

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**April 2, 2012**  
**City Hall Conference Room (Council Chambers until about 7:45 p.m.)**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Stiehm, Council Member-at-Large Janet Anderson, Council Members Jeff Austin, Roger Boughton, Brian McAlister, Steve King, Judy Enright, and Marian Clennon.

**ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Public Works Director Jon Erichson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Public, Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

**Item No. 1. Traffic Control**– St Augustine’s Elementary School asked for signage on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NW. State statues want to reduce speed limits. This area is used for loading and unloading students to get to school. Mr. Erichson’s recommendation is to put signs right off of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> St to advise people that this is a school zone. Council Member-at-Large Anderson moved to approve the signs, seconded by Council Member Austin. Motion passed unanimously.

10<sup>th</sup> St SE has a request for a turn lane. Mr. Erichson explained how citizens feel about this issue. His thoughts are that it is not designed for turn lanes. There will be sharp lane shifting here that may cause more accidents than prevent them. He suggested they could paint some arrows for turning. Council Member Austin thought the arrows are a good idea. No action is needed for this.

Citizens are concerned about 18<sup>th</sup> St SE, by Nevlen and Ellis schools. They are concerned about speed and accidents. There have only been two accidents in seven years Mr. Erichson said. They are still proposing a stop sign between 18<sup>th</sup> St and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave right by Nevlen School. Council Member Enright said a citizen called her about this issue recently. The citizen said it wasn’t so much about speed; it’s from the two block stretch without stop sign, that’s where the speed issue comes from. This week wouldn’t be a good week to put a speed trailer there, since there is no school. They will be put there when school is in session. Council Member King moved to approve the sign, Council Member Austin seconded this. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item No. 2. Flood property acquisition**– Mr. Erichson explained about the grant the City received. One of the required actions is to have property acquisitions in flood plains. 10<sup>th</sup> Pl NE was moved to 6<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, it was a rambler house he explained. A parcel property they would like to acquire is right in the middle of Rotary Park. That property does qualify under the LMI qualifications and the residents are ready to move from the area. Their house was appraised at \$72,000; the City has put \$90,000 into the other property thus far. It would turn out that they would owe the City \$14,000. They can come up with \$8,000 and have applied for a loan for \$6,000. We are proposing to trade them parcels of property provided they have the \$14,000 and we will also have local option sales tax to move this house from the flood plain, Mr. Erichson explained. Council Member Austin moved to approve this, Council Member-at-Large Anderson seconded this. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item No. 3. Riverside Arena**– There has been some hail damage to the roof of Riverside Arena. Mr. Erichson said the best option is to put shingles on the roof.

There is money budgeted for the lower level parking lot. Mr. Erichson is concerned about how bad it is even after the patching last year. Council Member-at-Large Anderson noted the status of this. Council Member Boughton noted the 25 year contract with Austin Utilities. Mr. Erichson noted a property trade that occurred in 1973. The deeds were never exchanged through his research. The City has authority to use this parking lot as long as the arena is still there. Since it is still in used, the contract should be renewed according to Mr. Erichson. The Utilities is not interested in sharing the costs to fix this since they don't use it. No action is needed for this.

**Item No. 4. Revolving loan request**– None.

**Item No. 5. – Administrative Report- LMC Legislative Action Day** – Mr. Hurm noted that he and Council Member Enright went to the League of MN Cities Legislative Action Day. She said it was an interesting day and spoke with Governor Dayton. They attended a panel from legislators and senators. They heard a few things that are going to affect greater Minnesota. One is the tax bill and the other is the photo id at the polls. It will be put on the ballot in November but there is some complication that will cost money. It will lengthen the time it takes to get results from the election, and take more volunteers at the elections. Council Member Boughton asked when it will be effective, Council Member Enright said most likely next year. It will probably cost \$23 million to the state plus at least \$8 million at the local level to conduct other elections. When asked if there was a problem with election fraud, local representatives were unsure. Council Member Enright would like everyone to keep an eye on this topic.

