

The Hokah City Council again found itself debating a parking measure for the Main Street municipal lots after discovering that its October vote did not conform to State Statutes.

City Attorney Skip Wieser informed the Council that with a quorum of five officials, three affirmative votes would be needed for ratification. With Mayor Mike Walsh abstaining, the October move tallied only two votes in favor, thus falling one short and putting the parking matter on hold.

To clear up any future procedural questions, Wieser said that the mayor was not required to abstain and that statutes give the mayor equal representation on the council, as well as a vote in all matters.

The parking issue surfaced last year when Police Chief Robert Schuldt noticed that vehicles had been left in municipal lots for an extended length of time. This became especially critical following snowstorms because the vehicles obstructed snow removal operations. Since no ordinance existed to remedy the problem, Schuldt first brought the issue to the council last October at which time they issued a 48-hour parking duration.

After finding out the measure didn't pass legal muster, the council revisited the measure at this month's meeting, again instructing Wieser to draft an ordinance that specified a 48-hour limit. Council member Cindy Pfiffner voiced support for the measure but expressed concern about haphazard parking practices. "I've had people call me about this issue—how people park in the lot," she told the council. "A parking lot should be safe and easily accessible, I'm not sure ours is."

After a short discussion, the council opted to include stall markings in the lots; one vehicle per stall with a temporary exemption for delivery. All council members voted affirmatively except Don Bissen. After the meeting, Bissen explained that he lives next door and would have to find remote parking for his equipment. "I have a 60-foot truck and trailer that I'll have to park two blocks away," he said.

In other business, Houston County Environmental Services Director Rick Frank reported that revenue continued to outpace expenditures, a situation that would prevent a hike in disposal fees. Frank also announced a county-wide fluorescent light collection on April 10. He also said that household hazardous waste could be disposed at the Recreation Center in Hokah on May, 18, Spring Grove on June 6, and La Crescent on August 22.

Librarian Shari Carlson asked the council to authorize a community project based on an architectural theme and using the two stumps in the park. She suggested getting kids involved in creating something as simple as a hollowed-out stump with flowers to a more complex design. She also told the council that she had been authorized by the library board to again be at the park on Tuesdays during the summer from 9:00 am until noon for library activities.

An extensive police report for last month included three traffic stops, a gas drive-off investigation, a juvenile runaway located and returned home, and four vehicle parking complaints.