

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**September 16, 2008**  
**City Hall Conference Room**  
**5:30 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:** Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood, Public Works Director Jon Erichson, City Administrator Jim Hurm, and Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Marian Clennon, Janet Anderson, Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

**Item No. 5 and #6 Park and Rec mid-year report and dog park recommendation.** Ms. Underwood went through the Park & Rec Department's mid-year report outlining the status of the 2008 goals for the Nature Center and the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Departments. The status update focused on projects as they stand now, with discussion on the completion of the projects and timelines. Ms. Underwood also noted, as part of the goals, that the proposed dog park needs to be reviewed with the new cost estimates.

Council Member Martin noted the area by the former Jim's Super Value could use some trees to spruce it up. Mr. Erichson said the City is under budget with the contractor, so there may be \$3,000 or so available to plant some vegetation/coniferous trees in the area. Mr. Erichson stated he would take something to the HRA Board.

Council Member McAlister asked if letters would be going out to the residents where the proposed dog park is being considered. Ms. Underwood stated they plan on canvassing the area where the dog park is proposed to be located. The supporters of the dog park, according to Ms. Underwood, would like to do some fund raisers to accumulate some funding for a hydrant for a water supply. The estimated cost is \$10,986 of a five-foot-high, tensile woven wire fence with wood fence posts placed every twenty feet.

Mayor Stiehm asked if this could be incorporated with St. Marks as they could benefit from having the animals at the park. Ms. Underwood stated the Humane Society could bring their animals to the dog park and the residents could come also at a specified time.

Mr. Hurm asked for Council's blessing to continue the progress. Council Member Hecimovich said the citizens promoting the dog park will also raise funds so we don't have to make up the difference. Ms. Underwood confirmed this.

Mr. Erichson noted the proposed site across the street from the Wastewater Treatment Plant has been left vacant in the event an expansion is ever needed. Mr. Erichson wanted Council to know that this structure may need to come down at some point if the Wastewater Treatment facility needs to increase its capacity. Council Member Hecimovich said that caveat could be included in the agreement.

After further discussion, motion by Council Member Dick Pacholl, seconded by Council Member Austin, to go ahead with plans and then come back when things have been settled with the location, funding, and the neighbors. Carried 7-0. No further action needed at this point.

**Item #4 – Capital Improvement Program.** – Mr. Dankert began the discussion by noting we are projecting to expend nearly \$80 million over the next five years on capital related projects. Mr. Dankert noted this plan essentially directs staff to implement the activities listed for 2009, and preliminarily to plan on the 2010 to 2013 projects. However, funding is the final say over the project, so if a grant, for example, is not secured the project could not go forward without an alternate funding source.

Council Member McAlister asked if an impound lot like Mower County is looking into could be added onto the city garage. Mr. Erichson said that probably would not work. The two government entities tried once to plan on a joint facility several years ago, but the placement now virtually would not work.

Council Member Dick Pacholl brought up the dog pound and the need for an improved facility. Mr. Dankert explained that this came up during a staff meeting the other day, but to date, no request has come from the Police Department for such a facility. Mr. Erichson noted the Humane Society has some flooding problems, and partnering with them may be a good solution to all of our problems.

Mr. Dankert continued through the different departments. Mr. Erichson discussed the proposed projects being reviewed by the Public Works Department, and Ms. Underwood discussed the projects being reviewed by the Park and Recreation Board.

Council Member Martin asked about the sanitary sewer backups due to flooding on the east side of town. Mr. Erichson noted that page 40 of the CIP refers to an I&I study (Inflow and Infiltration for the Ellis School area.

Mr. Erichson also noted the railroad safety crossing by Buffy the Cow should be done in late October. Additionally, we are looking at trying some LED lights to lower our monthly utility bills.

\$50,000 of Port Authority funds are needed in 2010 to help clean up the 13.55-acre undeveloped site near the truck stop on I-90.

Ms. Underwood also noted that the Park and Recreation needs could be tied into the possible city garage expansion project in 2013.

No objections were noted with the process and plans that have been discussed. Any material changes from now until December will be brought back up to Council for their review.

There being no further business, motion by Council Member Hecimovich, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tom Dankert  
Director of Administrative Services