

**CITY OF EUREKA SPRINGS
CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING**

amended

MONDAY

JUNE 15, 2020

Mayor Robert “Butch” Berry called the special meeting of the Eureka Springs City Council to order at 6:00 p.m. Monday, June 15, 2020 in the Auditorium at 36 S. Main **to hear a presentation on Safe Open Streets and Six Weeks of Fun.**

PRESENT in person: Mayor Berry, Aldermen Terry McClung, Susan Harman, Bob Thomas, Melissa Greene, Harry Meyer, Mickey Schneider, and City Clerk Treasurer Ann Armstrong
PRESENT remotely: City Attorney Tim Weaver

PRESENTATION: Kent Butler and Jacqueline Wolven provided an extensive summary of the background in developing their group’s plan for opening town and using public spaces for merchandise sales, dining, reinstating the entertainment district, removing parking, and collecting data. Council members asked questions and offered their views of the proposals.

Mr. McClung made a motion to have fireworks on the 3rd of July if we can meet the protocols. Ms. Harman seconded. Mayor Berry said there needed to be a motion for a resolution for the next Council meeting. A roll call vote followed.

Motion carried 4/3/0 with Ms. Greene, Ms. Schneider and Mr. Meyer voting “No” and Mayor Berry adding an “Aye” to carry. Mr. Thomas’s vote was counted as an “Aye” although he specified he was voting for a resolution on fireworks.

City Attorney Tim Weaver weighed in saying, “To continue on would be a violation. (Council) has taken an action. Special meetings allow one action.” The Mayor declared the motion null and void. Mr. Weaver said the meeting was to be a presentation. Mr. McClung interpreted Mr. Weaver’s comment as meaning the motion and vote did not count.

Mr. Weaver noted that if the vote has been recalled, and wasn’t actually official, then (Council and the Mayor) could probably continue on at this point on the original theme of the meeting. “Technically it was a vote even though it may have been improper at the time.” The Mayor said no more votes would be taken.

Mr. Thomas left the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Fourteen letters were sent to Council regarding opening town to more visitors. Thirteen were in opposition. One was in favor. Letters were not read and are on file.

Karen Lindblad spoke about the referendum that has been certified for the Entertainment District to go to a vote of the people, and also about the last Spring St. closing despite 28 retailers signing a petition in opposition.

Laura Jo Smole said it was a great plan but it is the CAPC that is to take care of business. It was her view Council people and Mayor are there to take care of the citizens. She spoke about points of COVID transmission such as gas stations.

Blakley Wilson spoke about impact of having to close her shop. She noted that Eureka Springs is noted for being a healthy place and asked that nothing be done that could change that reputation. She objected to having street parties and parades at this time.

LeRoy Gorrell spoke in favor of making the decision based on the health and wellbeing of the citizens and guests. He emphasized it was more than a fiscal issue and asked Council to remember the oath they took, and to pull back on the reins of promoting gatherings of large groups.

Steve Beacham was in support of having no special events until at least September 1. He said removing parking on Spring would create a wider walking space. He opposed large gatherings and questioned trying to do an "end run" behind the voters backs with the entertainment district.

Ken Foggo held up a Where's Waldo cartoon showing "idiotic" behavior and another image with a pattern of increasing COVID-19 cases. He expressed his view there will be a spike in this County.

Dina Landis said it's hard to keep people apart in public or in the shops. She spoke highly of Jackie's enthusiasm, adding that (the proposal) may not be what we're ready for until we get through this, and "this is serious."

Vance Marvin said there were many shop keepers who did not know this was coming about until today. He asked what they were to do about deliveries on Fridays - Sundays and said parking is essential to the businesses. Not all can "do zoom" because they have businesses to run.

Suzie Bell, co-founder of ECHO, said we need to follow the CDC guidelines. She was concerned about the number of visitors who are not practicing social distancing or wearing masks. One hospitalization with Corona virus would devastate a shop keeper far more than loss of income.

Autumn Slane thought closing the street was an awesome idea. She would be willing to get some business owners' signatures for the entertainment district, and said she believes (her husband and she) are doing their absolute best to protect the citizens while trying to make a living.

Dan Bell spoke about the current count of 88 positive cases in the County. Two restaurants have closed due to infected staff. He estimated that cases will be 50% higher in July and, for every 2000 people who come to visit us, about one person is going to die.

Dee Rude estimated that there will be over 200 cases in the County by July 4. Dee liked the ideas in preparation for when the day does come. Now is not the time. People have come here for 100 years because they want to be healthy.

Jeff Danos said he loved everything in the plan. The Zombie Crawl has been cancelled and it doesn't happen until October. It was his position closing half of Spring St. would get people walking and get rid of the noise problem. He said he has to think about the community.

Ms. Green favored taking things slowly because we can't police the people and keep them apart.

Ms. Schneider noted she was not seeing anyone from Heart of Eureka and said 100% of the phone calls she's received have been against six weeks of events and the entertainment district.

Mr. Meyer said it's a great plan and this is not the right time.

Ms. Harman said she wants to support our businesses, thought the presentation was great, and that to scrap the whole thing would be a mistake.

Mr. McClung considered the plan a floating plan and encouraged the Mayor to bring a resolution to the next meeting for fireworks on the (3rd).

Mayor Berry spoke about Council looking at the plan in the future and thanked everyone who came out.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. McClung moved to adjourn. Ms. Harman seconded.

Motion carried 6/0/0.

ATTEST:


Ann Armstrong, City Clerk Treasurer

APPROVED:


Robert "Butch" Berry, Mayor