

City looking into dog pound

Written by Chris Lee

Holyoke City Council will begin to look into constructing a dog pound to help house stray dogs found in town. Discussion during the Monday, April 2 meeting got the ball rolling on a possible pound, which the City has discussed in the past.

Police chief Doug Bergstrom and code enforcement officer Dawn Worley recently attended a share holders meeting regarding new rabies issues. They received a large list of requirements and regulations pertaining to dog pounds. Bergstrom said the city would definitely need to begin looking into the idea of a pound. He also noted Holyoke is one of a select few towns in northeast Colorado that doesn't currently have a pound.

Council members decided to begin the dog pound process by getting their ducks in a row and going through the requirements before acting on anything. JC Peckham and Steve Moore said they will help by going through the requirements to get things rolling.

City attorney Al Wall noted if Holyoke builds a pound and gets licensed by the state, then they wouldn't be subject to the regulations. Bergstrom said the regulations are being refined and a new set should be out sometime this summer.

City supt. Mark Brown said they have looked into different locations and feel the pole yard located near the Holyoke Gun Club would be the most logical place because there is already water, electric and sewer at the location. It is also out of the way, so noise issues would be decreased.

Brown also questioned the size of the facility. Wall said he thought room for six dogs would be fine. The city will need to get through the regulations and then move forward with costs and logistics.

Prior to the pound discussion, Jim Yakel spoke to council members last Monday telling them about how his granddaughter was recently bitten by a pit bull in Amherst. Yakel said he knows the incident didn't occur in Holyoke but said he hopes the council would consider making pit bulls and other dangerous dogs illegal.

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“I’ve never had a position on pit bulls before,” Yakel said. He said the recent incident with his granddaughter has solidified his position on them.

He said he knows not all pit bulls will attack, but they can be vicious dogs at times.

“I would like the board to have some discussion on it,” Yakel said.

Wall said a number of years ago, the Colorado legislature passed a law that prevented breed-specific laws. The City and County of Denver under home rule charter contested it, and the Colorado Supreme Court agreed. Wall said since Holyoke is a home rule charter, the city can have breed-specific rules.

Wall and Bergstrom said, through the code enforcement officer, there are believed to be around 15 pit bulls in Holyoke.

Drug paraphernalia ordinance passed

City Council members unanimously passed an ordinance prohibiting the possession, sale, manufacture, delivery or advertisement of drug paraphernalia. The ordinance was earlier approved on first reading during the March 20 regular meeting.

People found in violation of the ordinance will be punished by a fine up to and including \$300 for each violation. According to the ordinance, no jail sentence or other form of imprisonment may be imposed. However, failure to pay a fine may result in imprisonment.

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Drug paraphernalia is defined in the ordinance as all equipment, products and materials of any kind which are used, intended for use or designed for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, concealing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance in violation of the laws of the state.

City to vacate portion of property

County Commissioner Jerry Beavers and County Administrator Randy Schafer attended last Monday's meeting, hoping the city would be willing to vacate a portion of Sherman Avenue to allow for a diesel tank to be installed.

Beavers said in an effort to help with fuel costs, a \$10,000 tank has been purchased with plans of installing it near the county's shop in town. He said recent regulations force them to ask the city to vacate the right of way for 10 feet of Sherman Avenue north of Emerson Street to Highway 6.

Since the street isn't as wide as the right of way, with the vacation, the right of way would still be two feet on the east side of the existing curb.

City Attorney Al Wall said the council will have to pass an ordinance to vacate the requested portion and they may do so as an emergency so it can get done in one shot to help speed the process up. The emergency ordinance will be in the April 17 meeting agenda.

Reports of city officials

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Council members heard reports from city supt. Brown and police chief Bergstrom at last week's meeting.

Supt. Brown said the new hot water heater has been installed and the boiler has been removed by Tom's Plumbing.

Bergstrom said a few larger incidents in the area have prompted the department to begin talking about training ideas for possible disasters.

Other business

In other business April 2, council members:

—approved donation of water for the 2012 Community Garden.

—approved a special events permit for Golden Plains Recreation Center/Peerless Theatre.

—opened bids for hauling seal coat rock and awarded it to Blackwolf Transport Inc. who bid \$15.50/ton. The bid was the only one received. Brown noted he received a verbal bid from Allen Mitcheck for \$16/ton.

—granted an exception to Phillips County Historical Society for sewer rate. Michael Coyne attended last Monday's meeting and told the council that a water leak had been found in one of the restrooms at the museum which caused the utility bill to increase. Coyne said the leak has

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since been fixed and rates should show things are back to normal.

—tabled the mini park discussion until more information and possible options can be explored.

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