

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
July 6, 2021
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Captain Todd Clennon, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann

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

OTHERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Austin Daily Herald, Honorary Council Member Christopher Moore

APPEARING IN PERSON: Ron Mecklenburg, Casey McIntyre, Jim Plehal, Carolyn Osmonson, John Mueller, Dan Mueller

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

Added to the Agenda:

Licenses:

Right of Way: K & L Construction, Inc., 90233 240th Street

Temporary Liquor: Mower County Ag Society on July 31, 2021

Temporary Liquor: Mower County Ag Society August 10-15, 2021

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the agenda as amended. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving Council minutes from June 21, 2021. Carried.

RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS

Mower County Commissioner John Mueller introduced himself as the new first ward County Commissioner and stated he is looking forward to working with the City.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Licenses:

Food: Unity Asian Grocery, Inc, 1300 18th Avenue NW, Suite C
Right of Way Contractor: MJ O'Connor, Inc, 1507 14th St NE
Temporary Liquor: Austin Area Commission for the Arts on August 28, 2021
Right of Way: K & L Construction, Inc., 90233 240th Street
Temporary Liquor: Mower County Ag Society on July 31, 2021
Temporary Liquor: Mower County Ag Society August 10-15, 2021

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Credit Card report.

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for street improvement assessments for deferred sanitary sewer assessments. Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the items are deferred assessments from the 1990's that have been deferred for 30 years. The amount to be assessed is \$262,792.90 at 3.5% for 10 years. City Clerk Ann Kasel stated notices were mailed to each property owner with the exact assessment amount and payment options.

Council Member-at-Large Austin proposed no interest on the assessments with a 10- or 15-year repayment term.

Council Member Waller agreed with the no interest on the assessments.

Ron Mecklenburg, 1701 12th Street SW, stated he owns several properties that are impacted by the deferred assessments. He stated he has paid for sewer and water for his property and he doesn't believe that he should have to pay additional fees at this time. He also stated he would appreciate no interest on the assessments.

Mr. Lang stated Mr. Mecklenburg has a large amount of property and because he owns so much frontage all around his property.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated there are hundreds of assessments that have been paid off and originally the City issued debt and paid interest to pay for the project.

Casey McIntyre, 1906 25th Avenue SW, stated he has an undeveloped lot and would like it to remain undeveloped. He stated charging no interest on the assessments is a fair compromise.

Jim Plehal, 1015 West 4th Street, Red Wing, stated he owns property behind the old Target and is held in a trust for his kids. He stated he was surprised with the notice from the City and it will be difficult to pay taxes on this property.

Caroline Osmonson, 1307 26th Street SW, stated she received the property from her mother and doesn't feel that her father would have allowed the assessment to be deferred.

There were no other public comments.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution declaring the cost of deferred sanitary sewer assessments. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting resolution adopting the assessment roll for deferred sanitary sewer assessments with zero percent interest for a period of ten years. Carried 7-0.

A public hearing was held for street improvement assessments for deferred water assessment. The amount to be assessed is \$55,206.90 at 3.5% for 10 years.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution declaring the cost of deferred water assessments. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting resolution adopting the assessment roll for deferred water assessments with zero percent interest for a period of ten years. Carried 7-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Mayor King stated the Human Rights Commission issue with Dan Mueller came up about a month ago. He stated the Human Rights Commission is a self-governing entity and he felt that if the committee wanted to move forward with the removal, he is supportive of their efforts. He stated this is not a public hearing and he will not take public comment on the matter.

Council Member Jason Baskin stated he is supportive of the Human Rights Commission and the positive work it does. He stated he would like to look at the best interest for the City of Austin. He stated he is opposed to the removal due to the precedence it would set for all City boards and commissions.

Council Member Oballa Oballa stated he agrees with the Mayor that it is not the job of the Council to micromanage the commissions. He stated he has been helped by the individual but he respects the Human Rights Commission's decision to remove the Mr. Mueller.

Council Member Fischer stated he supports the Human Rights Commission's decision.

Council Member Poshusta stated she has received numerous e-mails about the matter and she stated she trusts in the Human Rights Commission and is in support of the removal.

Council Member Postma stated he was concerned about it being politically motivated and has seen some of the good work that Dan has done. He also had heard that some of the work may have been superficial but he stated he has to respect the Human Rights Commission's decision.

Council Member Waller stated she is torn as to which way to vote on the issue. She stated the 8-0 vote to remove Mr. Mueller is bothersome by the Human Rights Commission.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated he is the representative for the Human Rights Commission and the mission statement is to advocate for all human rights, without exception. He added that the Human Rights Commission will be better served without Dan.

Council Member Baskin asked the Mayor to allow Dan to speak.

Mayor King stated the public hearing was at the Human Rights Commission and this is not a public hearing.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, for the removal of Dan Mueller from the Human Rights Commission. Carried 6-1 with Council Member Baskin voting nay.

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 1001 4th Avenue NE, Folly & Soudi 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 713 4th Avenue NE, Miller. Carried.

CITIZENS ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL

Elaine Hansen, 2905 7th Avenue SW, stated she is concerned about the 2022 budget.

REPORTS

Library Director Julie Clinefelter thanked the community for the turnout of the 25th anniversary of the Library.

Council Member Poshusta congratulated the new Pillars of the City- Dr. Olaf Hegge, Jacob Herzog and Susan Grove.

Council Member Postma thanked the Chamber for their work on the parade and the Holiday Inn and the City for their work on the park events.

Council Member-at-Large Austin thanked everyone for their work on the festival.

Council Member Oballa stated he and his family enjoyed the parade.

Council Member Baskin thanked the citizens for reaching out on recent matters.

Council Member Fischer stated he enjoyed riding in Petunia the pig with the Mayor.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adjourning the meeting to July 19, 2021. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:28 p.m.

Approved: July 19, 2021

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____