

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
April 18, 2016
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Steve King, Michael Jordal, Jeremy Carolan, Jeff Austin, Judy Enright, David Hagen 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, City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Nibaur, Charlie Fawver, Sandy Forstner, Eric Shoars, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 5:51 p.m.

The items were heard out of sequential order.

Item No. 2 –Izaak Walton Agreement

Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood presented the continuation of the Izaak Walton cabin use agreement with the Izaak Walton League for another ten years. The terms of the agreement are unchanged.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, recommending approval of a lease with the Izaak Walton League. Carried.

The item will be placed on the May 2, 2016 Council Meeting.

Item No. 3 – Bandshell Community Park Concert Event

Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood received a request from Bethlehem Free Methodist Church to host a concert on July 23, 2016 and have the music until 9:55 p.m., which is beyond the Park Board's rule of dusk. The Park Board referred the matter to the City Council as it deals with the City noise ordinance. Ms. Underwood and Chief Krueger reviewed the request and did not take issue with it as long as there were no noise complaints. If there was a complaint on that evening then the Police would ask the band to stop playing.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Enright, recommending approval of a concert request from Bethlehem Free Methodist Church. Carried.

The item will be placed on the May 2, 2016 Council Agenda.

Item No. 1 – Ad Hoc Housing Committee Recommendations

City Administrator Craig Clark provided a summary of the Mayor's Housing Committee activities and recommendations. One of the recommendations was to establish an abatement proposal for new multifamily and single family home construction. The program would provide a three year window for a five year abatement program of new property taxes associated with the new construction. He stated the City would approach the County and School District to see if they would like to participate in the program also.

Mr. Clark discussed increasing rents at the HRA housing units to jump start building by the private sector and having rent guarantees by employers. He also stated the Committee would like robust enforcement of housing codes.

Sandy Forstner stated the gap between the cost of development and rental or sale of the properties needs to be addressed. The proposed abatement program would be helpful because he felt employers are looking for help with housing issues.

Eric Shoars added major employers would be more successful in attracting employees if there were sufficient housing. He state this isn't just an Austin problem; it's a national problem.

Council Member King stated there may be more reasons than just housing when people are choosing a community to live in.

Mr. Fawver agreed with Council Member King and added that cleaning up some of the housing in Austin may also help.

Council Member Enright was concerned about increasing the rents at Chauncey and Courtyard apartments. She stated she is on the HRA board and most people living there are on fixed incomes.

Mr. Clark stated both housing complexes have a long waiting list and it would spur the marketplace to raise rents.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated she would not support a substantial rent increase at the HRA properties.

After additional discussion, Mr. Clark requested approval of the abatement proposal. He stated he would talk to the County and School District to see if they would also support tax abatement.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member King, recommending checking with the County and School District for participation of the proposed Austin Home Initiative. Carried.

Moved by Council King, seconded by Council Member Austin, recommend approval of the proposed housing recommendations from the Ad Hoc Housing Committee. Carried.

The items will be placed on a future Council Agenda.

Item No. 4 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated he is working on the Council goals and should be on an upcoming work session. He also stated registration is open for the Coalition summer conference which will be held in Austin in July.

Item No. 5 – Open Discussion

There was no open discussion.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Hagen, adjourning the work session at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk