

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
September 15, 2008
City Hall Conference Room
6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm, Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, Council Members McAlister, Austin, Martin, Hecimovich, Scott Pacholl, and Dick Pacholl.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Public Works Director Jon Erichson, City Administrator Jim Hurm, and Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert.

ALSO PRESENT: Marian Clennon, Janet Anderson, Jai Kalsy (MnDOT), Brad Wosniak and Mark Dierling (S.E.H.), Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Item No. 1: I-90 culvert discussion with MnDOT and consulting firm. Mr. Erichson noted that in 2009 MnDOT is expected to replace the box culverts underneath I-90 which will result in additional flow into East Side Lake. Jai Kalsy stated that MnDOT has advance-funded this project into 2009. Mark Dierling noted the flooding and hydraulic situation are being reviewed in an attempt to ensure no more or no less water enters into the waterway after this project is completed. Mr. Dierling stated they reviewed a few options for this area including a new box culvert or leave the existing structure and just add on. Mr. Dierling stated traffic needs to be restricted to one lane during the construction and a ramp will be closed for a majority of the project, which should be done in one construction season. The models, however, still indicate there may be some “over-tapping” onto I-90, and there may still be back up with the waterway upon completion.

Mr. Erichson stated that in 1978 the existing box culvert was jammed. It was jammed again prior to the 2008 flood so the City cleaned it out right before the floods came. Brad Wosniak stated the new culverts, which will be of the same size, would actually increase the water level due to their new length. He said they may have to increase the box culvert size in order to maintain the same flows. Mr. Erichson said the City’s main concern is for the residents on both sides of the culvert. Our goal is to maintain whatever is currently there.

Mayor Stiehm questioned who makes the determination of the size of the box culvert. Mr. Erichson stated this is a MnDOT decision, but they have been very supportive of our needs and concerns up to this point. Mr. Kalsy stated they are still trying to eliminate the “over-tapping”.

Mr. Dierling stated they will be requiring bidders to have an emergency plan in place in the event flooding occurs during construction.

Mr. Erichson stated the 11th Street interchange is very busy, but this will not be impacted at all. The 218 interchange can accommodate the traffic through detours. Mr. Dierling stated the City may also want to coordinate the force main project for the area as part of this project. (The force main project is scheduled in the 5-year CIP). Mr. Erichson stated MnDOT may need some easements from the city for property usage for this process.

Council Member McAlister asked if there would be a temporary dam while the construction goes on. Mr. Dierling stated there would be a temporary dam.

Council Member Dick Pacholl asked if the existing box culvert could remain instead of being removed. Mr. Dierling stated the structure itself is deteriorating. MnDOT may build a third barrel to the culvert in order to get the hydraulic capacity that is needed.

Council Member-at-Large Christopherson asked if I-90 could be gradually raised to move the road higher up from the waterway. Mr. Dierling stated the State has talked about this also and they could review that, but matters may become worse by damming up the water.

Council Member Hecimovich asked if gates could be put on the new barrels. Mr. Wozniak noted this relies on a lot of human judgment as to when the gates are closed or left open.

Mr. Erichson noted MnDOT will have a public meeting on this once the project gets closer to construction.

Other Item – Flood Phase 8. – Mr. Erichson noted that Mr. Wozniak from S.E.H. is actually doing our planning for the Phase 8 flood structures. Mr. Erichson stated this is progressing well; some walls will be up next to Packer Arena by next Friday. The whole project is expected to be completed in October.

Council Member McAlister stated he is concerned with the area from the swimming pool to the bridge and having staff put up invisible fences/panels for the flood wall. Mr. Wozniak stated we are looking at a permanent structure up to the 100 year flood level, and then the free-wall system above this for another three feet of protection.

Item #2 – Anniversary of Cool City designation. – Mr. Hurm and council celebrated the one-year anniversary of the City of Austin adopting the pledge to become a cool city.

Item #3 – Joint work session with Austin Utilities Board on energy efficiency and conservation. – Mr. Hurm thanked the ACES group and the City Council and Austin Utilities for being part of the joint presentation. Glenn Cannon, a renewable energy expert, went through a PowerPoint presentation outlining some of today's energy challenges. Mr. Campbell noted energy efficiency is a key part of the solution.

Kelly Lady of Austin Utilities also went through a PowerPoint presentation outlining the items that they do on a daily basis for the public. Ms. Lady noted this program started in the 1990s with some energy efficiency programs. The Austin Utilities is required to spend 1.5% of their revenue in programs to reduce energy. An energy audit is available for \$40 per audit, with the

Austin Utilities picking up the other \$135 of cost for this. Utilities will also cover 25% of the cost of energy audits for commercial/industrial users.

There being no further business, motion by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member Austin, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Dankert
Director of Administrative Services