

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
February 20, 2018
City Hall Conference Room A

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

ABSENT: Council Member Judy Enright

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Park and Rec Director Kim Underwood, City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Grover, Jon Boyer, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Vision 2020 Bike Arch

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council approve the City involvement in the Vision 2020 bike arch. The arch would be constructed at the Lions Shelter and would be constructed of old bicycle frames welded together. The City would need to approve the site, provide two used light poles, construct the concrete bases and help with installation.

Mr. Lang stated Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood has taken this to the Park Board and the Board was in approval of the proposal.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Hagen, approving the Vision 2020 Bike Arch. Carried.

The item will be placed on the March 5, 2018 Council meeting.

Item No. 2 – Riverside Arena Fire Alarm System

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the control panel for the fire alarm system at Riverside Arena has failed and needs to be replaced. He stated the first option would be to replace just the panel with a low voltage panel and install low voltage to the existing pull stations. The City received two estimates for the first option from Fox Electric in the amount of \$7,250 plus battery backup and from \$4,666.39 plus battery backup Custom Alarm. The estimated cost of a battery backup system is \$6,600.

The second option would be to replace the panel with a low voltage panel and install a complete new voltage system with 30 new horns and strobes. This would also remove the pull stations in

the arena. The estimated costs for this option would be \$21,490 from Fox Electric and \$18,645.20 from Custom Alarm.

Mr. Lang recommended moving forward with the second option of installing a complete up to date fire system and requested funding from 2018 contingency.

Fire Chief stated he recommended replacing the entire system.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Hagen, approving the use of 2018 contingency funds for the replacement of the full Riverside Arena fire alarm system. Carried.

The item will be placed on the March 5, 2018 Council agenda.

Item No. 3 – Rental Licensing and Inspection Ordinance

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace presented the proposed rental licensing and inspection ordinance. She stated the purpose of the ordinance is to protect tenant safety and keep the rental units up to date. Austin's ordinance is modeled after the City of Faribault's ordinance.

Ms. Wallace proposed a fee of \$110 per building and \$25 per unit to cover the budget of approximately \$154,000. There would be a reinspection fee of \$50 for units that were not compliant with the first inspection. She proposed the ordinance effective date of August 31, 2018.

Ms. Wallace had spoken with Jon Erichson about his concerns for the HRA's costs to inspect their buildings. He had stated he wished the City would explore the possibility of reducing fees to the HRA due to the fact they are not able to pass on the fees to their public housing tenants because the rent is set and income based. Mr. Erichson also stated his properties are inspected by the HUD process and local inspections would be redundant. He suggested random housing inspections of the buildings over 40 units which would save the City staff time and costs.

Council Member King stated the HRA shouldn't be treated any differently than any other landlord in the City.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson, who is one of the City Council representatives on the HRA board, stated it isn't all about the fees. The inspections would also be repetitive.

Council Member Austin stated the HRA's units that were HUD inspected could be exempt from inspection but would still have to pay the fee. He noted the average landlord doesn't have inspection options. He stated the program needs to be revenue neutral and doesn't want any taxpayer funds going into it.

Council Member Helle agreed that each unit should be charged a fee each year, regardless if it was inspected.

Peter Grover, with the Austin Landlord Association, stated he supports the ordinance and wants it to be fair for all landlords. He stated it is hard to compete with subsidized property and believes the HRA should pay the same fees as other landlords.

He also added that he would like to see a provision where compliant properties would be given a year grace from inspection.

Jon Boyer, stated he recently had to raise rent to cover street projects and will have to raise rents again to cover the fees for the rental ordinance.

Council Member Austin stated there should have been additional subcommittee meetings prior to the ordinance coming to Council.

Mr. Grover invited Ms. Wallace to attend the Austin Landlord meeting on March 13th at 6:30 at the Holiday Inn to address additional concerns.

After additional discussion, the Council directed Holly Wallace to attend the Landlord meeting on March 13th, meet with the housing committee and bring the ordinance back to Council on April 2, 2018.

Item No. 4 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark reported the Coalition's legislative action day is March 14 and the League's day is March 21-22.

Item No. 5 - Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Hagen, adjourning the work session at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk