

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
February 6, 2023
City Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan
Public Works Director Steven Lang, Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: KAUS Radio, Jeff Holt

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Hormel Foods Tax Abatement Request for Child Care Facility

City Administrator Craig Clark presented a request from Hormel Foods for a fifteen-year tax abatement for the construction of a child care facility. The facility is proposed to provide care for 130 children for Hormel and non-Hormel families and has a proposed valuation of \$5 million.

Jeff Holt stated the Hormel company is committed to increasing child care slots in the community which would not be exclusive to Hormel employees. He stated the request for tax abatement would be for the improvements on the property. He noted the location is strategically placed near other important businesses. The facility will be developed by partnering with Bright Horizons. He noted Hormel Foods will be providing a \$729,000 per year subsidy. He stated this is the only Hormel Foods location where there is a child care facility.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, recommending approval of a fifteen-year tax abatement for Hormel Foods child care facility and setting a public hearing for March 6, 2023. Carried.

The item will be on the March 6, 2023 Council Agenda.

Item No. 2 – Discussion of 24 month Council Plan

Council Member Baker distributed a proposed 24-month Council plan at the January 17, 2023 work session.

Council Member Helle suggested the Council focus on three key items.

Mayor King noted that he would like to add employee insurance to the discussion topics as a police officer left the City for County employment.

Council Member Poshusta stated she would like a third-party employee survey.

City Administrator Craig Clark noted the Local Option Sales Tax will need to be discussed.

The Council decided to focus on housing and city operations.

The items will be on the February 21, 2023 work session.

Item No. 3 – Library Construction Update

Library Director Julie Clinefelter provided the Council an update to the construction project stating the Library will be closed to the public February 13-17 for construction. On February 21st the Library will reopen from 10 am to noon and 4 pm to 6 pm for express service in the front of the library. On approximately March 20-24th the express area will be closed to deconstruct the express area and prepare for the grand reopening of the library which is tentatively scheduled for March 27th.

For Council information only; no Council action needed at this time.

Item No. 4 – Tree trek naming

Parks and Recreation Director Dave Merrill requested the tree trek be renamed the Michael Ruzek Tree Trek. He stated the Park Board made a formal motion for the matter.

The item will be on the February 21, 2023 Council agenda.

Item No. 5 – Assessment Policy Review

Public Works Director Steven Lang reviewed the City's assessment policies as part of an annual review. He started by reviewing the complete streets policy which was developed to ensure that the public right of way was being developed in a manner that serves all uses. This includes vehicle, transit, bicyclist and pedestrian traffic. The policy was adopted in 2012.

The paving assessment policy was developed to cover unique circumstances that are encountered with different private lot configurations. The sidewalk assessment policy addresses the criteria and procedures that have been used to address deficient sidewalk and the replacement and payment thereof. The ADA requirements drive the sidewalk standards. He noted that all of the sidewalk in a neighborhood may be replaced if over 50% of the panels are deficient.

Mr. Lang stated the goal is to assess 25% of the road to each side of the roadway and the City pays for the other 50% of the road. There are different rates for residential and commercial properties with the commercial rates being higher. The assessment rates are adopted by Council on a yearly basis.

Moved by Council Member Poshusta, seconded by Council Member Helle, to formally adopt the assessment policies. Carried.

The item will be on the February 21, 2023 Council agenda.

Item No. 6 – T-Hangar Funding Plan

Public Works Director Steven Lang discussed funding options for the airport t-hangar project. He stated the project could be constructed in 2023 or 2024, depending on funding. If constructed in 2023, the partner airports would not receive their funding back for 7 years. He stated it is unlikely that the City would be able to find 7 airports to borrow from.

However, if constructed in 2024 then the City would need to borrow from less airports and would be able to reimburse them sooner. He noted that the City would advance some of the funding from internal sources and pay that back with future grant funding. Mr. Lang recommended delaying construction of the airport t-hangar until 2024.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, to delay the airport t-hangar construction until 2024. Carried.

Item No. 7 - Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated there will be a closed meeting on February 21st at 4:00 p.m.

Item No. 8 – Open Discussion

Council Member Postma stated he would like the City to observed the Juneteenth in 2023 even though the state will not make it official until 2024.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, to observe the Juneteenth holiday in 2023. Carried.

The item will be placed on the February 21, 2023 Council Agenda.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel, City Clerk