

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
October 5, 2020
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm. Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Council Members Steve King, Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller,
Laura Helle, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative
Services Tom Dankert, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Police Chief David
McKichan, Park and Rec Director Kevin Nelson and City Clerk
Ann Kasel

STAFF APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Human
Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director
Steven Lang

OTHERS APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Austin Utilities Director Mark Nibaur, Austin Daily Herald

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Right of Way Proposed Ordinance

Public Works Director Steven Lang presented a proposed right-of-way management ordinance which was drafted on a League of MN Cities draft. The ordinance is designed to preserve the City's right-of-way, keep it in good repair and free from unnecessary encumbrances, ensure minimal disruptions to the public, business and the City and ensure that permittees properly restore the work area once the work has been completed. He stated many cities have adopted a similar ordinance to keep the right-of-way in good order for the City.

He stated that the first step in the process is to get the contractors registered and licensed. Then the contractors would need to pull a right-of-way permit for the work they are going to complete with a plan for job. There will be fees associated with the license and the permit. Fees would not be charged to government entities.

He noted that there is a provision in the ordinance that will require any abandoned utilities to be removed if they are not in use.

Austin Utilities Director Mark Nibaur stated Austin Utilities has reviewed the document and is working with the City to make the ordinance work for both entities. He stated there will be additional documents for review and provided some proposed modifications to the ordinance. He stated Austin Utilities has concerns about the undergrounding requirement for electric utilities. He stated it would be approximately \$130,000,000 to place all the electric underground.

Council Member Helle asked Mr. Lang to work with Austin Utilities to provide a medium area for both parties.

For Council information only; additional information will be provided at a future work session.

Item No. 2 – 2021 Budget Discussion

Mr. Dankert stated he had not received any comments from Council on the 2021 budget.

Item No. 3 – 2021 Capital Improvement Plan

The item will be on the October 19, 2020 work session.

Item No. 4 - Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the budget working group met on the tree trimming issue and the added cost to the City would be \$75,000 in the 2021 budget to keep the current employees as tree trimmers. The budget group voted to move forward with bidding the item to private contractors. He stated the group also discussed the parks master plan and a tree replacement plan.

He also stated the League of Minnesota Cities will have a meeting at the YMCA from 10-11:00.

Item No. 5 – Open Discussion

Council Member Laura Helle stated the Council should let the City of Austin employees know they appreciate them. She would like to make efforts to go to the departments and express appreciation to them. She stated she would be in charge of the efforts.

Council Member King spoke in support of the gesture.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adjourning the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk