



City of Sikeston

TENTATIVE AGENDA

COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING
SIKESTON CITY HALL

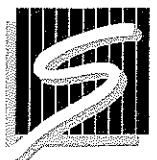
Thursday, October 16, 2014
7:00 A.M.

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE
- III. OPENING PRAYER
- IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS
 - A. Discussion on Litter Control & Beautification Programs
 - B. Other Items As May Be Determined During the Course of the Meeting
- V. ADJOURNMENT

Dated this 14th day of October 2014


Carroll Couch, City Clerk

The City of Sikeston complies with ADA guidelines. Notify Linda Lowes at 471-2512 (TDD Available) to notify the City of any reasonable accommodation needed to participate in the City Council's Meeting.



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Jonathan "J.D." Douglass, City Manager
Date: 10/09/14
Re: Comprehensive Approach to Community Beautification

This memo will present various ideas the City Council may want to pursue as part of a comprehensive approach to community beautification. City staff and City Council deliberations on these issues started as discussions of trash and litter, but have expanded to a wider, more comprehensive approach. Not every idea presented in this memo may be feasible, but these are things we can explore. Likewise, no single idea presented here will solve our beautification issues, but taken together they may begin to address not only technical issues but also cultural expectations and norms with regards to litter and pride in our community. The purpose behind a comprehensive approach to community beautification is to improve the quality of life of our residents, and the attractiveness of our community to those who would move to or do business in Sikeston.

City staff looks forward to Council discussion of these and other beautification related issues, and Council direction regarding any initiatives that staff should undertake or prioritize.

Land Use and Building Code Issues

Demolition Permits. Demolition permits, like other building permits, previously expired 6 months after their issue date, unless an extension was granted. In the past year we have observed that this expiration period was probably far too long for typical demolitions. A number of demolition permits were issued for some vacant, dilapidated mobile homes. As some of the mobile homes were demolished, trash from the sites blew onto nearby properties. As some of the demolitions lingered on, the problem had to be addressed by very frequent observations and interventions by Code Enforcement staff. Staff has already made two changes to demolition permits and will continue to observe their effectiveness: 1) changed the duration of the permit so that it expires 60 days after issuance, with extensions available upon review based on weather, complexity, and other extenuating circumstances, and 2) require as a condition of the permit that all loose (i.e. blowable) trash must be removed daily, or be placed in a container with a secure covering.

Construction Trash. Code Enforcement occasionally observes trash from construction sites blowing onto neighboring properties. A possible way to prevent this would be to require, perhaps as a condition of the building permits, that all loose trash must be removed daily, or be placed in a container with a secure covering.

Development Code Standards for Commercial Exteriors and Landscaping. Staff recommends exploring amendments to the development code regarding commercial building design. If the City would like to influence the quality of development that occurs, we must have adopted codes to fall back on. The effects of differing development code standards can be seen in the different appearance of the same national retail store built in different communities, such as the two images below:



If the Council would like to pursue adoption of stronger standards regarding commercial exteriors (and landscaping), staff suggests that we find another Missouri community whose standards we like, and model our code language from them.

Sidewalk Requirements. Sidewalks are widely recognized as an important part of a modern transportation network, allowing city residents to travel safely by foot for health, convenience, or economic reasons. In Sikeston, sidewalks are generally required to be built in new subdivisions. As you can see in the aerial photo of a newer subdivision below, sidewalk networks have been or are being completed. A major weakness in our municipal codes, or application thereof, is along arterial or collector streets *outside* of new subdivisions. For example, in the photo below you can see that by not requiring the construction of sidewalks along Brunt and Colonel George E Day along the outside of the subdivision, residents of neighborhoods less than ¼ of a mile from Mathews Park have to either drive in a vehicle or walk in a busy street in order to enjoy the park a stone's throw from their homes.

Sidewalks requirements in commercial areas should also be reviewed. The first time I visited Sikeston I noticed the new CVS building nearing completion. I was immediately struck by the complete absence of sidewalks at this brand new redevelopment at the biggest intersection in town.



