

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
January 4, 2016
City Hall Council Chambers

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Steve King, Michael Jordal, Jeremy Carolan, Jeff Austin, David Hagen, Judy Enright 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, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace,

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Jones, Sandy Forstner, KAUS, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Review 2016 Assessment Rates

Director of Public Works Steven Lang presented the 2016 assessment rates stating it is the City's goal to assess adjacent property owners 50% of the costs of street projects and in 2015 the City assessed 47% of the project costs. He proposed increasing the assessment rates for urban and commercial streets 1%. Therefore, the rate for 2016 will increase from \$42.75 per lineal foot to \$43.00 per lineal foot for residential street reconstruction and \$61.25 per lineal foot to \$61.75 per lineal foot for commercial properties. The sidewalk rate will also increase from \$4.10 to \$4.25 per lineal foot. Other rates would also be increased slightly.

Council Member Enright asked if a six inch thick sidewalk is for the driveways.

Mr. Lang confirmed that six inches of concrete is required for driveway areas and four inches for normal sidewalk areas.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, to recommend approval of the Engineering Department's proposed 2016 assessment rates. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the January 19, 2016 Council Meeting.

Item No. 2 – Riverside Arena Project Cost Review

Director of Public Works Steven Lang reviewed the Riverside Arena project. He is working to finalize the construction contract with Harty Mechanical. The budget for the project was \$1,848,703 and the costs so far are \$1,820,723.02. There are two change orders for the project

that need to be approved by Council in order to move forward. Mr. Lang detailed the change orders and additional work that was required on the project along with the funding sources.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Enright, to recommend approval of the two change orders on the Riverside Arena project. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the January 19, 2016 Council Meeting.

Item No. 3 – Hormel Institute Crosswalk/Stop Sign Request

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City received a request for a stop sign at the intersection of 8th Street and 16th Avenue NE which is adjacent to the Hormel Institute. A pedestrian was struck there earlier in the year. Mr. Lang stated the City has been working with the Institute during the development in the area and has installed crosswalks and pedestrian activated flashing beacons for crossing.

He recommended declining the stop sign request and installing an additional pedestrian activated flashing beacon and reviewing the area to determine if additional lighting should be added. He stated the main issue is the sight visibility of the intersection. The flashing beacons will warn traffic of the pedestrian crossing and the additional lighting would illuminate the area more effectively.

Craig Jones with the Hormel Institute stated he would prefer a stop sign for the intersection due to the pedestrian being struck. He stated there is poor visibility in the intersection because of the curve and pedestrians can't see the oncoming traffic and may still be in the crosswalk when a car is approaching. He agreed that more light in the area would help but the solution is to install a traffic light to slow the traffic down.

Council Member Enright stated she is concerned with the Hormel R&D increased traffic and Todd Park traffic going through the area.

Mr. Lang stated there are 2,300 vehicles a day that use the route and that may cause a traffic backup stopping every single vehicle. He stated the flashing beacon will warn the traffic when there is a person crossing and not impede traffic when it's not necessary.

Council Member Carolan asked the cost of a flashing beacon versus a stop sign.

Mr. Lang stated a flashing beacon is about \$8,000 and a stop sign is about \$200.

Council Member Austin stated that a stop sign will be awkward the way the road is laid out.

Council Member King spoke in support of the stop sign stating he received a complaint about an additional person being hit and the developments in the area warrant a stop sign.

Council Member Jordal asked if the beacon was activated when the pedestrian was hit.

Mr. Jones confirmed it was.

Moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member King, for a stop sign on both intersections at 8th Street and 16th Avenue NE. Motion failed 4-3 with Council Members Hagen, Carolan, Jordal and Austin voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, for a flashing beacon on the South side of 16th Avenue NE. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Stiehm suggested that the Police Department patrol the area a few days to help slow drivers down.

The matter will be placed on the January 19, 2016 Council meeting.

Item No. 4 – Hazardous Buildings

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace provided an update of pending hazardous building matters in the City. The City currently has seven hazardous structures that the Council has passed resolutions on. Ms. Wallace stated the asbestos abatement bid was removed from the Council agenda earlier in the evening so the Council could have an opportunity to review the options for the properties. She stated there are currently three properties that have the potential for demolition – 1804 9th Street NE, 2114 6th Avenue NE and 1001 6th Avenue NE. These properties have been problems for a few years and the City has Court orders for demolition. Once the structures are removed and the assessment placed on the property for the work performed then sometimes the property will go into tax forfeiture. Ms. Wallace looked for Council direction with these properties. She also added there are 40 hazardous building matters pending.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson asked where the funds for the demolition would come from.

Mr. Dankert stated the funds would come from contingency. It will be \$15,000 to \$20,000 per home.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated there may be something that the City can do to resolve these issues earlier and preserve the housing stock.

Ms. Wallace discussed the individual properties.

Mr. Lang noted the City may need to waive some of the costs in order to get the properties redeveloped.

Council Member Enright would like to fine or prosecute the habitual offenders of the housing code.

Ms. Wallace stated if the City could somehow prevent landlords from renting properties then it may motivate owners to keep properties are in good shape.

Council Member King would like to know how many nuisance complaints are discovered by inspector Fred Husemoeller and how many are called in by citizen complaints.

Ms. Wallace stated she would provide that information.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member King, to move forward with demolition on 1804 9th Street NE, 2114 6th Avenue NE and 1001 6th Avenue NE. Carried 7-0.

Council Member Enright would like to start using the right to fine and prosecute habitual offenders.

Ms. Wallace stated she is waiting to hear back from the City Attorney on that issue.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member Enright, authorizing \$60,000 from contingency for funding the demolitions. Carried.

The item will be placed on the January 19, 2016 Council meeting.

Item No. 5 – 2016 Council Boards and Commissions

City Administrator Craig Clark asked if anyone would like to change boards and commissions.

The Council did not express any interest in changing positions.

Item No. 6 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated that City staff is trying to pin down retreat dates. He asked that the Council respond to the e-mail sent out for availability.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, adjourning the work session at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk