement that seeks to limit campaign financing.

The resolution supports passage of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution seeking to recognize human beings as being endowed with constitutional rights — not corporations, unions, non-profits or other artificial entities. The resolution also says "money is not speech, and therefore limiting political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting speech."

David Penn of Madison presented the case for the movement that would seek to overturn some recent rulings by the Supreme Court that have deemed some legislation limiting campaign funding as unconstitutional.

The amendment being sought by the group would allow laws to be passed to limit spending on campaigns.

In other action, the council voted, 6-1, in support of moving forward with plans to improve East Haseltine from Sheldon to East streets. Matt Muchow of Vierbicher presented an agreement to provide engineering, surveying and consulting services to the city for the

reconstruction of the street more than 1,600 feet with an estimated cost of more than \$1 million.

Muchow proposed undertaking the project in 2019 because the city was not likely to qualify as low to moderate income as required for a CDBG grant. He noted that, if the final results showed it could qualify, the project could be delayed until 2020.

Aldersperson John Collins, who cast the lone dissenting vote, said the project involved two engineering firms — one for the city and the other for the utilities.

During the three-hour meeting, the alderpersons approved pay requests from Gerke Excavating for work done on West Side Drive and Panorama Estates. The council altered its purchasing policy to allow bidding or quotes of budgeted items to be sought without prior approval of the Finance Committee.

The council also authorized a budget amendment allowing \$14,000 to be used to purchase new playground equipment.

The council issued a Class B beer license for an event at the A.D. German Warehouse on January 19, and renewed the taxi license applications for Towne Taxi and Running, Inc. (for the Richland

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Center Transit).

The council did not act on a reimbursement request from Tim Oman, who seeks to be reimbursed for work done to his yard following a sidewalk

replacement.

Cary Norman asked the city to allow the de-annexation of a parcel on the southeast side of the city. Norman pointed out the property was not serviced by city water and sewer but he paid over \$2,800 in taxes to the city.

Since it was the final meeting of the year and the de-annexation would have to be done before January 1, and Norman had not fulfilled all legal requirements for de-annexation, the parcel will remain in the city for a while.

New city resident Terry

Chitwood told the council that he is upset with the fact that taxes on his house in Wedgwood increased over 30 percent. City Assessor Gretchen Jelinek pointed out that the taxes reflect what Chitwood recently paid for the house.