

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**October 3, 2016**  
**City Hall Conference Room**

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

**ABSENT:** Council Member Steve King

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Police Chief Brian Krueger, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Park and Rec Director Kim Underwood, City Clerk Ann Kasel

**ALSO PRESENT:** Tanya Medgaarden, Matt Cano, Laura Helle, Greg Siems, Bruce Westrum, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

**Added Item – Rec Center Agreement with YMCA**

City Administrator Craig Clark presented a modified lease with the YMCA for the rec center. The agreement has already been passed by the YMCA and allocates \$100,000 to the YMCA for the operation of a youth activity center and children's play area which will be free of charge to the public. There was an additional \$100,000 which was previously included to cover other public areas but now that \$100,000 will be allocated for scholarships at the Council's discretion. The remainder of the lease is unchanged from what Council previously authorized.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned how the parties came to the decisions in the proposed lease agreement.

Matt Cano stated negotiations between parties evolved into this new agreement and the indoor walking track was taken off the table since public walking time in the winter is possible at the dome.

Tanya Medgaarden added that there were lots of meetings to come to a consensus with all parties.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson asked how this final version of the contract varied from the original plan of Vision 2020.

Ms. Medgaarden stated the goal of the project was to apply for as much community access as possible while recognizing there is a cost for public access. The committee worked to keep as much public access as they could without having substantial cost to the citizens.

Mr. Cano noted it is much cheaper to have a third party operate the facility than the City operate it due to labor costs. He stated it is unique that the facility will be paid for and there will be no membership dollars going toward payments of the construction.

Mr. Clark noted the contract shifts the public access component from guaranteed public hours to the scholarship program. That way citizens are still able to access the facility but it isn't a threat to the YMCA's membership base.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson asked if non-Austin residents that live close to Austin will be able to benefit from those programs.

Mayor Stiehm stated Austin residents are the only ones that can benefit since they are paying taxes to the City.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated the County could develop a similar program for County residents if they wished to do so.

Bruce Westrum expressed his concerns about the lack of tennis courts in the facility.

Mayor Stiehm noted the City is not responsible for the design of the facility.

Council Member Austin stated this scenario isn't the first thing that comes to mind for a community recreation center but he stated this is the best compromise the parties could have gotten. He added that it is a bonus that the facility will be debt free.

Council Member Hagen thanked the YMCA for their efforts in bringing the agreement together.

Council Member Carolan stated he appreciated the family pass option for the aquatic center and questioned if it would be available for all areas of the facility.

Ms. Medgaarden stated the YMCA may offer other passes based on usage of the facility.

Council Member Carolan asked if visitor passes would be available for non-Austin residents.

Mr. Cano affirmed those passes would be available.

Council Member Carolan asked what percentage of a tax increase would the \$200,000 equate to in the levy.

Mr. Dankert stated it would be an approximately 2% increase of current levy and increase the average homes taxes \$8-\$12 a year.

Mayor Stiehm noted the scholarship program has to be developed yet.

Council Member Jordal stated he liked this plan more than the one previously brought forward but he still feels a large percentage of the citizens are not in favor of the project. He would prefer the City not be involved in the project at all.

Mr. Dankert stated if Austin Utilities has to knock down the facility then it would be paid for by the citizens through their utility bill. Under the current project the demolition would be paid for by a grant not by taxpayers.

Mayor Stiehm stated the Council needs to have a vision for the community and this project is a great part of that vision to make Austin great.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson noted the City previously paid for a Youth Activity Center as part of the yearly budget so some of the \$200,000 will be paid through that.

Council Member Enright spoke in support of the project and stated the Youth Activity Center will take a burden off the youth hanging around the library.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, to recommend approval of the lease with the YMCA. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Jordal voting nay.

The item will be placed on the October 17, 2016 Council meeting.

*The follow item was taken out of order on the agenda-*

#### **Item No. 4 – Off-sale Liquor Ordinance Discussion**

City Clerk Ann Kasel presented the discussion on changing off-sale regulations in the City code. The first proposed change would be to allow off-sales until 10:00 p.m. on weekdays. Current ordinance limits sales at 8:00 p.m. but the State allows sales until 10:00 p.m. The second issue whether to allow 3.2 off-sale liquor in stores other than liquor establishments. The current city ordinance prohibits the sale of 3.2 beer in stores other than liquor establishments. The State does allow the sale of 3.2 in other establishments such as convenience stores.

Ms. Kasel noted the owners of Bell Liquor and Cheers Liquor were not in support of the changes while Hy-Vee and the Minnesota Grocers Association provided letters in support of the ordinances.

Police Chief Brian Krueger stated he doesn't see a police problem with either change.

Council Member Austin stated he is in favor of expanding the off-sale hours until 10:00 p.m. but not in favor of expanding access to 3.2 beer at additional locations.

Mike Ankeny, convenience store owner, spoke in support of expanding the sales into convenience stores adding that it would be up to each individual store owner if they wanted to sell it.

Council Member Hagen stated he spoke to five liquor store owners in Austin that were not in favor of the changes. He stated the owners felt it would hurt their customer counts and create additional overhead.

Council Member Jordal spoke in support of the changes stating it would make Austin a more tourist friendly destination and the sales will be consistent with the majority of the rest of the State.

Hy-Vee spoke in support of the measure stating it would add customer convenience.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Jordal, to allow off-sale liquor sales until 10:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday nights. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Hagen voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Jordal, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, to allow 3.2 beer off-sale in facilities other than liquor stores. Carried 3-2 with Council Members Austin and Hagen voting nay and Council Member Enright abstaining from the vote.

The items will be placed on the October 17, 2016 Council Agenda.

#### **Item No. 1 – Flooding Event Update**

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update from the September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> flooding event and the process that the Public Works department went through to prepare for and deal with the flooding. He stated the flooding resulted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest flood for Turtle Creek and the 7<sup>th</sup> highest for the Cedar River. He noted Turtle Creek didn't get as high as predicted due to the Cedar River not being as high and not allowing Turtle Creek to flow into it.

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

#### **Item No. 2 – Turtle Creek Flood Mitigation Update**

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update on the Turtle Creek Flood Mitigation. He stated there have been delays in the project due to the design of the pumping stations required to pump water from the dry side of the berm with a rain even occurs at the same time as a high water event. A berm would be constructed in the fall of 2017 at the earliest. Mr. Lang stated the City will be approaching residents for easements and possible acquisition.

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

#### **Item No. 3 – Administrative Citation Ordinance**

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace presented the proposed administrative citation ordinance. The citations would be used for residents who violate various City ordinances repeatedly or refuse to comply with ordinance or licensing requirements. The citations can be

contested and the costs of the hearing would be paid by the non-prevailing party. The property owner could also receive an assessment on their property.

Moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member Hagen, recommending approval of the administrative citation ordinance. Carried.

The item will be placed on the October 17, 2016 Council Agenda.

### **Item No. 5 – Capital Improvement Plan Discussion**

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert presented the 2017-2021 Capital Improvement Plan. The plan identifies approximately 102 million dollars in capital improvements for the City, some of which are contingent on receiving grant funds. The purpose of the work session was to review and ask questions about any of the proposed items. Then the Council will approve the document in December 2016 which authorizes the staff to purchase the 2017 items that are indicated in the CIP. For years 2018 and beyond, the document serves as a guide for the future but is subject to change as the City's needs change.

Pages 5-7 - Police Chief Krueger discussed the Police Department's capital improvement plan and noted that there are two marked squad cars budgeted for 2017, down from their normal three each year. The Department has been using funds from the forfeited vehicle reserve balance to outfit the vehicles. There is also a canine replacement budgeted for 2017. The Chief also stated the department will most likely purchase body cameras in the future which are not in the CIP currently.

Mr. Dankert noted the Police PERA will be expended in full after 2017.

Page 10-11 – Tom Dankert presented on behalf of Library Director Ann Hokanson presented the Library's portion of the capital improvement plan. In 2017, painting is planned for the library. Other furniture and improvements are scheduled for future years.

Page 12 – Director of Parks and Recreation Kim Underwood stated the Nature Center asks for most of their capital improvements through the Hormel Foundation or the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center. A new Visitor Center is being built in 2017 at an estimated cost of \$7,000,000 with \$500,000 coming from the City.

Pages 49-53 - Mrs. Underwood reviewed the Parks and Recreation requests noting various upgrades to parks including roads, playground equipment, buildings, signs and accessibility. The Park and Rec equipment fleet is also older and various purchases of vehicles and equipment are scheduled over the next five years.

Pages 8-9 – Fire Chief Jim McCoy presented the Fire Department's capital improvement items. In 2017, Chief McCoy plans on various remodeling projects at the station along with fire vehicle replacements over the next few years.

Pages 13-15 – Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert discussed Administration’s capital improvement projects stating that funds are being budgeted for public works equipment, a new server, computers and election booths. Each year \$20,000 is set aside for computers and associated equipment. The election equipment may be required to be upgraded for the 2018 or 2020 election.

The item will be continued to the October 17, 2016 Work Session.

**Item No. 6 –2017 Budget Discussion**

Mr. Dankert stated there were no questions from the Council sent to him since the last work session in regards to the 2017 budget.

**Item No. 7 – Administrative Report**

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

**Item No. 8 – Open Discussion**

None.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, adjourning the work session at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk