

MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
August 5, 2003
5:00 PM

PRESENT: Mayor Rietz, Council Member-at-Large Goodnature, Council Members Nordin, Jorgenson, Pacholl, Christopherson, and Koch

ABSENT: Council Member Chamberlain

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Hurm, Craig Hoium, Paul Philipp, David Hoversten, and Tom Dankert

ALSO PRESENT: Public, KAAL TV-6, Austin Daily Herald, and Austin Post Bulletin

Mayor Rietz called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Item #1 – Community Development Director Craig Hoium discussed a proposal to have the Planning Commission and the City Council have a joint work session to discuss the legal aspects of land use. Craig Byram, the Planning Commissions attorney, has volunteered to put the work session on for both governing bodies. Mr. Hoium noted he would try to schedule the joint session in October.

Item #2 – Mr. Hoium discussed the proposal to install two entrance signs at the west and east side of Austin welcoming people into our city. Gary Rhodes, former President of Riverland Community College, started this project a few years ago and we have solicited donations from the service clubs in the amount of \$2,900 (plus one entity did not specify an amount) and the Hormel Foundation has agreed to donate \$5,000 for the signs. The total cost of each sign is \$14,873.18, leaving the city with the remaining costs. Mr. Hoium did note we could try to go back to the service clubs for more donations. Mr. Hoium noted the costs would be a “not to exceed” figure so we wouldn’t have any additional hidden costs.

Discussion ensued as to taking the corporate sponsors off of the sign. Additional discussion ensued regarding asking the Chamber of Commerce to financially support the signs. Council Member Jorgenson questioned if we could do one sign this year and the other sign at a future date. Mr. Hoium noted we could table this action until the next work session so we could see what was going to happen at the Park and Recreation Board meeting on Wednesday regarding needing more basketball courts within the community.

Motion by Council Member Christopherson, seconded by Council Member Nordin to table further discussion on the entrance signs until the work session scheduled for August 19, 2003. Carried 6-0.

Item # 3 – Mr. Hoium updated council on the JOBZ. Mr. Hoium noted he has a meeting on August 6 in Mankato and also that council should be thinking of sites within the city limits they would like included within the zone.

Item #4 – City Attorney David Hoversten discussed the proposed liquor ordinance changes that staff had come up with during a meeting with Dick Lang of the Austin Beverage Association. Minor changes in the wording used were discussed and approved by all. The grid system for penalties was discussed as to what is the most fair and reasonable. After much discussion between the council and some of the affected license owners, the following grid system was recommended:

Offense	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Fine	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	-
Suspension	0 business days	3 business days	7 business days	Revocation

Mr. Hoversten reiterated that under the current ordinance in effect, the first offense is automatic revocation of their license. The owner of the establishment still has the right under the proposed ordinance to appeal to an administrative hearing and then through the court system if they so choose.

One member of the public questioned about being responsible for happenings outside their bar. Mr. Hoversten and Police Chief Philipp stated that it would have to be a recurring problem that could be proven originated from a particular bar.

More discussion ensued about the issue including changing the time since first violation to eighteen months versus twenty-four or thirty-six months. After further discussion it was decided to use a two-year look back period along with the grid above.

Motion by Council Member Koch, seconded by Council Member Pacholl to recommend to council the approval of the above grid system with a two year look back period. Carried 6-0. Item will be added to the next council agenda on August 18, 2003.

Item #3a – Mr. Hurm discussed coordinating efforts with economic development amongst the eligible participants in the community. Mr. Hurm noted he is having meetings with individuals in order to more streamline the activities.

Mr. Hurm also went through a Power Point presentation titled Community Governance Process. This presentation outlined where we have been since June of 2003 and where we expect to go by the time this process is done in July of 2006. Mr. Hurm went through the action plan in order to give council an update.

Item 3b- Mr. Hurm discussed the 5-Year Fiscal Plan that had been presented at an earlier work session. Mr. Dankert further noted this plan is the basis for the budget we are preparing for 2004 so if there are material things that are sticking out that council does not agree with, we should probably discuss all of those now. Included in the plan is an estimated 9% tax levy increase (\$200,000) plus a tax levy base (new growth) increase of 2.25% (\$50,000) for 2004. The use of \$455,000 of fund balance is also included in the plan. Mr. Dankert noted these numbers have already been plugged into the budget we are in the middle of planning for 2004.

Council Members questioned what a 15% increase on a home assessed at \$100,000 would be? Mr. Dankert went though the calculation and estimated the total increase would be approximately \$35 of additional city tax, this does not include anything for the county or school.

Council Member Koch requested we use a 15% tax increase and reduce the use of fund balance in 2004. If we need to increase the budget we could then go into the fund balance for additional dollars. No further discussion ensued, so Mr. Dankert noted he would use the 15% tax increase for the budget meetings on August 18.

Item #5 – Mayor Rietz noted it was that time of the year to rank the budget requests to go to the Hormel Foundation. The council briefly discussed some of the projects that funding had been requested for. After discussion each council member ranked their requests in order of their priority on the white board (#1 being the first priority, etc.). After the Mayor and all council, including the email Council Member Chamberlain sent regarding his priorities, Mr. Dankert tallied all of the ranks, noting the following as the order chosen:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.	Fire	Smoke Alarms	\$ 3,000
2.	Police	Crime scene equipment	\$ 1,810
3.	Nature Center	Acquisition and restoration	\$ 65,000
4.	Street	Pedestrian Bike Trail	\$ 5,100
T5.	Library	Four specialized computer systems	\$ 38,000
T5.	Nature Center	Upgrade lighting system	\$ 4,050.85
7.	Administration	Hanging flower baskets	\$ 16,000
8.	Police	Mobile Incident Command Vehicle	\$ 78,000
9.	Administration	Community newsletter	\$ 21,000
10.	Nature Center	Replace carpeting at Visitation Center	\$ 5,100
11.	Library	Three Smithsonian traveling museum exhibits	\$ 70,000

One request for \$75,000 to create handicapped facilities at Todd Park was removed as the council funded this project at the council meeting on Monday August 4 from the Building Fund.

Above ranking will be brought forward to the council meeting on August 18 for council approval.

Mayor Rietz noted that even though we may rank them in this order, the Hormel Foundation may allocate to the projects they would like to be seen done, and they may or may not be the same ranking as we have listed. Additionally, we do not know how much money is available to distribute this year, so some things may not even get funded.

With no further items on the agenda, motion by Council Member Pacholl, seconded by Council Member Jorgenson to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Director of Administrative Services