

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
February 16, 2016
City Hall Council Chambers

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Michael Jordal, Jeremy Carolan, Jeff Austin and Council Member-at-Large Janet Anderson

ABSENT: Council Members Steven King, David Hagen and Judy Enright

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Xcel Energy Renewable Development Fund Grant

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City was selected to receive a grant in the amount of \$3.5 million dollars for the installation of engines that would run off methane gas to produce electricity. The City evaluated the project and discovered that the SMMPA contract wouldn't allow for electrical generation because the City would still need to purchase the electricity at a higher rate than it could sell it. In addition, the gas production has gone down and utility rates have changed since the original application. Mr. Lang recommended declining the grant due to these factors.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, recommending declining the grant from Xcel energy. Carried.

The item will be placed on the March 7, 2016 Council agenda.

Item No. 2 – Interim Use Permit

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace stated the Planning commission reviewed the interim use permit issue at their November 10, 2015 meeting and recommended moving forward with it. There are unique circumstances that come up and this would allow that activity to be permitted for a specified amount of time. This varies from a traditional conditional use permit in that it has a time period that it is allowed. She stated this would facilitate a more business friendly environment in Austin. The applications would go to the Planning Commission.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Carolan, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to move forward with the adoption of an interim use permit ordinance. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the March 7, 2016 Council Meeting.

Item No. 3 –Update on Labor Negotiations

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to close the meeting at 7:59 p.m. pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.03, for an update on labor negotiations. Carried.

[See DVD of Closed Meeting](#)

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to reopen the meeting. Carried.

Item No. 4 – City Administrator Evaluation Review

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.0, subd. 3, for employee evaluation. Carried.

[See DVD of Closed Meeting](#)

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to reopen the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Carried.

Item No. 5 – Administrative Report

Council Member Austin stated he received a complaint from a citizen about a neighbor feeding feral cats. City staff researched the issue and found that this would be a hard ordinance to enforce. The Mower County Humane Society suggested that the citizen trap and neuter the animals to control the problem.

Council Member Jordal stated it would be difficult to have an ordinance regarding it. Council Member-at-Large agreed.

Council Member Austin stated he is against unenforceable ordinances and would talk to the Citizen.

Council Member Jordal expressed his concern about Council Member Hagen being missing from the Council meetings so often. He also noted that Council Member Hagen will not be at the retreat. It is unfair to his constituents and the rest of the Council. He added that he would like Craig to look into the procedure to remove a non-attending council member.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, adjourning the work session at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk