

**City of Columbus
Regular City Council Meeting
MN Statutes, Section 13D.021
Alternative Meeting Format
03.25.20**

The 03.25.20 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 7:14 p.m. by Mayor Preiner at the City Hall. Present were Council Members Janet Hegland, Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, and Shelly Logren (via teleconference); City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Bill Griffith (via teleconference), City Attorney Jake Steen (via teleconference), City Engineer Kevin Bittner (via teleconference), and Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes (via teleconference).

Also in attendance were: Barb Bobick (via teleconference), Julie Parent (via teleconference), Ron Hanegraaf (via teleconference), Matthew Weiland (via teleconference), and Kris King (via teleconference).

A. CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

- 1. Call to Order – Regular Meeting – 7:14 P.M.**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

B. CONSENT AGENDA

- 3. Motion – Agenda Approval with Additions**
- 4. Motion – Approval of the 03.20.20 City Council Special Meeting Minutes**
- 5. Motion – Pay Bills as Posted**

Motion by Duraine to approve. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson - aye; Hegland - aye; Mayor Preiner - aye; Duraine - aye; Logren - aye. Motion carries.

C. PRESENTATIONS

6. Planning Commission Report

Non-Binding Concept Review - Clear Channel Outdoor LLC Column Cover Design Review

Matthew Weiland addressed the Council on Clear Channel's Non-Binding Concept Review which the Planning Commission heard on 03.18.20. As a result of that Planning Commission meeting Clear Channel made a minor change to the size of the City of Columbus sign which is to be placed on the column cover below the billboard.

Mayor Preiner noted that there was a concern that the imitation brick to be placed on the billboard pole should extend higher than six feet, especially because the grass in the area tends to grow quite high. He asked Weiland if he thought it could be extended to eight to twelve feet? Weiland replied that the cost of the brick is expensive, and the goal with the placement of the brick is to create a visual transition from the base to the top. He added that Clear Channel would be happy to work with the landowners to ensure that the grass is mowed. Logren agreed with Mayor Preiner and

suggested that some of the existing billboards be marked at various heights to test the visibility of the brick. Weiland said he would be willing to mark some of the billboards but reiterated that the current plan is already quite expensive. Weiland added that they are committed to having billboards in Columbus for the long term and will be upgrading nine to ten columns, including the signs which will transition to digital.

Hegland asked if any of the signs they will be updating are under an IUP? Weiland replied that all of the signs are under IUPs. Mayor Preiner asked what will happen to the seven existing billboards that are under CUPs? Weiland said they will not be updated with brick, but will be kept in good condition. Logren asked if the stucco on the outside of the support pole will end up rusting? Weiland said he has never heard that raised as a concern, and will look into the question for her.

Hegland suggested that the Council determine which billboard poles they would like to be marked, and suggested they do one on high ground and one on low ground. Weiland said to let him know which signs they would like marked, and he will get it taken care of, and the Council agreed to do so.

7. Public Open Forum

No report.

D. STAFF & CONSULTANT REPORTS

8. Engineer Report

City Engineer Kevin Bittner said that he is continuing to work on the Zurich Street extension feasibility report. He added that the site survey has been completed and soil borings will also be completed shortly with Council approval. He is hopeful that the preliminary feasibility report will be ready to present at the next City Council meeting,

Duraine asked if further discussion needs to be had with Viking Industrial before moving forward? City Attorney Bill Griffith said that Viking has returned a fully signed right of entry agreement, and he is waiting for them to sign the final site development agreement. Mursko added that they will not receive their building permit until that agreement is returned, and she expects to receive it in the near future. The Council agreed they were comfortable with Bittner moving forward with soil borings while the City waits to receive the development agreement.

9. Attorney Report

Information - COVID 19 Emergency Powers and Information

City Attorney Jacob Steen gave an update on the COVID-19 situation and any orders from the Governor which may affect the City. The most recent order requires all workers who are able to work from home to do so from 03.27.20 through 04.10.20. However, the order also provided several exemptions for employees who are critical for health, safety and welfare, and providing financial and priority services. Steen added that the Order provides broad discretion for which

employees may fall into these categories.

Mursko said that her and Public Works Superintendent Jim Windingstad have looked at employee responsibilities and determined that the critical areas/employees are public works, the building department, the Deputy Treasurer, and the City Administrator. She added that it is also critical for support staff to work from home, which will require at least one person in the office to distribute essential paperwork. In this way the City will be able to abide by the governor's Order and continue to provide service. Mursko finished by saying she is recommending cancelling next week's Planning Commission meeting because there are no new applications to consider.

Hegland asked if there are any services that the City will no longer be able to provide to the public? Mursko said the City will generally not be able to provide any face to face meetings. Hegland asked if the front door will continue to be open? Mursko explained that currently the public is only allowed into the front entryway where there are stations for incoming and outgoing paperwork, and there is a 24 hour hold on anything that is dropped off. In that sense, the City will continue providing nearly all services, but there may be a slight delay in processing. Hegland said that she wants information posted clearly for the public if any service is not going to be available.

Mursko asked the Council if they are comfortable holding Public Hearings in a telephonic format? This is important because if they are not comfortable with that format, there would need to be a hold put on application submittals. Mayor Preiner asked Mursko if she felt a Public Hearing in a telephonic format would be successful? Mursko said that she thinks it will work fine and added that a number of applications were recently submitted which will need to go forward for a public hearing. Mayor Preiner asked everyone else if they felt like this format would work? The Council all agreed they felt like the format would work, and that public hearings should continue to be scheduled. Griffith noted that some Cities ask the public for questions relating to the application ahead of time and place them in a speaking order so that it is easier to administer over the phone.

Motion by Hegland to support City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko's Emergency Staffing Plan during the Governor's Shelter in Place Order beginning Friday 03.27.20. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson - aye; Hegland - aye; Mayor Preiner - aye; Duraine - aye; Logren - aye. Motion carries.

Mursko asked the Council for a motion canceling next week's Planning Commission meeting. She noted that the first Planning Commission meeting with public hearings in a telephonic format will be 04.15.20.

Motion by Peterson to cancel the 04.01.20 Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Peterson - aye; Hegland - aye; Mayor Preiner - aye; Duraine - aye; Logren - aye. Motion carries.

Griffith continued his report with additional information about the Governor's Order. He said that there are certain industries that are exempt from the order such as health care, law enforcement, first responders, transportation, legal service, real estate transactions, and all forms of construction. The order also stated that activities such as walking, biking, or running is safe as long as six feet of distance is maintained between people.

Next, Griffith discussed a memo that he submitted to the Council addressing the Council's ability to forgive, defer, or waive payments for assessments, taxes, or utility fees. The key message from his memo is that there is no clear authority for forgiving, deferring, or waiving payments, and any such requests will have to be handled on a case by case basis. He added that if the Council determines it is appropriate to waive a fee, they should not do so without clear need and a due process arrangement with notice and a hearing.

Griffith continued by saying the legislature is looking at possibly extending the time to file property tax appeals. The legislature will convene for emergency purposes tomorrow afternoon, partly to discuss possible government action for relief. The City will look to the legislature for guidance on these items.

Mursko asked Griffith if he could provide an update on possible legislation which may provide the City with left over Local Road Improvement Funds for the extension of W. Freeway Drive to the north? Griffith said that there is not currently an indication of when the legislature will get back to regularly scheduled items. However, this legislation is part of the bonding bill, which he believes will remain a priority for legislators.

10. Mayor & City Council Member's Report

Council Member Peterson

No report.

Council Member Hegland

Hegland gave a Personnel Committee report. The committee reviewed applications for the open Planning Commission position. The committee is recommending nominating Steve Wagamon for this position. Wagamon has been a resident of Columbus for 31 years and is a retired business owner. He has also been a manager on the Rice Creek Watershed District for eight and a half years.

Wagamon is set to attend his first meeting on 04.15.20. Mayor Preiner added that another applicant, Robert Berens, indicated he was interested in the EDA opening and he will be contacted to discuss that position further.

Motion by Hegland to recommend approval of Steve Wagamon's appointment to the Planning Commission, to finish out the remainder of Commissioner Krebs' term. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Peterson - aye; Hegland - aye; Mayor Preiner - aye; Duraine - aye; Logren - aye. Motion carries.

Council Member Logren

Logren reported that all meetings of the EDA's Branding Subcommittee have been canceled until further notice.

Council Member Duraine

No report.

Mayor Preiner

No report.

11. Public Works Report

Fire Hall Floor Repair

Windingstad reminded the Council that when the budget was approved last year, it included funds for a \$30,000 project to redo the floor in the Fire Hall. He is hoping to complete the project this year and has received two bids for it. Both bids received were above \$30,000, but he is requesting approval to accept the lowest bid at \$33,395.

Duraine asked when Windingstad anticipates completing the project? Windingstad said that because there is painting planned in the Fire Hall, he would like to wait until that is over to redo the floor. Therefore, he anticipates that the project will be done in late spring or early summer, and it should only take 3-4 days to complete.

Mursko said that this is a two-step process. The first order of business is to amend the capital budget by \$3,395 in order to accommodate the project, and then a motion can be made to approve it.

Motion by Hegland to amend the Capital Budget Schedule F – Fire Hall floor from \$30,000 to \$34,000. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

Motion by Duraine to award the contract for repairing the Fire Hall floor to QC Companies for \$33,395. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

Update - Parking Lot Repairs

Windingstad continued by saying there have been tentative plans to do maintenance to the City Hall parking lot for some time. Recently, a resident was trying to get into City Hall to vote and they got stuck in the parking lot mud. This incident has pushed Windingstad to address the maintenance problem sooner rather than later.

He plans to hire someone to pave a 30'x230' area of the parking lot, mostly where City Hall workers and residents park. The pavement will also extend past the Senior Center entrance. He said that he would like to get the project done in the next three weeks.

Duraine asked what the cost will be? Windingstad said that the price is \$15,000. He continued to say that this project has been on the list to complete for a number of years, and the condition of the parking lot is getting worse. The project will be funded by City Hall maintenance funds and is already built into the budget.

12. Public Information Coordinator Report

No report.

13. City Administrator's Report

Update - COVID 19

Mursko provided the Council with an update on any expenditures that have occurred relating to the COVID-19 situation. To date the only purchases made have been cleaning supplies like paper towels, bleach, and handwipes. Supplies that are purchased for this pandemic will be tracked in case there is a chance for reimbursement.

She continued to say that she was informed that overtime hours during the pandemic can be reimbursed, so they are being tracked as well.

Looking forward, Mursko noted that she expects to spend some money for new software and hardware. Already built into the budget is the cost to purchase new computers for the office. The current delivery time for new computers is 10 weeks, so she is planning to put the order in soon so that they will be delivered this year.

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization Meeting

Anoka County recently went through computer upgrades which has resulted in having to move back the dates for Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meetings. The new date for the meeting is 05.07.20 at 7:00 pm.

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

14. Calendar of Meetings

The 04.01.20 Planning Commission meeting is canceled.

The next EDA meeting is 04.08.20 at 6:00 p.m.

The next City Council meeting is 04.08.20 at 7:00 p.m.

The next Planning Commission meeting is 04.15.20 at 7:00 p.m.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Duraine. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator