

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**July 17, 2017**  
**City Hall Conference Room A**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Paul Fischer, Jeff Austin, Steve King, Judy Enright, David Hagen and Council Member-at-Large Janet Anderson

**ABSENT:** Council Member Laura Helle

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sheri Dankert, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

**Item No. 1 – Joint Powers Agreement with South East MN Violent Crime Enforcement Team**

Police Chief Brian Krueger reviewed some minor changes requested by the South East Minnesota Violent Crime Enforcement Team. The final version of the joint powers agreement will come back for Council approval at a later date.

For Council information only, no Council action needed at this time.

**Item No. 2 – Rental Housing Discussion**

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace provided information on rental housing in Austin. She stated since the rental registration ordinance was passed in 2014, 2,409 units have been registered which represent 889 properties. She reviewed zoning complaints and stated approximately sixty percent of complaints were on rental properties.

She provided information from different cities about a rental licensing and inspection ordinance and discussed different levels of inspection ordinances for the City. Council discussed the inspection component of the ordinance. Ms. Wallace stated many surrounding cities have rental inspection ordinances.

Ms. Wallace stated she would like a working group to develop the ordinance. She would like some Council involved and the Austin Landlord Association. Council Members Austin, King and Council Member-at-Large Anderson agreed to join the working group.

For information only, no Council action needed at this time.

### **Item No. 3 – Childcare in Austin**

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace stated a group named the Rural Child Care Innovation Program was launched recently to study child care in Austin. The program was started due to a grant written by Sheri Dankert of the Hormel Foundation. The group concluded there is a shortage of care by 810 slots. There have been some complaints that there isn't enough child care and there is a waiting list of 100-200 kids at Apple Lane. Their goal is to support existing child care centers and in home providers to make a better network of child care in Austin.

Mrs. Dankert stated to watch for a town hall meeting in September/October time frame.

For informational purposes only, no Council action needed.

### **Item No. 4 – 2017 Council Goals / Administrative Report**

City Administrator Craig Clark provided an update to the Council goals stating work is wrapping up on City Hall, the online registration for Park and Rec will be coming in the fall, the comp study currently is out for RFP's, and the Nature Center's demolition of the old interpretive center has been completed.

### **Item No. 5 - Open Discussion**

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided Council some preliminary figures for upgrades at the Waste Water Treatment Plant to comply with the MPCA proposed permit. He stated the City is still waiting on the final permit before any concrete figures can be determined but there will likely be sanitary sewer rate increases to cover the millions of dollars of projects planned.

The item will be placed on a future work session.

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update on flood project funding in the City of Austin. He stated the legislature allocated \$11.5 million for flooding in the State with \$7.3 million of the funds are available for grants. The City intends on meeting with the DNR and Mr. Lang requested the Council prioritize projects. The Council stated the North Main Street flood project was priority number one; the Turtle Creek area project was priority number two; and Lions Park was priority three. Mr. Lang stated it is unlikely that multiple projects in Austin will be funded.

The item will be placed on a future work session.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated he attending the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities board meeting and the board recommended a dues increase and additional environment assessments for the member cities.

Mayor Stiehm stated the Pillars of the City Committee has dedicated 8 pillars to date. He suggested changing the criteria or selection process so famous sports figures from Austin can receive a pillar.

City Clerk Ann Kasel stated she will send the criteria to Council for review.

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

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk