ARDEN HILLS

Approved: March 28, 2016

CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 16, 2016
5:00 P.M. – MARSDEN ROOM - PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Pro-Tem Holden called to order the City Council work session at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Grant (arrived at 5:20 p.m.); Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes (attended meeting via telephone), Dave McClung and Jonathan Wicklund

Absent: None

Also present: Interim City Administrator Sue Iverson; Acting Public Works Director John Anderson; City Planner Ryan Streff; and Deputy City Clerk Julie Hanson

Public Works Maintenance Workers: Max Arvidson, Michael Christofore, Jeff Frid, Thomas Mikacevich, Tony Nowlan, Darien Schifsky, Mike Schifsky and Dave Winkel

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Red Fox Road – Lexington Avenue Intersection

Joe Lux, Ramsey County, provided the Council with an update on the Lexington Avenue and Red Fox intersection operations and possible improvements to deal with congestion. He noted he has held several discussions with County and MnDOT staff. He explained he had visited this intersection during the lunch hour on several occasions. He expressed concern with the number of vehicles that were running red lights. He then reviewed several potential scenarios that could be tried to improve traffic at this intersection. He indicated the County would like to wait to make any changes until the right turn lanes were constructed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Holden expressed concern with the amount of truck traffic that would be funneling through this intersection to get to I-694.

Mr. Lux understood this was the crux of the issue. He discussed how the intersection was being impacted as the area around it continues to develop. He indicated the County would continue to monitor this intersection and the lights.

Mayor Pro-Tem Holden was concerned with Arden Hills' residents and business owners being able to get in and out in a timely manner.

Mr. Lux stated the business owners that are developing now were willing to contribute to intersection improvements. Due to the fact there were no obvious solutions, in the interim options would continue to be considered by the County.

Councilmember McClung questioned how long the County would wait given the fact status quo was no longer acceptable. He stated the City was not comfortable with waiting and wanted to understand the County's plans.

Mr. Lux believed if the County was able to gather several more opinions regarding the concerns at this intersection he would have a better understanding on how to proceed. He did not anticipate the County would want to wait much longer than a few weeks after the construction was completed.

Councilmember McClung understood the County was proposing both some short-term and long-term solutions for the intersection. He asked when the County's project would be completed.

Mr. Lux hoped the Lexington Avenue project would be completed by the second week of August. He commented further on the short-term and long-term solutions for the intersection. He anticipated that the short-term fixes could be in place by October 1.

Councilmember Holden stated she was tired of receiving phone calls from local businesses complaining about this intersection. She wanted to see a solution from the County that would address the City's concerns prior to October 1.

Mr. Lux commented the County could continue to adjust the signal light timing.

Mayor Grant indicated the signal light tweaking led to only fractional improvements. It was his hope a second signal could be added to the south end of Target. He believed this would improve the traffic in the area.

Mr. Lux explained Target was not agreeable to participating financially in an additional light, but noted the Lexington Station developer was. He reported he could contact these businesses again. He provided further comment on how to address the Red Fox Road/Lexington Avenue intersection and indicated it would be difficult to prohibit right turns on red at this intersection. He stated he could speak with the sheriff about patrolling this intersection to reduce the number of vehicles running red lights.

Mayor Grant supported the County exploring the addition of another light on the south side of Target.

Further discussion ensued regarding the flow of traffic in and around the Red Fox Road and Lexington Avenue intersection.

Mayor Grant thanked Mr. Lux for his attendance and looked forward to continued conversations with the County regarding this topic.

B. Interstate I-35W North Corridor

Jerome Adams, Project Engineer with MnDOT, presented a project overview on the I-35W North Corridor for the City Council. He explained he was responsible for the I-35W north preliminary design. He discussed the location of the MnPASS lanes and described where noise walls would be located. He then noted where concrete would be used within the project area. The positive impact the new lanes would have on I-35W and I-694 traffic was reviewed. He clarified that the northbound entrance loop from County Road I would be closed in 2017. It was noted the I-35W North Corridor project was slated to start in the spring of 2019.

Mayor Grant asked if MnDOT was coordinating this project with the proposed improvements that would take place at County Road H.

Mr. Adams explained all of the traffic modeling for I-35W had included the development plans for TCAAP.

Mayor Grant questioned how MnDOT was raising capital for this project.

Mr. Adams stated the engineering for this project was brought to the district engineer of MnDOT. He reported this project was one of the top five priorities for MnDOT at this time. He explained MnDOT was not asking for money from the County or cities within the project area. He noted the ADA sidewalks at the top of terminals may require upgrades which may require City participation.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed improvements for I-35W.

Mr. Adams provided further comment on where sound walls would be located and who would be able to vote on them. He reported the proposed sound walls would be 20 feet in height and would have a decrease in traffic noise of five decibels.

Mayor Grant requested further information on the portion of Arden Hills that would not be receiving a noise wall.

Councilmember McClung believed that this neighborhood may require an explanation from MnDOT as to why they were not receiving a sound wall.

Mr. Adams indicated this neighborhood would not receive a five decibel decrease in noise, and therefore would not be receiving a sound wall.

Councilmember Holmes asked if there would be a noise wall on I-35W from I-694 to County Road D.

Mr. Adams reported there would be no noise wall north of County Road E2 to I-694 on the Arden Hills side.

Mayor Grant questioned if an 80 yard connection could be added to the County Road F ramp to the cloverleaf to improve traffic flow for Arden Hills' residents.

Mr. Adams stated he would look into this further and would ask the question. He did not believe MnDOT would likely support this connection.

Mayor Grant looked forward to hearing back from MnDOT regarding this issue.

C. Public Works Presentation

Acting Public Works Director Anderson hosted a shop tour and provided comment on some of the recent additions to the Public Works Equipment fleet. He then gave a presentation on work the Public Works Department would be involved in this spring. He noted the increased workload led to the use of more technology to increase efficiencies. He explained the Gopher One locates had become a huge drain on his department as the number of requests had gone up 44%. This work required one-half of a person devoted to locating utilities.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson reported another major focus for the Public Works Department staff was the monitoring of the City's 14 lift stations. He provided comment on how staff monitored the alarms and kept the lift stations working round the clock. He discussed how the City was utilizing the mobile 311 app. It was noted staff was also working on sign replacement within the City.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson explained the Public Works staff was also addressing problem watermains within the City. He discussed the number of valves and lines that his department was responsible for. He indicated a valve replacement plan would be implemented in 2016 to assist with reducing the number of water line breaks. He commented the City's new jetter has assisted the Public Works Department with keeping the City's water and sewer lines properly maintained. The great strides the City has made on lining its sanitary sewer lines was reviewed. He commented on the storm sewer improvements and repairs the City has been making. It was noted 23 rain gardens were included in the 2015 PMP project.

Councilmember Wicklund asked what the greatest challenges were for Public Works and asked how many FTE's they had.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson discussed the department's biggest challenges and noted the number of Public Works full time and seasonal employees.

Councilmember Wicklund was shocked by all of the work that was completed by the Public Works Department on a daily, weekly and annual basis. He was intrigued by how staff was utilizing technology to streamline Public Works tasks.

Councilmember Holden questioned how the Public Works Department was addressing the City's stormwater ponds.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson reported the City was required to create a pond maintenance program over the next five years. He stated the City does not have a full-fledged program in place at this time.

Councilmember Holden requested further information on the cost benefit analysis of having lights on at the City's skating rinks.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson explained the lights were push button at Cummings and the cost was $1,500. He reported staff did not have a way to monitor usage. He believed it was beneficial at some rinks to have an attendant. He indicated the skating rinks were an anomaly and each year usage varied depending on winter weather.

Mayor Grant understood the Arden Hills Foundation was considering funding the push button light controls at other rinks.

Councilmember Holden inquired if the Public Works Department had a list of tools and equipment, and where it was stored.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson stated equipment was stored in different locations based on the season.

Councilmember Holden commented that the Council may want to consider keeping a portion of the old City Hall property for additional storage for additional Public Works storage.

Further discussion ensued regarding the City Hall generator.

Councilmember Holden asked if there was a market for used generators.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson believed there would be a market for this generator.

Councilmember Holden questioned what percentage of the City's manholes have been replaced.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson did not have an answer for this question. He explained he would have to review the City's maps in order to find an answer.

Mayor Grant asked how many water breaks the City had in 2015.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson estimated the City had six in 2015, four of which were along County Road E.

Mayor Grant thanked the Public Works Department workers for attending the worksession meeting.

D. Public Works Retirement

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson stated the City Council has received a letter from Dave Winkel, Public Works Maintenance Worker,

announcing his intent to retire from the City on February 29, 2016. It was noted the letter was received while she was out on vacation, thus it was not put on a previous City Council meeting. Staff would like to discuss with the City Council the timeline for advertising and filling this position.

Mayor Grant questioned if this was a busy time of the year for the Public Works Department.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson commented that the department would soon be very busy.

Mayor Grant asked how long the hiring process would take.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson anticipated the hiring process would take at least two months.

Councilmember Holden questioned if the posting time period could be less than two weeks.

Mayor Grant did not recommend this time period be shorter than two weeks as this may reduce the number of qualified candidates that apply for the position.

The City Council supported this item being placed on the February 29, 2016 City Council agenda.

E. Discussion on Mounds View High School Athletic Field Improvements

City Planner Streff stated that the property is located in the R-1 - Single Family Residential District where general educational uses and their facilities are permitted by Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The Mounds View High School operates under a CUP, which was granted for the site in 1978. The original CUP has been amended from time-to-time as the school and campus have expanded over the years. The property is located at 1900 Lake Valentine Road which is generally positioned north of County Road E2 West, south of Lake Valentine Road, east of Interstate 35W, and west of Snelling Avenue North.

City Planner Streff reported that the High School is proposing to replace the existing scoreboard located at the football stadium with a new scoreboard that utilizes modern technology for its sound, display, and messaging functions. The new scoreboard as proposed would be constructed in the same general location at the south end of the stadium and would be approximately 12'-8" in width by 32' in length. Included in the upgrade proposal for the football stadium is the replacement of the existing press box which is located along the top edge of the west bleachers. The new press box would be 54' in length and 9' wide. The existing press box is 30' long and 8' wide. The applicant is also requesting to construct a 20' by 20' storage shed next to the baseball field between the batting cage and the bleachers. Staff requested the Council review and provide feedback on the proposed scoreboard and press box replacement at the football stadium and the proposed construction of a storage shed at the baseball field.

Councilmember Holden asked what time the lights had to be off at the Mounds View High School.

City Planner Streff indicated the lights had to be off at 10:00 p.m.

Councilmember Wicklund requested staff provide Council with a copy of the Mounds View High School conditional use permit when this item proceeds to Council for formal action.

City Planner Streff stated that he would provide this as an attachment to the Planning Case.

Robert Madison, Activities Director at Mounds View High School, thanked the Council for their time. He explained that the school works to be a good neighbor and stated he was not aware of any time the stadium lights were on after 10:00 p.m. He commented that he does receive an occasional call concerning the noise coming from the stadium.

Mr. Madison provided the Council with a short presentation on the proposed athletic field improvements at the Mounds View High School. He described how the press box and scoreboard would be improved. It was noted the press box improvements would provide additional space for coaches and media members. He reported the new scoreboard would be a Daktronics LED multi-activity board with no advertisements. He explained the new scoreboard came with one speaker that would direct all sound into the stadium. All other speakers within the stadium would be removed.

Councilmember Holden requested further information on the lighting within the press box.

Mr. Madison anticipated one light may be on for up to 30 minutes after a game to allow coaches and/or reporters to finish up their work.

Councilmember Holden encouraged the school to have the lights within the press box to be on separate switches to ensure only one light will remain on. She asked what material would be on the outside of the press box.

Mr. Madison commented the press box would have a metal roof and siding.

Councilmember McClung requested further information on the new sound system and how other school districts are managing the new technology.

Mr. Madison knew East Ridge, Stillwater and Woodbury already had the same scoreboard system in place. He reported he could reach out to the Activities Directors at these school districts to gain further information on the sound system.

Councilmember Holden questioned if the LED lighting brightness would be adjustable. She wanted to be sure the LED lights were dimmed in the evening hours.

Mr. Madison stated he would have a Daktronics representative with him at the Planning Commission to address these specific issues.

Mayor Grant inquired if the scoreboard would be visible from Lake Valentine Road.

City Planner Streff stated the scoreboard would be visible from this roadway.

Councilmember Holden asked why the new scoreboard would be two feet higher.

Mr. Madison discussed how the new scoreboard would be installed and aligned within the stadium.

Councilmember Wicklund inquired if the City had any decibel level ordinances in place.

City Planner Streff explained Arden Hills did not have anything within its City Code, but rather deferred to EPA requirements.

Councilmember Wicklund questioned if the school district was in contact with the neighbors regarding the proposed changes at the stadium. He suggested the school district hold an informal meeting with the neighborhood.

Mr. Madison indicated he had been in contact with the neighbors when the baseball stadium was constructed. He anticipated many of the neighbors would be attending the Planning Commission meeting.

Councilmember Holden inquired why the size of the scoreboard had to change.

Mr. Madison stated after reviewing the size of the stadium, Daktronics made a recommendation to the school district regarding the scoreboards size and sound system. He reported the scoreboard would be on the small side based on Daktronics recommendation.

Councilmember Holden requested further information on the sound system.

Mr. Madison reviewed a diagram and pamphlet regarding the sound system with the City Council.

Councilmember McClung encouraged Mr. Madison to have additional information available regarding the sound system for the Planning Commission meeting.

Further discussion ensued regarding noise and light pollution.

Mayor Grant recommended a dimmer be mandatory on the LED scoreboard. He understood the new scoreboard had directional sound technology. He looked forward to seeing additional information regarding how this would work in the stadium.

Councilmember Holden questioned when the most recent storage shed was built.

Mr. Madison indicated the storage shed was built three years ago at the north end of the stadium. He commented the 20' x 20' storage shed would assist the school district in keeping all of its equipment indoors. He reviewed the building materials that were selected for this shed.

Councilmember Wicklund recommended the building materials for the sheds match.

Mayor Grant agreed with this suggestion and believed this would create a cohesive look within the stadium. He stated he did not object to the new press box or scoreboard. He looked forward to reviewing this item further at the upcoming Planning Commission meeting.

F. Personnel Policy

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson stated the Personnel Committee has been working on updating the Personnel Policy over the last year. The current Policy was last updated in 2004 with minor updates occurring over time. The Committee has gone over the entire policy and has used the LMC's new updated sample policy language on most sections to bring the policy in compliance with current Federal and State laws. The City Attorney has also provided feedback and made revisions. Some sections were changed and approved earlier this summer by the Council; such as, PTO and the maximum deposit into HSA accounts. These changes have been incorporated into the new document.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson indicated staff has a clean copy and two versions showing the changes with comments and notes from the City Attorney and a copy showing the changes with notes from the Personnel Committee. Staff requested feedback on the basic policy and noted she would then proceed to clean the document up and present it for approval to the City Council at the next meeting on February 29, 2016.

Councilmember Holden believed the proposed changes to the personnel policy were hard to follow.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson discussed how she incorporated the City Council and City Attorney changes.

Councilmember Holden discussed an issue she had with the Personnel Policy. She commented that if an exempt employee took off less than four hours in a work day this was not calculated into PTO. She feared that this could be interpreted to mean that employees could take three hours off every day. She recommended that this portion of the policy be amended.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson reviewed Attachment C with the City Council noting the corrections from both the City Council and the City Attorney.

Councilmember Wicklund asked if the Personnel Policy had to be approved by the City Council.

Mayor Grant commented the City Council would wordsmith the document this evening and it would be brought forward on February 29, 2016, for approval.

Councilmember Holden expressed concern with the use of social media on City issued cell phones. She questioned if the City wanted to address this issue and require employees to carry two cell phones (personal and City-owned) or provide these phones and forego the social media concerns.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson reported most of the Public Works employees carried two cell phones.

Councilmember McClung asked if there was any liability for items that appear on the City that are non-City related/inappropriate.

Councilmember Holden stated this was also a concern for her.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson explained she had a City-owned phone, but noted she preferred to use her personal phone for City business than to carry around two cell phones.

Mayor Grant questioned how much data City staff was using on their cell phones.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson was uncertain as he had not ever reviewed a cell phone bill for the City of Arden Hills.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson reported the City had unlimited minutes and data.

Mayor Grant was in favor of staff reviewing the amount of data that was being used. He believed that the City's bill could be reduced if small amounts of data were being used by employees.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson indicated she spoke with a Verizon cell phone representative quarterly to assess the City's usage and to see if a switch should be made to a more cost effective plan.

Councilmember Wicklund encouraged the City to continue providing every employee with a phone, but require all personal use to be done on another phone.

Councilmember Holden feared that employees with two phones would have crossover issues by receiving voice mails and emails on their personal phone for work.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson stated if she conducts City business on a personal phone, her phone would have to be open for review. She explained she kept all of her Arden Hills emails separate from her personal emails. She then reviewed the City's cell phone use policy.

The consensus of the City Council was to not allow City cell phones to be used for personal use.

Councilmember Holden discussed the City's tuition reimbursement policy. She noted all classes have to be job related in order to receive reimbursement. In addition, the City employee would have to receive prior approval from staff and the Personnel Committee.
Councilmember Wicklund asked if any City employees have asked for full degree programs.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson stated some employees have asked.

Councilmember Wicklund questioned if these employees then have to remain with the City of Arden Hills for any length of time.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson suggested this language be added to the policy. She commented she has seen cities require one or two years.

The Council recommended the policy be amended to require employees to stay with the City of Arden Hills for one year after completion of their degree program.

Councilmember Holden commented on the drug testing language.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson reviewed the language within this section in further detail with the Council.

Councilmember Holden asked why the political reference was taken out of Page 33. She believed this language was part of every employment policy.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson commented this language was covered in another section of the personnel policy.

Councilmember McClung requested staff provide the City Council with a reference on where this language was within the policy.

Councilmember Holmes recommended the holiday reference for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve refer to the afternoon and not the morning.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson thanked Councilmember Holmes for catching this. She clarified that City Hall was open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

Mayor Grant questioned how the Council wanted to proceed with the personnel policy.

Councilmember McClung stated he would like to see the political language reference within the personnel policy.

Councilmember Wicklund commented it would benefit him to see one "final" document prior to the February 29, 2016, City Council meeting without red-lines or comments.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson stated she would address the comments and concerns of the Council prior to the next Council meeting.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Mayor Grant reported Harry Brull contacted him by phone regarding a potential City Administrator candidate that lives in Siren, Wisconsin. He asked if the Council wanted to consider this candidate now or wait to continue the hiring process this summer.

Councilmember Holden supported the City Council interviewing the potential candidate.

Councilmember Wicklund requested further information on the process typically used in hiring a candidate.

Mayor Grant described the process the City has followed to date.

Councilmember Holden stated the City had no way of knowing if there would be better or more candidates available this summer. She indicated there were a number of cities in the metro area looking for City Administrators at this time.

Mayor Grant understood this to be the case.

Councilmember Holden believed it would not harm anything to interview the potential candidate that was recommended by Harry Brull.

Councilmember McClung stated he was inclined to wait until this summer.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson discussed the potential applicant's resume with the Council.

Councilmember Holmes stated she could support the Council interviewing the candidate to find out further information as to why he wanted to relocate.

Councilmember Wicklund could support interviewing the candidate this summer or suggested the entire hiring process begin at this time.

The consensus of the Council was to wait on the interview until this summer.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson questioned when the City Council wanted to repost the position.

The Council supported the City Administrator position being posted in June.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson recommended that an all employee meeting be held and that Mayor Grant inform staff on how the City Council was proceeding with the City Administrator hiring process.

Mayor Grant was more than happy to attend this meeting and provide an update to staff on the hiring process.

Councilmember McClung questioned how long it would take to have a City Administrator in place if the position was posted in June.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson anticipated the new City Administrator would not be working for the City until October.

Councilmember McClung commented he would like to have a discussion on how the Council wanted to move forward with the Public Works Director position.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson suggested this matter be addressed at a future worksession meeting.

Councilmember Holden expressed concern with the traffic flow in and out of the pork chop.

Acting Public Works Director Anderson stated this was an enforcement issue that could be brought to the Sheriff's Department.

Councilmember Holden requested that staff also speak with the Sheriff's Department regarding the number of vehicles running red lights at Red Fox Road.

Interim City Administrator/Director of Finance and Administrative Services Iverson explained she would talk to the Sheriff's Department and the contract Cities at the meeting that Thursday.

Mayor Grant asked that staff clarify the offenders are coming from the City of Shoreview.

Councilmember Wicklund questioned how items were placed on the City Council worksession agendas.

Mayor Grant discussed how items were placed on agendas.

Councilmember Wicklund reported he would not be able to attend the March 14th City Council meeting.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council work session at 9:35 p.m.

Julie Hanson
Deputy City Clerk

David Grant
Mayor