

Orville Tonsing takes over as new mayor

Written by Chris Lee

Mayor Pro Tem Orville Tonsing was voted to take over as mayor of Holyoke during the Tuesday, Aug. 17 city council meeting.

The position became vacant when David Nygaard resigned his spot at the Aug. 3 council meeting.

Nominations were made for Tonsing and councilman Kevin Scott. After a roll call vote both Tonsing and Scott received three votes. Scott then decided to remove his name from consideration, stating he wouldn't have time to fulfill the position. The council then voted to name Tonsing the new mayor.

With Tonsing taking over as mayor, a mayor pro tem was voted on and Scott accepted the position.

Council members later voted to allow advertising be run for the open seat. They don't wish to hold a special election and will advertise for interested parties.

Council hears new playground proposal

Council members welcomed Brooke Dirks, Shannon Schlachter and Michelle Vieselmeyer to discuss plans and requests for a new playground set up for Homesteaders Park.

The plan is to build a new playground system that is universally accessible to any child with a disability. They would be able to access the entire playground. Things such as larger slides to allow parents to go down with children are in the plans. Additional items include swings with straps, a rubber surface and a 50x100 feet all-weather turf field.

Dirks said the metal slides and splintered wood structure of the current playground are cause

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for concern to mothers around town who take their children there.

Dirks said she is working with a grant writer with a very high success rate to apply for a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant. She explained this in no way will interfere with the GOCO grant the city is applying for to use at the ball field. If they were looking at building a ball park then it wouldn't work, but that is not the case.

"We feel very passionate about this and are all emotionally involved," Dirks said. The trio made the point that they don't want to take anything away from the city park. They just would like to add this option to Holyoke.

The request to the city includes a letter of support, labor support and/or a donation.

Two other grant applications to the Daniels Fund and Temple-Hoyne-Buell Foundation are in the works as well.

The cash match needed will be \$20,000. The total for the project is in the neighborhood of \$220,000, according to Dirks.

Schlachter reported a number of northeast Colorado entities have jumped on board in support for the project. She said the closest 100 percent accessible park is located in western Ft. Collins, so this new park would be a big benefit to Holyoke and surrounding communities.

"What we will have is a park that will be completely unique to all of northeast Colorado," Schlachter said. "There is no other park like this that is public."

Council members voted to draft a letter of support and will wait until a consultation has taken place with City Supt. Mark Brown to determine the number of hours the city will provide for in-kind labor to the project.

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A question of debris that blew off the former Baldwin building onto the street during a recent storm was raised at last Tuesday's meeting. Council members agreed to draft a letter asking for a plan of action from the owner by Sept. 21.

Councilman Ray Bailey said the city needs to present proof to get the ball rolling. It was stated there had been some verbal communication in the past but they need to get something in writing.

Tonsing presented council members with a handout outlining amendments 60 and 61 and proposition 101. "I think we need to let the public know that we are absolutely not in favor of these," he said.

The council discussed times to get a resolution in place to let voters know about the council's position regarding the issues.

Reports of city officials

Jeff Deselms reported on behalf of Supt. Brown. He said the seal coat program was a success and they had some leftover oil which allowed for some additional streets to be worked on.

He also reported there was a water main break and a couple of power outages.

Police Chief Phil Biersdorfer said HPD was involved in a domestic violence harassment investigation and an arrest had been made in connection with it.

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Other business

In other business Aug. 17, council members:

—approved an ordinance repealing certain sections of Title 2, Chapter 2.48, tree board and regulations of the Holyoke Municipal Code and creating a new ordinance for regulation of maintenance and removal of trees and shrubs and licensing within the City of Holyoke.

—approved travel request for Tillie Fisbeck and Kathy Olofson to attend Master Municipal Clerks Academy.

—approved the request of contribution in the amount of \$1,330 from Northeastern Colorado Association of Local Governments for 2011.

—voted on appropriation for the GOCO bleacher grant. Olofson said the grant is asking for \$41,000. The city will match 28.5 percent of the final \$57,335.72 project. That amount is \$16,335 with \$11,192 coming from the Conservation Trust Fund and the rest as in-kind labor and materials.