



memo

To: Clerk of Council Michelle Blazak
From: Mayor Thomas J. Coyne, Jr.
CC: All Council Members
Date: August 5, 2015
Re: Veto of Ordinance #9967-2015

In accordance with Section 3:03 B of the Charter of the City of Brook Park.
I hereby veto Ordinance #9967-2015.

My objections are as follows:

1. Ordinance #9967-2015 is insufficient. It will not provide the revenue required to meet the immediate needs of the City's aging streets and sewers. It most certainly will not provide the resources necessary to allow long term planning and strategic financing of the City's infrastructure problems.

Upon inspection this Spring of the City's streets, the City Engineer prepared a cost estimate to repair and replace our most distressed pavement. That estimated cost totaled \$9,954,800.00 (see attached Engineer's Report of March 17, 2015).

In addition I requested the City Engineer to review our current street data base 2014 (see attached) and ascertain what projects needed to be undertaken over the next 2 years and the funding required. (see attached Engineers Report dated July 24, 2015).

The funding necessary to address pavement rating categories 22 thru 26, less \$1,201,598.00 required for the City facilities total \$36,574,373.00. Engineering and inspection customary costs total 10% of construction costs. That would bring total pavement project costs to over \$40,000,000.00 just to get current. In addition, waterline replacement may be required at a cost of \$235.00 per linear foot. As an example, the Leslie project of approximately \$960,000.00, the watermain replacement costs a total of \$387,783.00 (see attached Contract 1305 dated May 29, 2015) this is almost 1/3 of the project cost.

While pavement issues are quite obvious to the public, sewer issues are less obvious and not visible, but are none the less real and costly. If left unaddressed they pose our greatest threat to property values and citizens piece of mind. I requested the City Engineer prepare an update on the sewer project requirements completed, in progress and yet to be completed work, excluding the Ford Motor storm water retention basin. Our funding requirements for sewer projects total over \$11,000,000.00 (see Project List Report dated July 24, 2014). In recent sewer inspections we are seeing substantial calcium buildups in various parts of the City. Our historical evidence will demonstrate our sewer needs are infinite. Maintenance costs will be continual and new construction will be in constant demand.

2. While sunset provisions seem to be expedient to portions of constituents, in fact they are merely a game of political darts in the dark. They serve as an impediment to comprehensive financial strategy. They ultimately, almost always fail the expectations of the public in the end. Voters bark in disgust "THEY ARE ALWAYS ASKING FOR MORE MONEY".

Sunset provisions have some merit when applied to general operational levies. Operational needs are in constant state of change. It is these tax measures that create the greatest voter skepticism of how their taxes are being expended.

As initially proposed, this tax measure would provide a permanent funding source for road and sewer improvements only. These funds are prohibited from being expended for any other purpose. I proposed it in that form and structure because it is the best means by which we can rebuild our City.

The proposed sunset provision would sink vital future City Improvement projects into a continual political quagmire. Elected officials have the ultimate responsibility to challenge the electorate to meet their ultimate responsibility at the ballot box.

Sunset gimmicks can only lead to further decline. Voters must make a permanent commitment to create and maintain the kind of City in which they want to live. To do so they must provide the resources necessary.

3. Ordinance #9967 as amended is clearly a futile exercise in political separation. Politicians seeking survival at the expense of effecting long term resolutions of the City's infrastructure needs. Political storm clouds hover over our City during every election season. There is so much more at stake this year. City Council's continual avoidance of the reality of the inevitable defies logic. It is contrary to sound public policy. It threatens our City's survival. City Council seeks separation from the Mayor hoping to appease the opposition, voices of the Hometown News. Council has had no voice. They have sat silent on the sidelines. Since I have returned as Mayor, my proposals have been defeated by the voters. Denied their approval, I carried on and made the tough choices necessary. The voters have experienced the unintended consequences of their decisions...programs cut, services curtailed, and workforce reduction. I must accept their reaction to my decisions. Council and the residents can blame me, but it doesn't change the cost of our City's infrastructure needs.

City Council and the voters need to take a good look in the mirror. Each should recognize their responsibility for our City's current state. Council's failure to communicate with the voters and voter's failure to demand more from their City Council than just neighborhood complaint resolution. Council does not need to separate themselves from the Mayor...they need to reconnect with our citizens.

The amendments to Ordinance #9967 were orchestrated in a vacuum. There was no discussion with the administration, no debate on the merits of the amendments or the consequences of their enactment. No compromise. No communication. No open discussion...just the same old politics. Even fellow Council members were left uninformed and subject to last minute machination. It is perfectly clear City Council is not serious about facing the voters on these issues. A divided City Council separating themselves from the Administration is not a climate conducive to gain voter approval.

Finally, I could blame other elected officials for the mess I inherited. That is the very reason I sought to return and rebuild the City I love. I implore City Council to join me and fight those forces that continue to bring our City down. This ordinance with the sunset provisions fails to address the magnitude and urgency of our problems.