

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
February 5, 2024
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Laura Helle, Geoff Baker, 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 Recreations Director Jason Sehon, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf.

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, KAUS Radio, John Garry, Dan Maulkee from Grace Baptist Church, Mark Vanhouse from Our Saviors Lutheran Church

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Item No. 1 – 16th Street NW Project Discussion

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum spoke about what options are available for reconstruction on 16th St NW. This is a one-way street between Grace Baptist Church and Our Saviors Lutheran Church.

This is a low traffic road. Mr. Wenum asked if there is a need to put the street back and what options we have for reconstruction. Representatives from both churches were present. There are three different options available.

Option #1 would be to turn it the road into a two-way street with parallel parking. Total assessment for Grace Baptist Church would be \$114,000 and Our Saviors Lutheran Church would be \$63,000, and it would cost the City \$165,000. Total for the area is \$237,000. The totals for just the 16th Street assessment would be \$51,000 for Grace Baptist Church and \$41,000 for Our Saviors Lutheran Church. In that area, there is a lot of sidewalk that will need to be replaced. This is 70% City Cost and 30% Owner costs.

Option #2 would be to get rid of the road completely and turn it into grass. This would cost the City \$55,000. Grace Baptist Church would have no assessment costs and Our Saviors Lutheran Church would have \$5,000 in sidewalk repairs. The right of way would remain intact, we would not be turning it over as Austin Utilities has water main in this area. If in the future we wanted a road we could put it back in.

Council Member Poshusta asked if the city would be responsible for upkeep and mowing. Mr. Wenum stated that the city would not be responsible. Mr. Wenum stated that the concern with this plan is that the Grace Baptist Church parking lot is not set up the best for this configuration. Fire Chief Jim McCoy stated that there are no issues from the fire dept on this plan. The fire hydrant in this area would be able to be relocated.

Option #3 would be a blend of the two different options. The road would still be removed. This would cost the city about \$45,000. Then it was proposed to build a parking area with an access drive to the north parking area of Grace Baptist Church.

Both churches would split the parking area costs. The driveway would be paid for by Grace Baptist Church. Approximately \$28,000 in costs would accrue to Grace Baptist Church and \$23,000 to Our Saviors Lutheran Church.

This has not been proposed to anyone else in the neighborhood. The engineering department only notified the churches as they will be the ones that will be impacted.

The Mayor asked if the engineering department had a recommendation. They did not have a strong recommendation.

Grace Baptist Church stated that this is a very low traffic road. They would suggest not a dual road traffic. Their preference would be between option 2 or 3.

Our Saviors Lutheran Church stated in favor option 2 or 3.

Council Member Baker asked what the next step would be. Mr. Wenum stated that they have invited the citizens impact in the area to the open house. We would like to get some guidance and start to move forward with the process at the February 20th meeting.

Council Member Helle stated that both of the churches are in agreement with option #3. Does the engineering department see any issues with this plan? Mr. Wenum does not have problems with option #3.

We could create an agreement where we could retain ownership of the right of way. In the future if we wanted, we could put in a road. Mr. Wenum did confirm that at this time Austin Utilities does plan to do underground work during the road construction project in this neighborhood.

The churches did state that they do not need the full area for parking but would utilize the small area for parking.

Mr. Wenum will continue to work with the churches over the next couple of weeks. We will bring the information to the open house.

The Council took no action.

Item No. 2 – 2024 Fireworks Contract

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert relayed that Flashing Thunder Fireworks stated that there would be an increase in shipping cost for fireworks for the 2024 season. The increase is in the amount of \$2,000. If the city is not able to find additional funding, we would request the

money come out of contingency. This would be for the one night of fire works like in the previous year. No objections.

The item will be on the February 20, 2024 Council Agenda.

Item No. 3 – Postage Machine Replacement

The postage machine will no longer be compatible or allow for software upgrades after June 30th. Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated that we are going to have to purchase a new one for \$3,985.

The postage machine one will be similar to the one we currently have. We would like to use money out of the contingency fund. No objections.

The item will be on the February 20, 2024 Council Agenda.

Item No. 4 – Impact Austin Support

City Administrator Craig Clark is requesting support for Impact Austin to support a new position. This position would be to support small projects and are requesting \$20,000 from the City in participation in this.

Mayor stated that this would be an excellent use of funds. Council Member Baker asked John Garry and Holly Wallace who will be in charge of this. Council Member Baker stated that the Chamber of Commerce, The City, The County, all want a say on how they want things run.

John Gary stated that this is a complex project. The DCA will be in charge of the comprehensive part of it. We will have to balance every one's interest.

Motion made by Council Member Postma, Seconded by Council Member Helle recommending moving forward with support for the new position for Impact Austin. Carried 7-0.

The item will be on the February 20, 2024 Council Agenda.

Item No. 5 – Creekside Project Update

Public Work Director Steven Lang spoke about the Creekside project deadline coming up on March 5th. This is an update on how they will meet that deadline.

The project involves about 50 acres, roadway construction of 9th Street NW, which will run North/South on the East side of Nu-Tek. We will be constructing 26th Avenue NW and this runs on the South side of Nu-Tek. We will be constructing 27th Avenue NW and this will be connecting the area from Nu-Tek to All Fur Dogs.

Water, gas, electric, sewer, and storm sewer construction will also take place. There will be a storm water pond and site grading to bring these areas up to level. These will not be commercial building pads but they will be closer to grade.

There are a variety of funding sources for this project including the Port Authority, Austin Utilities, EDA Grant, and a BDPI grant that is in the works. There are also funds that the City has allocated to this project. This is a total project of \$5.4 million dollars.

We will be opening bids Wednesday. Once we open the bids, we will send off the information to the EDA engineers. Once we have the information, we will bring the info to the February 20th meeting. Our hope is that construction will begin in May, finishing in the late fall.

Council Member Baker asked if Austin Utilities is thinking about a water tower out there. Mr. Lang stated that they haven't had those conversations at this time. This is just an update. He will come back with a recommendation.

The Council took no action.

Item No. 6 - Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark gave an update on Employee Engagement and the company Culture Partners. Their proposal was very fairly costly. We are waiting to hear back from another consultant that we have talked to.

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

Item No. 7 – Open Discussion

Council Member Postma stated that the next meeting is the streets and sidewalks meeting and stated that as a reminder to attend the meeting on 14th and also that the council voted to affirm the complete streets policy and to keep that in mind as we talk to the neighbors.

Mayor moved the meeting into Conference Room A to conduct a closed session.

M I N U T E S
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION – CLOSED MEETING
February 5, 2024
4:30 PM
Conference Room A

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, City Attorney Craig Byram, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 6:48 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, to open the meeting

Moved by Council Member at Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. Section 13D.03 subd. 1 (b) – Labor Negotiations. Carried.

See Recording of closed meeting.

Moved by Council Member at Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, to open the meeting at 7:04 p.m. and to adjourn it. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brianne D. Wolf, City Clerk