

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
January 3, 2017
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Laura Helle, Paul Fischer, 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, Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood and Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann

ALSO PRESENT: Randy Kramer, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Flood Plain Ordinance Update

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace reviewed the process for adopting a FEMA letter of map revision effective February 22, 2017. This is the final step to remove properties from the special flood hazard area in the North Main Street Area. The North Main Street flood control project provides flood protection for the properties and therefore they no longer are classified in the flood zone. This would allow the property owners the option to drop their flood insurance on the properties.

Ms. Wallace requested the Council approve the ordinance for the adoption of the letter of map revision.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Enright, recommending approval of the flood plain letter of map revision. Carried.

The item will be placed on the January 17, 2017 Council meeting.

Item No. 2 – Park and Rec Office Donation

City Administrator Craig Clark requested the Council approve the donation of the Park and Rec office to the Austin Area Commission for the Arts. The AACA has been interested in the property for a number of years but Park and Rec had no plans on moving until the recent City

Hall remodel. The City cannot directly gift the property to the AACCA so the City would provide funding for the purchase so the AACCA would return those funds for the purchase of the building.

Randy Kramer, with the AACCA, provided a map of the area stating that they would like to purchase the property to expand and modernize the Paramount. Currently, there is not a handicapped accessible restroom in the Paramount and patrons that need that type of restroom are brought over to the Park and Rec building to use their facilities. He added there is no expansion possibility to the east so the only way the Paramount could expand would be to go to the west. He noted the request would be for all of the property that the City owns from the curb to the alley in the back.

Council Member King asked what the value of the property is.

Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood stated the property value is approximately \$80,000.

Council Member Hagen asked if the AACCA will be able to handle additional overhead of additional property.

Mr. Kramer stated the enhancements to the theater will draw additional performers and more people to the shows. He noted they have had to turn away acts because of the lack of space.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated she has been in the theater with Matchbox Children's Theater performances and there is a clear lack of space. She felt the donation by the City would be an investment into the community.

Council Member King stated the donation would increase quality of life in the City.

Council Member Austin stated he is on the Park and Rec board and agrees the use of the property would be a fit with the downtown plan. He stated he questioned the donation of the property and added he received an e-mail from a concerned citizen about the donation of the property when others have to pay market value. Council Member Austin asked if the property is marketable to anyone else or if the AACCA have funds available for purchase of the property. He added he doesn't see this as promoting economic development.

Council Member Hagen added there is not a lot of market for buildings in downtown Austin so he would like to keep the building in good use.

Mr. Kramer added there are many projects that the City had participated for the improvement of the City as a whole and this project falls in line with that concept.

Council Member Helle stated she would abstain from voting on the matter due to her employment at the AACCA and added it is a coincidence that this matter is being discussed at her first council meeting.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, to recommend approval of funds for the gift of the Park and Rec building to the AACA. Carried 6-0 with Council Member Helle abstaining.

The matter will be placed on the January 17, 2017 Council meeting.

Item No. 3 – Setting 2017 Assessment Rates

Director of Public Works Steven Lang presented the 2017 assessment rates stating it is the City's goal to assess adjacent property owners 50% of the costs of street projects and in 2016 the City assessed 35.8% of the project costs. He proposed increasing the assessment rates for urban and commercial streets 2%. Therefore, the rate for 2016 will increase from \$43.00 per lineal foot to \$44.00 per lineal foot for residential street reconstruction and \$61.75 per lineal foot to \$63.00 per lineal foot for commercial properties. The sidewalk rate will also increase from \$4.25 to \$4.75 per lineal foot. Other rates would also be increased slightly.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Enright, to recommend approval of the Engineering Department's proposed 2017 assessment rates. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the January 17, 2017 Council Meeting.

Item No. 4 – Council Committee Assignments

The following Committee assignments were made:

AUSTIN/MOWER COUNTY HOMEOWNERSHIP BOARD

Meets January, May, October – 5:30, City Hall Conference Room

1. Jeff Austin
2. Paul Fischer

BLAZING STAR TRAIL JOINT POWERS BOARD

No set meeting times

1. David Hagen
2. Janet Anderson
3. Jeff Austin

CABLE TV COMMITTEE

No set meeting times

1. David Hagen

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD

1. Judy Enright

CITY/COUNTY HEALTH BOARD (County Appointment)

1. Steve King

COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Laura Helle

DISCOVER AUSTIN, MINNESOTA

1. Steve King

DCA BOARD

1. David Hagen

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

1. Steve King

HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD

1. Janet Anderson, First Ward
2. David Hagen, Second Ward
3. Judy Enright, Third Ward

LEC COMMITTEE

1. Tom Stiehm
2. Judy Enright
3. Craig Clark
4. Brian Krueger
5. Jim McCoy

LIBRARY BOARD

1. Janet Anderson

MOWER COUNTY WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Steve King

PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

1. Jeff Austin

PORT AUTHORITY OF AUSTIN

1. Laura Helle
2. Jeff Austin

SALVATION ARMY BOARD

1. Paul Fischer

SENIOR CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Tom Stiehm

SMART Transit Advisory Committee

1. Steve King

SUSTAINABILITY TASKFORCE

1. Janet Anderson
2. Paul Fischer

YELLOW RIBBON COMMITTEE

1. Judy Enright

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, recommending approval of the 2017 Council committee assignments. Carried.

The item will be placed on the January 17, 2017 Council meeting.

Item No. 5 – 2016 Council Goals

City Administrator Craig Clark reviewed the 2016 Council goals and noted some projects are ongoing but will be worked on in 2017.

Item No. 6 – Open Discussion

The dates are being set for the Council retreat.

Items No. 7 – Closed Session

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Helle, to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.03 – Labor Negotiations Update. Carried.

See DVD of Closed Meeting.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Enright, to reopen the closed session.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Enright, adjourning the work session at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk