

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
January 2, 2024
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, Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Steve Kime, Kyle Skov, Nate Smit

Mayor King opened the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Oakland Avenue & 1st Avenue SW Design Options

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum introduced Kyle Skov with WHKS for a review of the Oakland and 1st Avenue design options. He stated there have been multiple public surveys and public informational meetings to receive feedback on the proposed project. He stated overall, the public expressed a strong desire to keep parking on both sides of both roads, to include bike facilities within the design but do not want bicyclists on the streets and residents felt speed was an issue on the roads.

Mr. Skov presented three additional design options for the Oakland Avenue and 1st Avenue SW project. Option 1 would not make any changes to the roadway or sidewalks. Option 2 would create an 8-foot sidewalk on one side which would narrow the driving lanes by 1 foot and the parking lanes by 6 inches. Option 3 would create wider 6-foot sidewalks on both sides and would narrow the driving lanes by 1 foot and the parking lanes by 6 inches.

Council Member Poshusta asked how the I-90 bridge projects will impact this project.

Mr. Wenum stated the bridge projects will be taking place at the same time as the Oakland and 1st project so there will be a lot of construction in town.

Council Member Baker asked if narrowing the road three feet would create savings on the project.

Mr. Wenum stated there would be a minor savings on the materials.

Mr. Wenum stated the public voted 55.7% for option one to keep the road design the way it currently is. He recommended option 2 to provide bike facilities for future connections. He requested the Council recommend which option they would like to move forward with.

Council Member Postma stated he thinks option 2 makes the most sense.

Council Member Fischer doesn't support narrowing the road and would prefer option 1.

Council Member Baskin stated he supports option 2 for the roadway because it would serve as a connection for the community.

Council Member Helle stated she also supports option 2 to provide better facilities for the bikers and walkers on the roads.

Council Member Poshusta stated she agreed with Council Member Helle.

Council Member-at-Large Austin also agreed with option 2 for the design of the road.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Helle, recommending moving forward with option 2 for the Oakland and 1st Avenue design. Carried 5-2 with Council Members Baker and Fischer voting nay.

The item will be on the January 16, 2024 Council Agenda.

Item No. 2 - 2024 Street Assessment Rates

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum presented the 2024 assessment rates stating it is the City's goal to assess adjacent property owners 50% of the costs of street projects and in 2023 the City assessed 27.4% of the project costs. He proposed increasing the assessment rates for urban and commercial streets 7%. Therefore, the rate for 2024 will increase to \$64.32 per lineal foot for residential street reconstruction and to \$91.85 per lineal foot for commercial properties. Other rates would also be increased slightly. He noted that construction rates are increasing at a greater rate than the City has increased the assessment rates. He stated that the City guarantees that the road will last 35 years and the City has policies in place for different types of properties.

Public Works Director Steven Lang noted the example of a 75-foot frontage lot of approximately \$4,200 for the replacement of the roadway.

Mr. Wenum stated there is zero cost to property owners for the first sidewalk installation.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, recommending approval of 2024 assessment rates with a 7% increase. Carried.

The item will be on the January 16, 2024 Council agenda.

Item No. 3 – Whitewater 30% Design

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum stated the work is continuing on the Whitewater Project.

He proposed the City contribute \$25,000 for the project design, which would come from unspent 2023 trail construction funds. The Whitewater on the Cedar group is also requesting funding from supporting groups and the remaining funds would be requested from the Hormel Foundation.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Helle, recommending approval of \$25,000 from 2023 trail construction funds for the Whitewater 30% design along with in-kind survey work. Carried 7-0.

The item will be on the January 16, 2024 Council agenda.

Item No. 4 - Administrative Report

None

Item No. 5 – Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Helle, adjourning the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk

