

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
January 19, 2021
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta, Michael Postma, Oballa Oballa and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan

STAFF APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Park and Rec Director Kevin Nelson, City Attorney Craig Byram, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, City Clerk Ann Kasel, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace and Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann

OTHERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Austin Daily Herald, Elaine Hansen, Honorary Council Member Santino Deng, Tom Yezzi, Jeffrey Robbins, John Garry and Kent McCoy

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving the agenda with a modified proposed development agreement under the public hearing item for Nu-Tek. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving Council minutes from January 4, 2021. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

Cab Driver: Christi Heuton, 1015 4th Avenue NE

Cab Driver: Michael Johnson, PO Box 82, Brownsdale

Excavation: Wagner Construction Company, 2209 4th Street NW

Exempt Gambling (raffle): Austin Area Chamber of Commerce on March 5, 2021

Exempt Gambling (raffle): Austin Youth Hockey Association on February 7, 2021
Food: Austin Dairy Queen, 1200 Oakland Avenue West
Food: Salvation Army, 409 1st Avenue NE
Hotel/Motel: Sterling Motel, 1507 West Oakland Avenue
Hotel/Motel: Rodeway Inn, 805 21st Street NE
Shuttle Owner & Driver: David Hunn, 702 36th Drive SW

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Investment Report.

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for an application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for a grant under the Minnesota Investment Fund Program. City Administrator Craig Clark stated there is a proposed \$35 million project for the construction of a 60,000 square foot facility in the Creekside Business Park for NuTek Biosciences, LLC.

The Minnesota Investment Fund application required a public hearing and notice was published in the paper accordingly.

In addition, Mr. Clark requested the Council approve a development agreement with NuTek for the Grow Austin incentive program. He stated an updated agreement was provided to the Council tonight that had some technical changes. He stated that there are some contingencies in the agreement, including with Mower County and Austin Utilities providing other funding sources for the project. In addition, the Port Authority would be donating 8.6 acres of land in the Creekside Business Park.

Tom Yezzi stated he is excited for the project and stated Nu-Tek is in the business for creating specimens for the pharmaceutical industry. He stated the product is used to manufacture new pharmaceuticals. He added that this technology is very exciting due to the COVID pandemic's need for vaccines. Nu-Tek has been in business for 12 years and stated it is not a short-term business.

John Garry stated they expect to add 35 jobs to the community with the addition of the company. He stated this business would bring a new, vibrant industry into the community and added there would be potential for a partnership with Riverland Community College and possibly the Hormel Institute into the future.

Mayor King thanked Mr. Garry for this hard work on the project and is excited about the project.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving a development agreement with Nu-Tek Biosciences, LLC. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving a grant application to MN DEED. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving a job creation fund application in connection with Nu-Tek Biosciences, LLC. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving the City's Participation with the Grow Austin program in the estimated amount of \$91,350. Carried.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum presented the proposed assessment rates for 2021. He stated the Council reviewed the item at their January 4, 2021 work session and requested staff increase the rates by 7% for 2021.

Council Member-at-Large Austin noted it was recommended from staff to increase the rates by 5% for 2021 and the Council voted to increase them by 7%. He stated he would like to go with the 5% increase as staff recommended.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution setting 2021 street assessment rates with 7% increase. Carried 4-3 with Council Members Waller, Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Austin voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, setting 2021 Council boards and commissions. Carried.

Teresa Lugo stated that she is the bilingual navigator at Austin High School and stated she is excited to be the next Honorary Council Member.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, appointing Teresa Lugo as the Honorary Council Member, February to April 2021. Carried.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert requested the Council approve an audit engagement letter from CLA, LLP for the 2020 audit. He stated the proposed amount is \$46,305. The base audit amount is the same as the previous year, but an addition single audit is required in the amount of \$2,500 due to the federal CARES act funds the City received.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, accepting an audit engagement letter from CLA, LLP. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving a Sunday on-sale liquor license for Bella Victoria Italian Cuisine, LLC. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution accepting donations to the City. Carried 7-0.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert requested the Council approve a resolution amending the investment interest policy due to the low interest rates through December 31, 2022.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution amending the investment interest policy for allocation to the Building Fund. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, appointing Shannon Lysne to the Library Board, term ending December 31, 2021. Carried.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace presenting a sign appeal request from Pet Authority for a second wall mounted sign that would face south. The Planning Commission reviewed the matter at their January 12, 2021 meeting and recommended approval by a 5-0 vote.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving a sign appeal from Pet Authority. Carried.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace reviewed a lot combination request from JSB Properties, LLC. Ms. Wallace stated the petitioner wishes to combine two parcels on the property. The business located on the property is Precision Signs and they need to combine the parcels to make building upgrades.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving a lot consolidation request from JSB Properties, LLC. Carried 7-0.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace reviewed a lot combination request from Hormel Foods. Ms. Wallace stated the property owner would like to combine the parcels for future development on the site. The proposed lots are between the Paramount Theater and the Tendermaid.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving a lot consolidation request from Hormel Foods. Carried 6-0 with Council Member Baskin abstaining.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1016 2nd Avenue NE, Lopez Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1203 11th Avenue NW, Dennison Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1007 9th Avenue SW, Lau Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 800 11th Avenue SW, Soe Property. Carried.

REPORTS

City Administrator Craig Clark stated he had a good conversation with Senator Dornink and Representative Mueller about the waste water treatment plant funding. He also stated there were approximately 70 participants in the Martin Luther King, Jr. event. Mr. Clark added the Development Corporation of Austin is administering the next round of COVID grants.

Council Member Postma thanked the City department heads for the introduction to the City.

Council Member Oballa stated he took a tour of Austin Utilities and stated he will be joining the Connecting Young Professionals group.

Council Member Baskin stated the Human Rights Commission put on a great discussion for their online event.

Mayor King stated he enjoyed the Human Rights Commission event.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adjourning the meeting to February 1, 2021. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:15 p.m.

Approved: February 1, 2021

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____