

Present: Council President Domzal; President Pro-Tem Woodrow; Members: Koss, McCleary, Pfeifer and Taylor

Absent: Downey

Also Present: Village Manager, Murphy

President Domzal called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road. The purpose of the study session is to review the status of Council action plan items.

#### Elections

Pfeifer stated that she and Village Clerk Ellen Marshall will be attending a class sponsored by the Michigan Municipal League on the new election law at the end of September. Murphy added that clean up language to the legislation is before committees in Lansing.

Council discussed options available for Village Elections. Beverly Hills can either hold elections in September of odd number years or in November of even number years. Without action of Council, the default will be to hold elections in November of even years with all seven Council members elected at one time. Regardless of whether the election is held in September or November, the Village can opt for staggered four year terms so that four people would be running every two years. There would always be a member with a two-year term. Council discussed how this would work. It was noted that the Village can only run its own elections under the September format.

Domzal asked Murphy to prepare a chart showing Village Election options assuming no legislative alternatives. Pfeifer and Ellen Marshall will continue to provide Council with guidance on this issue. Council will decide how to proceed by October 1.

#### City vs. Village

Dave Taylor is chair of a committee that will gather information and report back to Council in September on the city vs. village issue. Taylor stated that he has received new material from the Michigan Municipal League on the topic. He related that two municipalities looked into becoming a city last year as opposed to 22 villages with interest in becoming a city this year.

#### Charter Revision

Pfeifer will be working with Attorney Ryan on a recommendation for Charter revisions to be placed on the ballot of the next Village Election. A report will be provided by September 15, 2004.

#### Trees

Murphy stated that the Tree Committee is working on the bid document for a tree replacement program to go out sometime in July.

The deadline for receiving a written report on the Village-wide tree planting program was moved to August 1. It will be placed on a Council meeting agenda for discussion.

RV Storage

A report generated by code enforcement officer Dan Gosselin regarding problems associated with storage of recreation vehicles was forwarded to the Zoning Board of Appeals. At its last study session, Council agreed not to pursue tightening of the ordinance regulating RVs on the basis that problems are being handled through code enforcement. There was no indication that the ZBA addressed this topic at its last meeting. The item will remain on the action plan for now.

Southfield Road Corridor Study

This item is on hold awaiting recommendations from the Strategic Planning Development Committee.

Fourteen Mile Road Corridor Study

Murphy met with representatives of Independent Bank relative to providing fixed-rate low interest loans to Beverly Hills residents for home improvements. Loans will be available for exterior improvements only and will not be based on income. Independent Bank anticipates having literature available soon on a program to have these loans available at the end of summer.

Council has requested that Dan Gosselin prepare a report describing conditions on Kirkshire and on Fourteen Mile Roads in terms of code enforcement. The report will be available at the next study session.

Domzal commented that resident Bunker Kelly took it upon himself to take a look at the situation on 14 Mile Road, take photographs and speak with residents. Kelly mentioned that some residents felt that they had not been included in discussions about the corridor plan. Domzal clarified that residents of 14 Mile Road have received notification of Village meetings held to discuss the corridor study and proposed overlay district.

Council will schedule at least one more information meeting with notification mailed to residents along 14 Mile Road advising them of a forum to present a low interest loan program and discuss the proposed overlay district idea. The meeting will be held in September on a date other than a regular council meeting day. Council members are interested in what 14 Mile Road residents have to say.

Koss thinks that Council should make a firm decision on whether or not to proceed with an overlay district so that residents are not in a situation whereby they are unsure of whether to reinvest in their homes. Domzal responded that the work product will be filed at the Village offices if a decision is not made to pursue an overlay district. Koss volunteered to talk to Fourteen Mile Road residents to determine their interests and concerns.

### Strategic Plan

The Personnel Committee is scheduled to report to Council in October with recommendations on the next step with respect to implementing a strategic plan for the Village. Koss related that the Strategic Planning Development Committee is continuing to work on determining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Village and key strategic issues for Beverly Hills in the next three to five years. The Committee anticipates that a report will be completed by September.

### Community Relations

There was discussion at the last meeting on improving communications between Council and the community. This topic ties into some of the budgetary items such as the newsletter and calendar.

There were specific suggestions made in terms of improving communications. Domzal mentioned that municipal cable channel 15 is an under-utilized asset for communicating community information. Murphy informed Council that Leslie Helwig from Bloomfield Community Television (BCTV) has offered the services of an intern from Michigan State University who is working on a degree in broadcast communications. Catherine Yeh has met with Beverly Hills department heads to develop programming on topics such as recycling education and public safety. Yeh will be assisting with script writing and filming the segments at no cost to the Village.

Woodrow questioned whether community information could be posted on the Internet for those people who do not subscribe to Comcast cable television. Murphy responded that he is looking into means of updating the Village web site.

Koss stated that resident Fran Knorr has suggested placing tubes at a location in Beverly Park to hold flyers relaying current community information. Another suggestion was made to post pertinent community news on a kiosk or information board in the park.

Pfeifer mentioned that the Cable Board is looking into webcasting its meetings as well as the meetings of its member communities.

It was proposed that the Village should continue to look for opportunities to run stories on topics of interest to the community in the Birmingham Eagle, Eccentric, and Free Press newspapers.

Administration will develop the ideas presented and report back on progress being made at the next study session.

### Safety Issues

It was mentioned that Downey has voiced concerns about safety issues in the Village with particular interest in the striping of crosswalks. Domzal referred to the intersection of Fourteen Mile and Lahser Roads as an example of a safety risk in terms of visual obstruction for vehicles and pedestrian hazards. McCleary commented that it is the

responsibility of homeowners to maintain their right-of-way in terms of obstructions to vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Domzal maintains that it is an administrative responsibility to identify potential safety risk in the community. Administration was directed to ask Dan Gosselin to prepare a survey to identify areas where there may be safety concerns and handle any code enforcement that is necessary. A report to Council on what has transpired would follow.

#### Budget Discussion

Domzal reviewed that the budget/finance subcommittee of Council met to review issues discussed at the June 3 meeting of Council and provide recommendations in terms of further budget reductions or increased revenue. The subcommittee looked at short term (FY 2004/05) cost reductions and revenue increases totaling \$100,000. In the intermediate term, there has been discussion about placing a library millage issue on the ballot (1 mil) that would result in a \$450,000 increase to the general fund. Staffing issues are being studied in terms of the Public Safety Department and the Village administrative staff. Two separate reports will be provided to Council within the next 30 days. Domzal remarked that staffing is more of a long-term issue that may realize some cost savings but should be viewed in terms of good practices for the Village.

Woodrow reported that the goal of the subcommittee was to identify a short term cost reduction/revenue increase of \$100,000. A revenue increase of about \$20,000 will be available this fiscal year due to income from building renovations in the Village. A new service instituted by the Village to issue passports will result in a revenue increase of about \$3,000. It has been suggested that the Village general fund charge the water and sewer fund for the full cost of the general fund administrative services. An enterprise fund can be charged for the actual cost that the general fund provides. This will result in an increase to the general fund of about \$31,000.

In terms of cutting costs, the Village will be approaching the Baldwin Public Library to ask for a reduction in the amount stipulated in the contract for library service.

Domzal questioned the subcommittee's recommendation on placing a library millage issue on the ballot, which would result in the return to the general fund of \$425,000 in about a year after the voters approve the library millage. It is his understanding that, once Council determines that the general fund is not going to fund library service, the issue is whether or not a new millage would be approved to provide for Baldwin library funding. There was discussion as to whether this was the intent of Council or if the Village should supply residents with library services somewhere. There was agreement that Council would like to learn the sense of the community on how they view the library.

Murphy stated that the Village has the ability under the law to charge up to 1 mil for library service without a vote of the people. A community can also collect up to 2 mils for rubbish collection and removal.

Woodrow commented that a vote for the library millage would be a vote to increase taxes so that the Village can continue with a service that it currently provides. Beverly Hills cannot afford to run the Village as it has for the last 15 years with the revenue that is now coming in. Domzal added that the Village was never obligated to support the library service. It was done because the Village could afford to do so.

The Village is required to give the library a two-year notice to opt out of the contract. There is a mutual agreement clause whereby both parties can agree to end the contract in six months. It was suggested that the Library Director be informed that Council is considering a millage vote on library service when Murphy meets with her to request a reduction in this year's contract fee.

Council was in agreement to defer making a determination on ballot language until there is a clear consensus of Council and until the Village Manager has another meeting with the Baldwin Library Director. The suggestion was made that a member of Council attend that meeting to impress upon the library the seriousness of the situation.

Murphy related that the Southfield Library is interested in having a relationship with Beverly Hills. Copies of the contract with Baldwin Library will be provided to those Council members who do not have one.

Woodrow stated that another issue discussed by the subcommittee is an attempt to renegotiate the contract with Great Lakes Waste. Great Lakes will have a proposal to administration later this week that will probably involve a modest rollback in cost tied to an extension of the contract. The Village will also consider suggestions from the contractor in terms of providing rubbish collection in the Village. Great Lakes may be able to achieve better utilization by collecting for three days rather than four days a week.

At Council's request, Murphy will look into the accounting of current rubbish collection and recycling costs and will provide clarification on this topic at the next study session.

The finance/budget subcommittee discussed employee concessions that will save the Village an additional \$15,000-\$18,000 this year. These savings are partially due to changes in health care coverage benefits. Murphy stated that administration is working on expanding a third alternate health care program that has been available only to public safety officers. Employee participation in the COPS Trust Program could result in a savings of \$1,000-\$2,500 per employee.

Woodrow reported that the subcommittee does not recommend discontinuing the Village calendar. What is proposed is to print half as many calendars this year and have them available for pick up at the Village office rather than mailing them to every household. This would save \$2,000 in printing costs and \$1,400 in postage. Council was in agreement to reduce the number of calendars printed and eliminate the postage cost.

It was questioned whether advertising in the calendar should be used to supplement the cost. This has been discussed previously, and the consensus of Council is to keep the calendar informational with no sponsors.

Woodrow concluded that, with the revenue increases noted, employee concessions, and other miscellaneous savings, the subcommittee came close to the \$100,000 mark without concessions from the Baldwin Library or Great Lakes Waste.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Sharon Tischler commented that the Clerk's Conference held last week was informational and beneficial. She submitted written information to Council about a web based community calendar and suggested that Council take a look at [www.clarkstoncalendar.org](http://www.clarkstoncalendar.org). The site is a joint project between the Charter Township of Independence, Clarkston Chamber of Commerce and Clarkston Community Schools. It is an online calendar that provides a user friendly, up-to-date calendar of all community events including local events, government meetings and area activities. Tischler suggested that Beverly Hills might want to consider investing in the creation of an online calendar that can be modified and kept current.

Tischler expressed the view that, if residents had the opportunity to purchase a non-resident library card and bring Beverly Hills their bill, the Village would not spend \$450,000.

Tischler stated that there is a 1% administrative fee that can be levied on the Village's tax bill without the approval of the residents. A number of communities levy this fee as a way to offset costs. It does not have to be levied every year.

With regard to elections, Tischler stated that the Village can place an issue on the ballot of any election occurring in the jurisdiction without waiting for the next September election.

Art Liberty commented on the library use in the community noting that a person with a library card from one community can use any library in the same cooperative consortium.

Jill Sickels commented on recycling practices of residents. Questions on the types of items that can and cannot be recycled were addressed by Council. Sickels was informed that white paper can be recycled as of July 1. Sickels commented that she is not impressed with the quality of reference materials available at Baldwin Library. However, she expressed concern that a group such as senior citizens could lose library service. She agrees with taking the question to the people to learn how much they use the library and what they would be willing to pay for it.

Bunker Kelly commented on the quality programming available on Bloomfield Hills Channel 18. Kelly suggested that Council and administration clarify the costs for rubbish collection and recycling in order to understand the best way to approach a new contract.

Kelly referred to Council's short term goal of reducing the budget by another \$100,000 and suggested that Council could have done a better job of trying to cut expenditures.

Woodrow responded that Council has been cutting items out of the budget and reducing the expenses of this Council and Village until there is nothing left to cut. He challenged Kelly to find something and bring it forward for Council to consider. Woodrow remarked that the remaining choices are to cut services or raise taxes.

Kelly suggested that Council play hardball and send the Baldwin Library a letter giving them notice that Beverly Hills wants to terminate its library service contract two years from now.

Domzal thanked the finance/budget subcommittee for its work on identifying further revenue and reduction in expenditures in the budget. He suggested that Council meets in about 30 days to consider staffing studies, review additional information regarding the solid waste vendor and cost accounting information, and to discuss the library service contract with Baldwin Library.

A Council study session was scheduled for Thursday, July 29 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Woodrow, second by Pfeifer, to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Motion passed.

**Dave Domzal**  
**Council President**

**Ellen E. Marshall**  
**Village Clerk**

**Susan Bernard**  
**Recording Secretary**