

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
September 6, 2016
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Michael Jordal, Jeremy Carolan, Jeff Austin, Steve King, 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, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Nibaur, John Garry, Steve Kime, Laura Helle, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

The following item was taken out of order:

Item No. 2 – North Main Flood Control Project Levee Certification

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update on the North Main Flood Control Project levee certification. He stated staff has been working with SEH and FEMA to remove structures from the flood plain and as part of the project SEH has modeled the Cedar River from I-90 to the Roosevelt Bridge and identified corrections in the 100 year flood plain boundary. This resulted in changes to the flood plain maps to accurately represent how the water flows through the City. The levee certification process is required to be done approximately every 10 years.

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

Item No. 1 –Final Visual Quality Manual

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update on the Visual Quality Manual developed by citizens working with MnDOT for options for landscaping and bridge aesthetics that will be used for future bridge replacements along the I-90 corridor. The manual specifies different architecture for primary, secondary and tertiary bridges and entrance signs. Mr. Lang reviewed the manual with the Council.

Mr. Lang added that the 11th Drive NE bridge will be the first to be reconstructed using the visual quality manual. The proposed bridge will be much wider with better visibility and a pedestrian trail.

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

Item No. 3 – 12th Street SW Bike Lane

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated as part of the Highway 105 reconstruction, a portion of 12th Street SW was to include a bike Sharrow or shared bike/vehicle lane. Due to the installation of the fog line, the sharrow was to be installed in the passenger wheel area. Mr. Lang brought the matter back to Council for additional consideration due to the proposed placement. He stated the options are to:

- Do nothing and bicyclists will utilize the existing sidewalk and roadway with no markings
- Install a sharrow lane and bicyclists will share the path with vehicles.
- Create a dedicated bike lane to separate vehicles from bike traffic.

Mr. Lang stated the dedicated bike lane would eliminate parking on 12th Street SW. He stated he sent letters to 53 adjacent property owners regarding the matter and approximately 75% of residents are in favor of the dedicated bike lane. Mr. Lang recommended moving forward with a dedicated bike lane on 12th Street SW.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Hagen, recommending approval of a dedicated bike lane on 12th Street SW. Carried.

The item will be placed on the September 19, 2016 Council Agenda.

Item No. 4 – Economic Development Incentives Package

City Administrator Craig Clark presented a “Grow Austin” incentives package to Council to establish local incentives for job growth. The Austin program is based on the State of Minnesota’s Job Creation Fund, Capital Investment Rebate and Job Training programs. The Austin incentives would be on a one-time basis and would require the creation of a minimum of three jobs with a wage requirement of \$16.35. There would also be rebates and training funding within the program. The City’s program would be a one-time incentive program.

The program would be funded via the DCA in the amount of \$25,000 and the remaining would be split between the City and County on a 50/50 ratio with overall funding capped at \$350,000. In addition, Austin Utilities would rebate utility services on a per job basis.

DCA Director John Garry reviewed a table with Council detailing how the program could be applied to a company coming to Austin. He stated this would be a tool for Austin to attract businesses and make Austin unique.

Council Member King asked if this type of program is unique to Austin.

Mr. Clark stated the City of New Ulm has some economic incentives but not the exact same items as this proposal.

Mayor Stiehm asked how the program will be funded.

Mr. Clark stated beginning with the 2017 budget the City will begin to put funds aside slowly for the program. He added that he will ask for County participation in the program also.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson asked how the program would be marketed.

John Garry stated the City would work with the State so they have knowledge of the program and can market it to potential businesses. He added that the City program is open to existing businesses in the community, not just new businesses.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member Hagen, recommending approval of the Grow Austin program. Carried.

The matter will be taken to the County for consideration and brought back to Council at a later date.

Item No. 5 – Brewery Ordinance

City Clerk Ann Kasel presented a proposed ordinance providing for the licensing of brewer tap rooms, brew pubs and brewery off-sale. Ms. Kasel stated breweries are an expanding industry in Minnesota and there has been interest expressed in opening one in Austin. The proposed ordinance refers to the Statutes for regulation of the license and therefore the ordinance would stay current as the Statutes are updated.

Moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member Hagen, recommending approval of a brewery ordinance. Carried.

The item will be placed on the September 19, 2016 Council Agenda.

Item No. 6 –2017 Budget Discussion

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert reviewed the Council's decisions from the August 15th work session in regard to the 2017 budget. Mr. Dankert stated the Council approved increasing the Fire Department's administrative assistant from 20 to 40 hours with funding coming from reducing contingency funding in 2017 from \$150,000 to \$115,000. A building maintenance person was not approved unless additional LGA was granted through a special session. Also not included was funding for the Mower County Historical Society and the Austin Area Commission for the Arts.

Mr. Dankert stated there were no questions from the Council sent to him since the last work session. He noted that Vision 2020 sent a request to increase their allocation from \$22,000 to

\$30,000 for additional marketing efforts. He stated the Vision 2020 had approval for those funds in 2015 but did not use the funds in that budget year.

Mr. Dankert stated if the Council supported the Vision 2020 request he proposed it taking it from 2017 contingency.

Council Members Jordal and Austin spoke against the additional funds stating it appears to be a duplication of services that are provided already in the community.

Council Member Enright also spoke against the funding and would like to see progress on the community recreation center.

Moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to deny an additional \$8,000 in requested funding for Vision 2020. Carried.

Mr. Dankert stated the total tax levy increase will be 9% which needs to be certified at the September 19, 2016 Council meeting. It cannot be increased after that date but could be decreased, if desired by Council.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Enright, for a 9% tax levy increase for 2017 with a total tax levy of \$5,341,000. Carried.

The item will be placed on the September 19, 2016 Council Agenda.

Item No. 7 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark provided a brief update to the 2016 Council goals.

Item No. 8 – Open Discussion

Moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member King, adjourning the work session at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk