

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
May 1, 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 Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Saville Lord, Elaine Hansen

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Local Option Sales Tax

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the City's Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) was originally enacted for flood control measures and it scheduled to expire in the coming years. The City would like to utilize the sales tax money for other projects. He stated the University of Minnesota Extension Service can preform a lost analysis to determine the allocation of local residents versus visitors that are paying the sales tax. The analysis of the data would begin in June with completion by July. This would help the City to make an informed decision as to the renewal of the sales tax.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert stated the tax will automatically sunset on March 31, 2027.

The University of Minnesota charges \$3,000 for this evaluation. Mr. Clark proposed the funding come from 2023 contingency. He noted the tax could go for different projects but they would need to be listed separately on a vote.

Saville Lord noted as part of the Discover Austin board they are looking to grow their revenue from the individuals that visit in Austin and would like an additional tax for that.

Council Member Baskin spoke in favor of the LOST tax.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, recommending approving an agreement with the University of Minnesota for sales tax analysis. Carried.

The item will be on the May 15, 2023 Council Agenda.

Item No. 2 – Wildwood Park Letter of Map Revision

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated in 2013, DNR and FEMA developed new floodplain maps for the City of Austin. These maps added six new properties in the Wildwood Park area to the flood plain. He stated the engineering department has been working with MnDOT for the bridge replacement in the area and there appears to be an irregularity in the surface water elevations in the Wildwood area. He stated the elevation rapid changes are uncommon and require additional evaluation.

A letter of map revision would cost approximately \$80,000 and could be funded using local option sales tax. He stated this process has the potential to remove some of the structures from the flood plain area thereby reduction property acquisition costs.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, recommending approving an agreement with SEH for a letter of map revision in the Wildwood Park area.

The item will be on the May 15, 2023 Council Agenda.

Item No. 3 - Administrative Report

None

Item No. 4 – Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk