

**CITY OF ROCK FALLS**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**Monday, January 28, 2013 – 6:30pm**  
**Minutes**

Those present at the meeting were as follows: Mayor David Blanton, Aldermen Brian Snow, Lee Folsom, Daehle Reitzel, Glen Kuhlemier, Mark Vandersnick, Jim Schuneman, John Watts, Robbin Blackert – City Administrator and Sylvia Frey.

Alderman Absent: Alderman David Hand

Department Heads Present: Ted Padilla (Street), Chief Mike Kuelper (Police)

Audience Present: Several members of the RRDA (Rock River Development Authority), Friends of the Hennepin Canal, bike path group, George Bellovics (IDNR-IL Dept of Natural Resources), Cathy Brunner (RF Tourism) and Kiran Sood (Reporter-SVM)

Mayor Blanton asked Alderman Schuneman to proceed with the discussion on the Hennepin Canal.

Alderman Schuneman began by saying 'thank you' to all the members of the various groups, Cathy Brunner and George Bellovics for coming to this meeting tonight.

He asked Cathy Brunner to present information on a recent meeting being held in Geneseo IL. Both Cathy and Mayor Blanton attended a meeting in Geneseo sponsored by the Friends of the Hennepin Canal discussing the canal cruising on the Hennepin Canal in Geneseo, Illinois. At this meeting, an economic impact study was presented by Western IL University. Cathy mentioned this study only used secondary sources and no social or ecological data were included – main objective of this study was to encourage boating on the canal to increase the tourism economy. Mayor stated the professor would be able to back up all the information on the sources in the study if anyone had any questions.

Mayor asked Jim Marks, RRDA member, if he would be able give him the amount of volunteer hours his group logged for 2012. Jim Marks stated there were 751 volunteer hours for last year.

Alderman Schuneman then asked George Bellovics to give everyone some information on his department's overview and ongoing responsibilities of the canal. George stated his department is responsible for 25 counties which have waterways feeding into the Mississippi River. Several cities have leases with the DNR for their canal waterways and the DNR is always willing to work with cities and any volunteer groups in their pursuit of cleaning/maintaining these same waterways. He stated to the volunteers in the audience that their input is important to the city because the IDNR will be working with the city in order to bring about future tourism to the canal.

Discussion continued with George Bellovics stating the intent of his department is to maintain the canal waterways for recreational purposes. The Renaissance Hennepin Canal group will be working on restoring 3 locks (22,23 and 24) at this time to clear them for water flow and clean up purposes from Rock Falls to Geneseo. He stated Geneseo is working on 'English Canal Boating' to bring more tourism and interest into their community.

During his discussion, the members viewed photos from the Colona IL canal parkway; whereas, this city doesn't have a park district and has to fund their cleanup through the city's budget.

Alderman Schuneman gave everyone a copy of a flow spreadsheet detailing the responsibilities between the city, IDNR and offset volunteer groups for discussion.

Discussion continued with Alderman Schuneman asking George Bellovics about various aspects of the canal, including but not limited to, E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge (structure is found to be stable by DNR), boat ramp, trees (unsafe-DNR will determine condition), Ash trees (could be included in lease), grants

available with federal government (DNR will apply when available), outbuildings (historical recognition made), general mowing and towpath conditions.

Chief Kuelper addressed the issue of policing divisions (Rock Falls – State Police) on the canal at present. Portions of the canal are state controlled; whereas, State Police would be contacted. Local dispatchers work with State Police when 911 emergency calls or other calls come in for incidents along the canal. Once the canal from Rock River to IL Rte 40 is annexed into the city, Rock Falls Police will patrol this area.

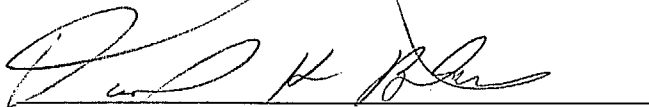
All of these issues can be addressed and implemented into the negotiated lease between the city and IDNR.

Alderman Schuneman stated this meeting was set up to bring together everyone interested in preserving the canal way and to continue to work towards finalizing the lease between the city and IDNR for future generations.

Mayor Blanton suggested the volunteer groups being represented tonight bring a list of their expectations to a future meeting for further discussion. Council members agreed and will be looking forward to another meeting.

With no further business, meeting was adjourned at 8:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David H. Blanton", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor David H. Blanton