Litter, Trash, and Recycling

There are many sources of litter, but studies indicate that most litter is generated by individuals who have intentionally littered. Keep America Beautiful, Inc. conducted studies and found that 81% of observed littering acts were intentional, and that 90% of litter could be traced back to individuals' disposal decisions (i.e. improperly disposing of trash which then intentionally or unintentionally became litter). Anecdotally, I have personally observed this phenomenon in Sikeston in my short time here. In the Walmart parking lot one day I

observed a small grocery bag filled with trash sitting on the ground. I looked around and there was a trash can less than 20 feet away, secured to a cart corral. Another day at a music in the park event at Malone Park, I observed a young man finish his bag of popcorn, wad up the paper sack, and throw it directly on the ground. Again, there was a trash can only a few steps away.

These observations, both anecdotal and more scientific, suggest that littering may be a cultural problem (i.e. social norms, customs, and expectations) more than a problem of infrastructure (i.e. easy access to proper trash receptacles), which suggests that there will not be quick easy fixes to the problem.

Keep Sikeston Beautiful Campaign. Affiliation with the national “Keep America Beautiful” organization would cost a few thousand dollars but would allow us to piggyback off their marketing materials and would give us access to grant programs that in the past have included tree planting, recycling bins, cigarette litter prevention, and other programs. A “Keep Sikeston Beautiful” webpage could be created as a portal to all our litter control efforts, and “No Littering” signs with fine information and “Keep Sikeston Beautiful” branding could be installed at strategic locations. Educational programs could possibly be conducted in the schools similar to programs that are already conducted for Public Safety.

Expand Adopt-A-Street Program. The city already operates an adopt-a-street program, but it is underutilized. If organizations would like to adopt a stretch of road, the city will make signs to put up in that area, and will provide trash bags to the organization and pick up the filled bags when the organization tells us they are going to have a cleanup day. Creation of a new webpage for the program, and letters from the city to service clubs, schools, churches, scouting groups, and others, could increase participation in the program.

Private Cleanup Efforts. There are numerous private efforts underway to at least clean up after, if not prevent, litter. Efforts such as the Hope Epidemic and Anchor Church’s Stash the Trash can be encouraged and supported by the city in whatever ways are feasible. If a “Keep Sikeston Beautiful” webpage is created, links to community service projects such as these could be provided.

Lead by Example. The example of community leaders preventing and cleaning up litter can be powerful. City Hall staff are trying to put together a regular City Hall Service Day where the Public Works Director chooses a date/time and a location that needs litter cleanup and we promote it to all employees as a volunteer opportunity the week prior. The first City Hall Service Day will be Sunday, October 26, at 2:00 p.m. at School St and Stallcup. The Leadership Sikeston class this year has considered a similar project.

Code Enforcement Efforts. Currently, when addressing a case of junk and trash on a private property, code enforcement staff documents the violations and forwards all the information to the city prosecutor, who then decides whether to press charges. It may be more effective in these cases for code enforcement officers to write tickets after a one time warning on a door hanger. City staff would need to talk to the city prosecutor about the burden of proof he would need in order to sign off on such tickets.

Residential Trash Containers and Lids. Occasionally animals have gotten into trash bags placed at the curb, turning properly disposed of trash into litter spread around the neighborhood. The city code is somewhat ambiguous regarding whether containers and lids are required, but if the City Council wanted to mandate containers and lids it could be done. I would suggest discussing this with our contracted residential solid waste service provider before making any changes.

Expanded Recycling. Recycling could be a large discussion topic on its own, so I will only introduce it here. Our current residential solid waste service provider provides recycling bins at its facility in Sikeston, but there are many things that could be done to increase recycling, ranging from greater availability of bins on both

public and private property, all the way to curbside pickup. Even within curbside pickup programs there are many options to consider, including universal vs. voluntary participation, and single stream vs. sorting materials.

Plastic Bag Ban. A number of communities, though none nearby of which I am aware, have adopted regulations restricting the use of plastic grocery bags. Restricting their use in Sikeston would certainly be a bold, and likely controversial, approach to reducing litter. I am not advocating for this, but it is an option that can be considered. It is undeniable that plastic grocery bags are a significant source of litter, particularly along Highway 60, where in the winter you can observe a large number of bags snagged on the stubble left in the fields.