

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
January 5, 2015
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members David Hagen, Steve King, Jeremy Carolan, Michael Jordal, Judy Enright, Jeff Austin and Council Member-at-Large Janet Anderson

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Park and Recreation Director Kim Underwood and City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Review 2015 Assessment Rates

Director of Public Works Steven Lang presented the 2015 assessment rates stating the City would like to assess adjacent property owners 50% of the costs of the project but 30% to 40% has been the average over recent years. He proposed increasing the assessment rates for urban and commercial streets 2.9% to get closer to that goal. Therefore, the rate for 2015 will increase from \$41.50 per lineal foot to \$42.75 per lineal foot for residential street reconstruction and \$59.50 per lineal foot to \$61.25 per lineal foot for commercial properties. The sidewalk rate will also increase from \$4.00 to \$4.10 per lineal foot. Other rates would also be increased slightly.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson to recommend approval of the Engineering Department's proposed 2015 assessment rates. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the January 20, 2015 Council Meeting.

Item No. 2 – Flood Home Acquisition

Director of Public Works Steven Lang requested Council authorization to purchase three properties: 404 7th Avenue SE for \$53,800; 406 7th Avenue SE for \$93,200; and 409 8th Avenue SE for TBD. Each property has an approximate asbestos abatement and demolition cost of \$15,000. These parcels are out of the normal requirements for acquisition however, they are part of the neighborhood that has already been acquired and it would eliminate the need for sanitary sewer and water services to the homes. The purchase prices would be funded through LOST funds.

For informational purposes only, no Council action needed at this time.

Item No. 3 – Ponderosa Acquisition

Director of Public Works Steven Lang requested Council authorization to purchase the Ponderosa located at 401 10th Drive SE from Austin Utilities. The property is valued at \$185,000 with \$6,000 in asbestos abatement and demolition cost of \$20,000 and plus water utility termination of \$2,000 therefore bringing the purchase price to \$161,000. The purchase price would be funded with 50% MnDNR grant and 50% LOST funds.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, for approval of the acquisition and demolition of the Ponderosa located at 401 10th Drive SE. Carried.

No additional action needed at this time.

Item No. 4 - Web Page Policy

City Clerk Ann Kasel reported the City is receiving many requests from companies around the world to have their service listed on our “New Residents Information” page. Most of the companies are online services such as colleges or internet that do not generally have a presence in the City. This has also been reported by many other cities around the State. Many of those cities are adopting a policy to establish guidelines as to what is listed on their city’s page. Don Tomlinson, the City’s IT manager, also agrees with the policy so our page is relevant to City’s residents.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, for adoption of the web page policy. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the January 20, 2015 Council meeting.

Item No. 5 – 2015 Council Boards and Commissions

City Administrator Craig Clark reviewed the open positions on the boards and commissions for 2015. The following appointments were made:

Port Authority – Council Member Carolan

DCA Board – Council Member Hagen

HRA Board – Council Member Hagen

Senior Center Board – Mayor Stiehm

SMART Transit – Council Member King

The appointments will be placed on the January 20, 2015 Council Meeting.

Item No. 6 – Council Retreat Information

City Administrator Craig Clark reviewed the 2015 Council Retreat information adding that George Brophy will be facilitating part of the retreat. Retreat information will go out at the end of the week.

Item No. 7- Administrative Report- 2014 Council Goals

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert reviewed the 2014 Council Goals and noted all are completed or are ongoing projects that could not be completed in the year 2014. The 2015 goals will be set at the Council Retreat.

Item No. 8 – Open Discussion-Rental Housing

Council Member Austin noted the rental housing ordinance passed while he was on vacation and was disappointed that a modification to the document couldn't be made to compromise the situation. He noted he had a person call him today and ask if they needed to register with the City.

No additional action needed.

Item No. 9 – Closed Session

Motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Carolan, to close the meeting at 7:29 p.m. pursuant to Minn. Stat. Section 13D.05 subd. 3 to discuss offers and counteroffers for the sale of real property located at 400 4th Street NE.

See DVD of closed meeting.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, to reopen the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Carried.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, to purchase the Austin Utilities' portion of City Hall for \$275,000 plus 4 acres of land at the Cook Farm Site. Carried.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk

