

**City of Columbus**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**05.27.20**

The 05.27.20 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Mayor Preiner at the City Hall. Present were Council Members Jeff Duraine, Shelly Logren (via teleconference), Janet Hegland, and Denny Peterson; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Bill Griffith (via teleconference), and Public Information Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: Ron Hanegraaf (via teleconference), Tammy Omdal (via teleconference), and City Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht (via teleconference).

**A. CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

- 1. Call to Order - Regular Meeting – 7:02 P.M.**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**B. CONSENT AGENDA**

- 3. Motion – Agenda Approval with Additions**
- ~~**4. Motion – Approval of the 10.09.19 City Council Meeting Minutes**~~
- ~~**5. Motion – Approval of the 11.13.19 City Council Meeting Minutes**~~
- 6. Motion – Approval of the 04.08.20 City Council Meeting Minutes**
- 7. Motion – Approval of the Publication Summary for Ordinance 20-02**
- 8. Motion – Pay Bills as Posted**

**Motion by Peterson to approve consent agenda items 3, 6-8. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

**C. PRESENTATIONS**

**9. Planning Commission Report**

Planning Commission Chair Ron Hanegraaf gave the Planning Commission report from their 05.20.20 meeting.

CST Companies CUP Application

A public hearing was held for a CUP application from CST Companies for a property located at 14045 Lake Drive. They are planning to locate a retail and contractor yard for mulch there. Ten neighboring residents spoke during the public hearing on concerns relating to noise, traffic, and dust.

Hanegraaf continued to say that the discussion on the application will occur at their next Planning Commission meeting on 06.03.20.

Draft Ordinance Amendments

Hanegraaf also reported that during the 05.20.20 meeting Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht presented six proposed drafts for ordinance amendments. A few of the areas being considered for amendment is fencing, site plan requirements, and accessory building regulations.

Another area they are looking at is the billboard spacing requirements. Hanegraaf explained that the Planning Commission will be looking at these changes first because the City is expecting to receive applications for billboard renewals soon.

Mursko noted that if the Council is in favor of decreasing the number of billboards in the City, they will need to increase the amount of space required between billboards. At this time City Ordinances require 750 feet between billboards.

Hegland asked if it was possible to declare another moratorium to further investigate the billboard ordinance? City Attorney Bill Griffith replied that this is a possibility for the Council especially because there is a change in circumstances –that a selection of companies will be removing their billboards.

**Motion by Hegland to direct the City Attorney to draft an interim ordinance for consideration by the Council for a moratorium on billboard applications in the City due to the change in circumstances and calling for a study that would look at spacing guidelines. Seconded by Duraine. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

## **10. Public Open Forum**

No report.

## **11. Anoka County Regional Park Designation Support Letter – Coon Lake**

Mursko reported that Anoka County is requesting Columbus' approval for designating Coon Lake as a regional park. Karen Blaska from Anoka County Parks provided background on the designation process and offered to answer questions from the Council.

Blaska explained that roughly every ten years the Met Council allows for additions to the regional park system. Coon Lake has been on Anoka County's list of parks to be added to the regional system for many years. This is because the park is a regional draw for the area, has picnic pavilions and a beach, and overall fills a service gap in the regional park system.

Blaska continued by explaining the changes and opportunities that this designation may provide. After a park is designated as part of the regional system, the City may see an increase in the number of people using the park. This is because the designation would allow an increase in their marketing budget to promote regional access to picnic facilities and water recreation opportunities. The designation also provides added protection to the park by increasing assurances that it will remain a park forever. There may also be increased opportunities for grant funding to the park after it the designation. Blaska finished by saying if the new designation is approved, the County will be developing a master plan with the City and the public to determine

what updates should be made to improve it. Such a master plan cannot be developed if the park does not receive regional designation.

Mursko asked if there are plans for Anoka County to purchase an additional forty acres for the park? Blaska replied that there is potential for adding acreage to the park but acquiring the necessary land would require going through a full master planning process that would involve the City and the public.

Peterson and Logren commented that the designation does not appear to provide any additional benefit to the City, especially because there are no Columbus businesses in the area which would see an increase in patronage. Peterson asked Blaska if the designation would result in restrictions on who can use the park? Blaska replied no, that it does not change any of the existing rules about who can use the park.

Hegland asked if the park would remain a County asset after being designated a regional park? Blaska replied that it would. Hegland followed up by asking what would happen if the City did not support the designation? Blaska contemplated that the Met Council may not approve the designation if the City is not in support of it.

Hegland asked if the surrounding residents have been surveyed to understand what their general feelings are about the change? Blaska replied that such a survey has not been conducted, as the overall level of outreach being done by the County has decreased since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

### **Motion by Duraine to direct City Staff to draft a support letter for the Anoka County Regional Park designation for Coon Lake.**

As there was no second, this motion failed.

Hegland said that she is not comfortable supporting the designation at this time because the Council does not have a lot of information about how neighboring citizens feel about the change. Blaska said that the deadline has already passed for providing the support letter but added that it would still be helpful for the County if it was issued at all. Overall, the Council agreed they would like to gather additional information before supporting the designation.

### **12. American Tower Proposal for Contract Amendment**

After discussion during today's City Council workshop on American Tower's proposal for a contract amendment, the Council agreed they would like to gather additional information on the cost for cell phone towers to rent the land they are located on before making a decision.

Griffith noted that the rental cost can depend on the capacity of the tower and the density of the market. He has some initial concerns that a reduction in rent may not be warranted in the marketplace, but he will research this question further and get back to the Council.

## **D. STAFF AND CONSULTANT REPORTS**

### **13. Engineer Report**

### Zurich Street Extension

Bittner continued the discussion from the last Council meeting on the extension of Zurich Street to the north. He said that the tenants have vacated the property and the City is very close to completing the acquisition process. An environmental inspection was also recently completed on the property.

Bittner continued by requesting that the Council complete a couple action items for the project.

The first is the approval of a feasibility report as part of the Chapter 429 process.

**Motion by Duraine to approve the feasibility report for the extension of Zurich Street to the north. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

The second is receiving the feasibility report and ordering preparation of plans and advertisements for bids. Bids for the project will be submitted next week and advertised for three weeks. Bids will be accepted on 07.01.20 and will be opened on 07.08.20.

Bittner was asked whether the road is being designed as a nine-ton or ten-ton road? He replied that his recommendation is to decrease the amount of bituminous to be used. This would result in the road still having a ten-ton designation. He believes this is feasible based on the expected level of truck traffic coming from Viking Industrial and will save roughly \$12,000 on the whole project cost.

**Motion by Hegland to approve Resolution 20-07, a resolution receiving a feasibility report, ordering improvements, preparing plans, and ordering advertisements for bids for the Zurich Street extension subject to receiving the RCWD stormwater permit. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

## **14. Attorney Report**

### Zurich Street Extension

Griffith reported that the closing for this property is scheduled for this Friday, 05.29.20. He added that no additional action from the Council is needed, unless they would like to make a motion delegating closing functions to Mursko and Mayor Preiner. Documents will be signed electronically for closing.

**Motion by Duraine to delegate signing authority to the City Administrator and Mayor for the closing on property located at 9155 Lake Drive. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

### Bonding Bill Update

Griffith finished by giving an update on the state's bonding bill. The legislature will begin meeting again soon, and discussions will take place on a COVID-19 bill, tax bill, and bonding

bill. They will likely be discussed at a special session on 06.12.20. He feels confident that there is enough interest in this session to complete a bonding bill this year.

## **15. Mayor and Council Members Report**

### Council Member Logren

No report.

### Mayor Preiner

No report.

### Council Member Hegland

#### One Watershed One Plan

Hegland reported that a draft plan for public comment on the One Watershed One Plan initiative has been completed for public comment. The end of the public comment period is 06.03.20. Council members will receive an email with a link to the plan and instructions for submitting comments.

#### Fall Fest Committee

Hegland continued to report that the Fall Fest committee was asked if they felt like the City should proceed with the event this year. Logren, Hegland, and the Columbus senior club all expressed their desire to postpone the event. Mayor Preiner and the remaining Council Members expressed their approval of a decision to postpone the event.

**Motion by Duraine to direct the Fall Fest Committee to announce to the public that Fall Fest will be canceled in 2020. Seconded by Logren. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

### Council Member Peterson

No report.

### Council Member Duraine

Duraine reported that the trees located adjacent to the sidewalk which runs to Running Aces Harness Park need to be trimmed.

He continued to report on a recent Cable Commission meeting. The Cable Commission is working with the Forest Lake Chamber of Commerce to interview businesses affected by COVID-19. He suggested to the Commission that they include Columbus businesses in their interviews.

Duraine finished by reporting that Scandia is considering rejoining the Cable Commission.

## **16. Public Works Report**

No report.

## **17. Public Communications Coordinator Report**

Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes followed up on a question regarding a property which has ordinance violations and is not responding to City correspondence regarding them. The Council said they would like to continue discussion to the next Council meeting to allow more time to visit the property.

Mursko reported to the Council that she spoke with the City's Criminal Attorney, Joe Murphy, regarding their priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Murphy indicated that ordinance violations are not high on the priority list right now, and such a violation would likely take some time to prosecute.

## **18. City Administrator's Report**

### COVID-19 Update

Mursko gave the Council an update on equipment purchases and long-term plans related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussions are taking place for developing a plan to get back to holding in-person meetings. Minnesota's Emergency Order ends on 06.12.20, and she is recommending continuing to hold telephonic meetings until that date. Until that time, the City is planning on purchasing a TV for the Senior Center and upgrading the City Hall Chambers and Senior Center to allow for members of the public to view meetings from the Senior Center.

Mursko also plans on upgrading the ventilation system in the City Hall Chambers to better circulate air in the space. She is working with Kramer Mechanical, who recommended installing a UV light on the City Hall's furnaces to kill germs. In order to retrofit these furnaces, it will cost roughly \$800. Because the Senior Center is already equipped with an air exchanger, these upgrades will not be done in that space.

Mursko continued to explain that the six-foot social distancing policy will maintain in place when the public is allowed in the Senior Center. The main purpose of moving the public to the Senior Center is to decrease the amount of time a group of people will be together in one space.

Mursko is still contemplating what the City policy should be for high risk individuals who are encouraged not to visit public places. Once the Governor's Emergency Order is lifted, the City will maintain an interest in accommodating high risk individuals without requiring them to attend in-person meetings. She is considering whether there may be a reasonable way to accommodate this group with a telephonic system while also maintaining compliance with the open meeting act. Griffith said that this question is being considered by a lot of people at this time. He will look into it and report back with answers at a later date.

### Burning Restrictions Lifted

Mursko reported that the restriction on burn permits was lifted today and explained that City Employees have created an internal process for issuing these permits while City Hall continues to be closed to the public.

### Internal Fund Transfers

Mursko reported that the City has been under audit for the past week. She also presented a memo recommending certain fund transfers.

Her recommendation relates to funds from the HyVee land sale. The City received roughly \$655,000 for the sale. Mursko is recommending taking 80% of the sale (or \$525,000) and allocating it to the Bond fund. Her other recommendation is to take 20% of the sale (or \$130,000) and allocating it to a general ledger fund until the City determines during the budget process what they would like to do with it. She clarified that today's recommendation simply allocates the money to a specific account, and the \$130,000 will not be spent until a future decision is made.

**Motion by Duraine to approve the recommended internal fund transfers as presented in the memo dated 05.27.20. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

### Broadband Options for Columbus

Based on discussion during today's City Council workshop, a committee of volunteers shall be established to consider options for bringing broadband to Columbus. Hegland has volunteered to find residents interested in joining the committee.

**Motion by Hegland to create a task force to research broadband options for the City of Columbus. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

### Bond 2015A Refunding

Mursko reported that the City will move forward with refunding bonds, and Tammy Omdal will write the associated trigger resolution to present to the Council at their next meeting.

**Motion by Hegland to proceed with a trigger resolution drafted by Northland Securities to refund bonds for interest savings. Second by Duraine. Roll call vote; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Mayor Preiner – aye; Duraine – aye; Logren – aye. Motion carries.**

Mursko asked the Council if they would like Omdal to include additional options for refinancing, or if they were satisfied with the options she presented? Hegland asked that Omdal include an option with a cash contribution of \$250,000. Logren agreed and added that she would also like Omdal to include a calculation of what the total savings would be under this option.

## **E. ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDER**

### **19. Calendar of Meetings.**

The next Planning Commission meeting is 06.03.20 at 7:00 p.m.

The next City Council workshop is 06.24.20 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The next City Council meeting is 06.10.20 at 7:00 p.m.

**F. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator