

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
July 20, 2020
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm. Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Council Members Steve King, Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller,
Laura Helle, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative
Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire
Chief Jim McCoy, Police Chief David McKichan, Park and Rec
Director Kevin Nelson, City Attorney Craig Byram, Library
Director Julie Clinefelter, Human Resources Director Trish
Wiechmann and City Clerk Ann Kasel

STAFF APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace

OTHERS APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Sally Garry, Elaine Hanson, Curtis Sorenson, Mike Postma, Peggy
Young, Karem Ramirez, Chuck Moline, Austin Daily Herald,
Public

Mayor Stiehm called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda:

(mot) 14. Appointing Yang Liu to the Culture and Arts Commission, term expiring
12/31/2020.

(res) 15. Recommending face covering usage to combat COVID-19.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving the agenda
as amended. Carried.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving Council
from July 6, 2020. Carried.

Elizabeth Wefel with the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities presented the year in the review
stating that the COVID pandemic changed their plans for legislative work. She provided detail

on their CARES Act work on behalf of cities. She also stated they are working on the bonding bill which includes funding for Austin's Waste Water Treatment Plant.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Investment and Financial Reports.

Carried.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a request for two parking stalls for an electric vehicle charging station. Carried.

Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson the YMCA has requested their second quarter payment from the City in the amount of \$25,000.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the second quarter payment to the YMCA. Carried.

Park and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson requested the Council approve the grant application for staffing at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving a memorandum of agreement required for applying for funding at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. Carried 7-0.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated that the State passed legislation for COVID-19 funding for the City of Austin in the amount of \$1.927 million. He stated that in addition to out of pocket COVID expenses, it is allowed to use the funding for full-time payroll costs for public safety employees. Mr. Clark requested the Council approve the proposed resolution for the acceptance and allocation of CARES funding from the State of Minnesota.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member King, adopting a resolution accepting and allocating CARES funding from the State of Minnesota. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution approving an on-sale liquor license for Austin MN Junior Hockey, LLC. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council approve materials testing on the Turtle Creek 2 project. He stated the City received a proposal from American Engineering & Testing for services on an hourly basis, up to \$2,105. He recommended approval of the contract.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution approving a contract for materials testing with American Engineering & Testing on the Turtle Creek 2 Sanitary Sewer project. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council approve deed restriction at the recently acquired flood property located at 509 South Main Street.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving deed restrictions on 509 South Main Street. Carried 7-0.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace reviewed a fence appeal from Chris Soucek and Kelly Anderson for a proposed 6-foot privacy fence which would enclose a portion of the side yard between the house and the garage at 511 4th Avenue SW. The Planning Commission reviewed the request at their July 14, 2020 meeting and recommended approval by a 7-0 vote.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, approving a fence appeal from Chris Soucek and Kelly Anderson. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1207 10th Street NE, Tasker Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 614, 616 & 618 10th Drive SE, Glassick Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 904 Oakland Avenue West, Sunbelt Motors Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Helle, appointing Yang Liu to the Culture and Arts Commission, term expiring 12/31/2020. Carried.

Mayor Stiehm stated the City is proposing a resolution suggesting, not mandating, residents wear face masks.

Council Member Waller stated she supports the resolution but is undecided on the mandate. She believed that it should be left up to individual retailers because enforcement would be difficult for the Police Department.

Council Member King stated he agrees with the resolution to strongly encourage citizens to wear masks and is interested to see if it has any impact on mask use in Austin. He added that he is

hesitant to put enforcement on the Police Department and likes the idea of the individual businesses regulating their own stores.

Council Member Poshusta stated she is supportive of the voluntary recommendation of mask wearing but is unsure of a mandate.

Council Member Helle stated she is in favor of the resolution encouraging mask use.

Council Member Fischer stated he is in favor of the resolution but doesn't think it is going to change any opinions on the issue.

Council Member Baskin stated he is in favor of the resolution and thinks that the City should publicly state its opinion on masks to set a good example for the community.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated he is in favor the resolution because it is good to encourage mask use by the public.

Curtis Sorenson stated he would like the Council to take more time on the issue because there is so much that is unknown about COVID-19.

Sally Garry spoke on behalf of Mower County Public Health stating they are in support of the resolution and added that wearing a mask prevents 30-45% of the spread.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution recommending face covering usage to combat COVID-19. Carried 7-0.

REPORTS

Council Member Helle congratulated Oballa Oballa for the recent birth of his child. She also encouraged citizens to vote, either in person on August 11th or via absentee.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated he is monitoring the status of the bonding bill for updates on the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member King, adjourning the meeting to July 20, 2020. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:30 p.m.

Approved: July 20, 2020

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____