

Council plans special meeting to discuss water rates

by Durward D. Jones

With a call to order Mayor Mike Mortimore began the Town council meeting Tuesday night with the Pledge of Allegiance and the meeting was soon under way.

A review of Mac's Bar request for a catering permit for their Customer Appreciation Bash to be held on September 12 had a few concerns about noise levels but the council was assured they would be kept at decent levels for the evening. A motion was passed in favor for the permit.

Heath Overfield, the town engineer, had several updates to report. There was a concern for a sewer line on 1st Street between Canyon Concrete and the sewer plant that had a crack in

the line and river water was seeping in. Progress is being made for the Cedar Ridge water tank to be painted.

Chief of Police Steve Shay had little to report at the meeting. There has been some mischievous behavior by a few town residents with fireworks, other than that it has been pretty quiet.

Ernie Slagle reported that some much needed new equipment had arrived and was ready to be used. Then shifting towards a local concern was the removal of the rose bushes from Bicentennial Park. Many of the removed bushes have been relocated to the Town Shop for the public to come and gather for their own gardens and yards.

The rest of the meeting there was discussion

about the new water rate increase. After some discussion a motion was passed to defeat the new rate increase. The mayor felt there are still too many outstanding issues left unresolved for it to be implemented. A new work session was planned for Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 5 p.m. at Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public.

Lastly, Tony Larson brought up a notice that the Joint Powers Board for the Armory would like to disband. The board consists of the town, county, school, and recreation boards. The reasoning is the recreation board is unable to gain grants for building upkeep and improvements due to the so many entities in the Joint Powers Board. The town was in favor for the disband after the town attorney reviews the paperwork.



photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

Turbo turtles trek to the finish line

Phil Scheel scoops up winning turtles during the Great American Turbo Turtle Trek Saturday while turtle owners eagerly watch the races. Top winners include: Grand prize - \$1,000 in cash - Suzanne Samelson, 2nd place - \$500 in cash - Pinnacle Bank, 3rd place - Rifle – Dick Hall, 4th place - Weekend stay in Casper - Sean Miller and 5th place - Red Pole Lodge stay - Laura Loughlin. The turtle trek is sponsored by the Thermopolis Rotary Club.

Main Street Thermopolis discusses splash park

by Holly Thomas

Thursday evening held the first Main Street Thermopolis meeting in the new office at Central Bank and Trust and proved to be very productive. The meeting started with a review of pending bills which included an invoice of \$70.69 from Print Zone for Art Stroll maps and Oktobrewfest posters, an invoice of \$400 from Tegeler and Associates for liability insurance for the upcoming brewfest, and various receipts for the set-up of the Central Bank and Trust office. The board approved the payment of all invoices.

Event ideas for Small Town Saturday in conjunction with American Express were bounced around by all in attendance. Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Meri Ann Rush discussed the idea of creating a large puzzle decorated by school kids and dispersing the puzzle pieces around town for shoppers to collect and return to a central location for chamber bucks. It was suggested that instead of having the downtown Christmas tree lit up in advance, use the tree as a reveal event in itself and invite citizens to decorate it. How ornaments could be made and exactly what tree to decorate was discussed in some detail. All ideas were tabled for the time being to continue discussion at a later date, but board president Stefanie Gilbert stated that with more than 10 businesses participating, Main Street Manager Lea Schoenewald would fill out the appropriate forms online to finish signing up.

Town Council board member Dusty Lewis made contact with Gilbert regarding their involvement with the town “splash park.” Not all members were aware of the water feature the town had been planning but, after some discussion of their upcoming plans, the majority of Main Street members felt that a splash park was not the best investment to beautify downtown Thermopolis. Gilbert compiled a list of other ideas for town beautification (including tree maintenance and watering, down town lighting, new holiday lights, and the addition of benches and trash cans). Director of Tourism, Amanda Moeller commented, “We should build upon what we have instead of adding another feature that will need even more maintenance.”

Downtown business, Needful Things, was announced as the newest recipient of the Historic Architecture Assistance Fund (HAAF) grant. Being awarded this grant means that Main Street will hire an architect and provide the business with an assessment and feasibility study for the building. The business owners will then be able to make an informed decision about how to improve their historic building. Needful Things is not the only Thermopolis downtown business to receive this grant – owners of the Klink building received the HAAF grant in 2014.

Gilbert updated the group on her workings with the Senior Center to get more involvement for downtown

events. Chanda Waddell, Director at the Hot Springs County Senior Citizens Center, recommended making a presentation to the projects council as well as a lunch presentation to attendees. The board concluded this would be a good effort and made plans to present on September 15 for the project council and September 29 for a general lunch presentation.

Wyoming Main Street will be holding a Best Practices Workshop October 8 and 9 in Laramie and Rawlins for Main Street participants to visit successful downtown communities. Gilbert commented that the effort was similar to the National workshop she and Schoenewald had attended earlier in the year, but that this workshop would offer a closer look at efforts done more locally. The state committee asked for at least three members of the community to attend. Gilbert recommended that the board request town council presence for an “eye opener” on what other Wyoming communities – such as National Main Street winner Rawlins – are doing with their downtowns. Several board members volunteered to attend and Gilbert agreed to contact town council members.

Before closing the meeting, the board agreed to submit the \$85 payment to become a Chamber of Commerce member and scheduled the next meeting one week late on October 1 for a post-Oktobrewfest review. An Oktobrewfest committee meeting was held at the close of the Main Street Thermopolis meeting.

Oktobrewfest taking shape

by Holly Thomas

Vendors are lining up for Main Street's upcoming Oktobrewfest event to be held Saturday, September 26.

Six non-food vendors have made commitments and will feature handmade crafts and gifts, jewelry, Scentsy products, and 307 Beard products.

Additional sponsor booths will line the streets along with seven food vendors providing guests with everything from brats to kettle corn and German chocolate funnel cakes to caramel apples.

Main Street Thermopolis board president, Stefanie Gilbert is still encouraging more local non-food vendors to purchase booth space to highlight their unique, local crafts.

The Farmers Market will continue to run Saturday mornings until October and as the two events will be overlapping downtown areas, Gilbert commented that inviting the group to participate in Oktobrewfest might be a good idea. She made plans to contact the Master Gardeners about sharing downtown space for both events.

Keep your eye out for Oktobrewfest posters going up around town as well as neighboring communities. Main Street members are working hard to get the word out about this fun event which will have fun and games for kids and adults.

A kid's play area will be designated on the South end of 5th Street and adult games will be spread out with tournaments for the popular game “Corn Hole” and minnow races.

Music will be streaming throughout the event. The original scheduled band unfortunately cancelled, but Gilbert announced that she had lined up Worland band Shark Twain who has a large following and will hopefully bring spectators from the North.

A pick-up/drop-off area for the Senior Center sponsored by Safe Rides and Teton Distributing was decided to be at the turnaround on 6th Street and Broadway. The board decided this was a highly visible location that would encourage more participation in safe rides while being close to main events.

Main Street Manager, Lea Schoenewald, has been lining up historic tours for the event. She has been in contact with business owners from Needful Things, One Eyed Buffalo, Owl Creek Graphics, Storyteller, and Black Bear Café.

Final details for the event included setting a deadline of September 10 for ordering Oktobrewfest t-shirts which will hold the same logo as last year but on a heather burnt orange shirt and approving the purchase of plastic mugs.

Both items were approved and a follow-up meeting was scheduled for September 9.

