

Pigeon Problem A Local Concern

By Jim O'Day
Of The Western Breeze

What's someone to do about a pigeon problem in town?

That was the concern expressed by Bill and Pat Hagen to the Cut Bank City Council at its meeting Monday night.

According to Bill Hagen, a number of pigeons have taken up residence on his property at 26 2nd Ave. S.W., and throughout his neighborhood. They leave droppings everywhere, he said, and are also threatening to ruin his roof. In addition, he said they can't be poisoned or shot in town. "We can't get rid of them," he told the council, adding that pigeon problems in Cut Bank will only worsen if the old Greeley elevator is taken down as it serves as a home for many of the birds.

Members of the council stated that pigeon problems tend to get worse when grain is being hauled to the local elevators. However, the aldermen weren't exactly sure how to get rid of the birds. City Attorney Selden Frisbee recommended contacting the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Bill Hagen, meanwhile, said that even if the pigeons were trapped, "you'd have to dispose of them because they'd come back." Pat Hagen said they'd tried various ways to rid their property of the troublesome birds and "nothing's worked." Added Bill Hagen, "I'd sure like to do something with them. It's terrible." Frisbee said he'd contact the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, then report back to the Hagens with his findings.

Also Monday, the city council tabled action again regarding a possible business license for area merchants.

Alderwoman Marion Culleton said she'd talked with some local merchants about the idea, but wouldn't be able to discuss the matter with the board of directors of the Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce until next week. In the meantime, she said she'd continue to do some telephone polling.

During the course of discussions, there were some concerns raised about how certain groups such as those selling their goods at bazaars would be handled, as well as wholesale distributors and people selling products out of their homes. Alderman Phil Cheety said a local insurance agent asked him, "What good is this going to do me?... He felt it would only be an additional tax." McCauley and Alderman Allen Brown, meanwhile, wondered how such a business license would be monitored, and if someone would have to be hired specifically to make sure it was being paid.

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In another matter, the council approved a building permit for Ron Armbruster to install a larger door at the Cut Bank Greenhouse. It also received a building permit request from Schane Schwint to build a storage shed and dog kennel on a property at 222 South Central Ave. In his application, Schwint stated the kennel was being built with the intent of breeding dogs, which Frisbee said would be a violation of a city ordinance prohibiting animals from being maintained in the city limits for commercial purposes. The council said it would accept the building permit if it didn't state the kennel was being constructed for the purpose of breeding dogs.

In other news from Monday's meeting, the city council:

---Tabled a bid on a new police car. The only bid received was that from Bell Motor Co. of Cut Bank for \$18,900 with trade-in of a 1990 Chevrolet Caprice, or \$20,980 without trade. According to bid specifications, the car was supposed to have power windows. Dave Bell of Bell Motor Co., however, said he wasn't able to get power windows in the car he bid, but he would see if they could be installed, and at what additional costs. The council then tabled the bid until hearing back from Bell, at which time the bid will be reviewed and either accepted or rejected.

---Gave City Superintendent Lorin Lowry the authority to purchase a new 60" Lawn Genie Flail pickup mower (power rake) at a cost of \$4,350 plus \$345 for freight. The unit will replace a 12-year-old model that is not repairable. Also in his report, Lowry addressed: an upcoming energy audit of city facilities; chip seal and crack filling plans for this year; the hiring of Brenda Robertson at the Civic Center; and other recent jobs done by the city crew. He also provided the council with a pay schedule for water turn-ons. The cost during regular business hours (8 a.m. until 5 p.m.) is \$25 for turn-on fees, while on weekends, holidays and nights, the fee will be one hour of overtime for office personnel, a two hour minimum overtime charge for the on-call person at \$27 per hour and the regular turn-on fee of \$25. By a 3-1 vote (with Cheety dissenting), Lowry was granted permission to attend a lighting workshop March 20 in Kalispell, along with a viewing of Polson's lake-aid wind processor being used for its lagoons. Lowry was also given permission to attend a Safe Drinking Water Act seminar in Helena on March 8 and a Supervisory Skills Seminar in Great Falls on March 9.

---Heard a brief report from Frisbee regarding legal items pending involving the City of Cut Bank. Frisbee was also granted the authority to terminate a lease being used for grazing purposes near the city's lagoon. There was some concern expressed about how horses in the area were damaging the dikes and lagoon. McCauley reported on an informal meeting he had recently with Mark Black of General Mills regarding the old Greeley elevator building. McCauley said that while General Mills leases the land, it is not the owner of the property. Thus, there is some question as to whom would be responsible for liability should a problem occur. In another matter, McCauley reported back to the council on his findings with officials of Executone. Last week, the council tabled a claim for \$629 to Executone for telephone equipment recently purchased by the city until some questions could be answered. McCauley said the matter still hasn't been resolved.

---Received a monthly update from Don Omdahl of TLC Recovery, who said his firm may be doing some D.U.I. training in Browning in the near future. He also said he had been invited to address students in the Cut Bank school system.

---Heard a report from Brown regarding findings at a recent school board meeting in which school safety issues were discussed. Brown was selected as the council's representative on a committee that will look into possible problem areas. Other committee members will consist of representatives of the local school district and law enforcement, as well as parents and students. The committee was requested after an Anna Jeffries student received minor injuries in a vehicle-pedestrian accident on the corner of 4th Ave. S.E. and 2nd St. two weeks ago. Brown said that it's important that speed limits around the schools are observed and that crosswalks are marked. He also suggested educating youngsters not to jay-walk or run in front of cars. Other members of the council felt it was important to have officers patrol the school zones heavier. In a related matter, the council agreed to pay overtime so that more officers can be on duty during tournaments the next two weekends in Cut Bank.

---Learned that negotiations are continuing to purchase a track of land in Bum's Coulee that is owned by Nancy Cox (Getter) Walker. Other correspondence included an update from Jewell Wolk concerning next month's Story Telling Conference in Cut Bank and the minutes from the Jan. 11 Park Board meeting. Also, Cheety reported on last week's meeting of the Local Government Study Commission. He said the commission will meet the third Thursday of each month with the next gathering on March 16 at 7 p.m. A public hearing is tentatively set for March 23 at 7 p.m. Also, McCauley informed the council the Glacier County Conservation District Dinner will be March 14.