Another funded mandates is budget reporting changes. This would require the state and counties with a population over 2,500 to use a new form of object code for recording local budgets. Council Member-at-Large Anderson asked what the goal of this is. Mr. Hurm said to compare different cities, which is a very complex thing to do; we are trying to do this already. It's going to be time consuming and costly.

Gun training for youth is another issue they looked at according to Council Member Enright. This could require training to be done at the police range. A police officer or City employee would have to be there during this time. Youth would need to do this in the afternoon or evenings, which in return means the City would need to fund the staffing. Our range is not very child friendly. Council Member Clennon asked if this was new, Council Member Enright said it probably is and she doesn't understand the need for this, perhaps there isn't enough gun training around.

**Item No. 5. – Administrative Report – HRA and Executive Director** – Mr. Hurm passed out a memorandum to the Council and Mayor discussing the possibility of when Mr. Erichson retires possibly next year becoming the new part-time executive director of the HRA. With upcoming retirements and the Housing Improvement Program coming up, as well as a survey handed out to the staff, a part-time position is sufficient. More time is needed than he can provide, Mr. Hurm thought. This is just a recommendation and needs to go to the HRA Board. Council Member Boughton thanked Mr. Hurm for his work at the HRA and said having Mr. Erichson there makes him feel comfortable with the direction the HRA is moving. He encourages the other board members to consider this. Council Member Enright asked how a position like this is filled. Mr. Hurm said they will need to look this through with the HRA board and an attorney. She said that having someone qualified and wanting to be there is necessary. Council Member Clennon questioned why this was brought up here with the council if the HRA board needs to do this.

Council Member Boughton said it is out of courtesy. Council Member Enright asked the connection between the HRA and the City. Council Member Boughton said that every board is appointed by the Mayor. Mr. Hurm noted that the HRA pays the City \$30,000 for Information Services and his position as the Executive Director. He noted that he could then offer more time to be spent at the City if this change were to occur. Council Member McAlister is uncomfortable with the proposal right now because he hasn't heard anything about the HRA needing a director. If there are administrative needs at the HRA and more at the City he suggested that there could be a part-time HRA director and part-time Assistant Administrator for the City. Mr. Hurm feels that there is more of an opportunity for an administrator at the HRA. Mayor Stiehm asked how much of a work load is at the HRA, there is a possibility that Mr. Hurm will have a significant less work load and able to spend more time with the City. Council Member-at-Large Anderson said it also depends on what is going on; the Housing Improvement Program could take a lot of time. Mr. Hurm said that there are retirements coming up and other projects; this is something to look into now. Council Member Boughton said that the HRA would love the Council's support. Mayor Stiehm asked Council Member Boughton to make a report at the next meeting from the HRA.

**Item No. 5. Administrative Report- legislative luncheon** – Mr. Hurm reminded the Council of the legislative luncheon on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at the Eagle's at 12 noon. Mayor Stiehm and Council Member-at-Large Anderson said she would like to attend.

**Item No. 5. – Administrative Report – Community Band-** The community band is looking for some extra funding. They are looking to the Austin Area Foundation (AAF) for this. Council Member-at-Large Anderson said the City doesn't need to do anything if the AAF is doing so. Council Members Boughton and Austin said the money has to go through the City since the AAF is not a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit. It will just pass through the City; it is not actually coming from the City. Motioned by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, motioned passed 6-1; Council Member Clennon declined.

**Item No. 6. Open Discussion** – Council Member Enright forgot to mention the fireworks bill, the LMC is opposed to this. This bill will legalize most fireworks in the area. So far it has passed at the House.

Council Member Clennon thought the Humane Society was supposed to be at this meeting. They want to come and talk about their programs. Council Member-at-Large Anderson said it would be great to have them at a meeting.

Motion by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindy Crawford