

**City of Columbus
Regular City Council Meeting
07.10.19**

The 07.10.19 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Mayor Preiner at the City Hall. Present were Council Members Janet Hegland, Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, and Shelly Logren; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Bill Griffith, City Engineer Dennis Postler, and Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: John Young, Myron & Cindy Angel, John Seibert, and Arlen Logren.

A. CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

- 1. Call to Order - Regular Meeting – 7:03 P.M.**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

B. CONSENT AGENDA

- 3. Motion – Approval of the 04.22.19 City Council Special Meeting Minutes**
- 4. Motion – Approval of the 02.27.19 City Council Meeting Minutes**
- 5. Motion – Approval of the 03.27.19 City Council Meeting Minutes**
- 6. Motion – Approval of Resolution 19-17 Kaulfuss Special Assessment Correction**
- 7. Motion – Agenda Approval with Additions**
- 8. Motion – Pay Bills as Posted**

Motion by Duraine to approve consent agenda items 3-8, including the addition of a presentation from the Anoka County Sheriff's Office. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

C. PRESENTATIONS

9. Bryon Fuerst, Commander Anoka County Sheriff's Office

Commander Fuerst came before the Council for a quarterly update from the Anoka County Sheriff's Office. He presented a summary of police reports generated in Columbus during the second quarter of 2019. Fuerst noted that this summary does not represent all calls for service, only calls which generate police reports.

Fuerst continued to say that during second quarter of this year there were 458 reports for Columbus, including things like 911 hang ups, accidents, burglaries, drug arrests, assaults, and a fair amount of medical calls.

City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko asked Fuerst if they have seen an increase in accidents that may be due to construction in the area? Fuerst replied that the number of accidents reported this quarter were consistent with previous quarters.

Mursko asked the Council, since budget season is approaching, if they would like to receive a formal presentation from the Anoka County Sheriff's Office on their contract for next year? Fuerst added that they will not be asking for an increase in hours, but there will be a cost increase of 4.5% due to negotiated contracts for deputy's salaries, PERA, and new squad cars. Duraine

asked Fuerst what kind of cars they have purchased? Fuerst replied that because Ford no longer makes the Interceptor model, they had to consider more expensive options and will be testing a couple Dodge Chargers.

The Council agreed they would not like a presentation from the Sheriff's Office. Mayor Preiner will call them if there are questions regarding the contract.

10. Public Open Forum

No report.

11. Bid Opening and Award – 1999 Ford F150 Pickup Truck

Based on direction from previous City Council meetings, the City has put their 1999 Ford F150 up for bid. The bidding process was closed on 07.09.19 at 4:00 p.m. The City received two bids, one from Ozzy Beren for \$800, and one from Colleen Duraine for \$1,023. At this time Duraine recused himself from the discussion.

Motion by Hegland to accept bids for the City's 1999 Ford F150 pickup truck, and to award the truck to the highest bidder, Colleen Duraine, in the amount of \$1,023. Seconded by Logren. Motion carried unanimously.

D. STAFF AND CONSULTANT REPORTS

12. Engineer Report

Speed Zone Study Request

City Engineer Dennis Postler submitted a memo to the Council regarding a resident's complaints about traffic sliding off the road on a curve that is located on Kettle River Blvd. The memo is requesting a speed study for that portion of road.

City Staff spoke with an Anoka County Traffic Engineer about Kettle River Blvd. There are different speed limits on the road; 50 m.p.h. from 165th Avenue NE to W. Broadway Avenue, and 55 m.p.h. on the remaining portions. The section of road described by the resident has a speed limit of 50 m.p.h. The last time a speed study was completed in this area was 1978. Postler cautioned the Council that if a formal speed study is completed and indicates that a higher speed limit is appropriate, they are legally required to raise it. Formal speed study requests are made through Anoka County to MnDOT. It is anticipated that a study would take 6-12 months to complete.

A second option that Postler presented was to request that Anoka County analyze the geometrics of the curve. They would complete a study and may take speed measurements. In this way, the Council would not be legally bound to the study.

Logren noted that she was surprised that the speed limit is so high because just north of this area Kettle River Blvd intersects in a roundabout with W. Broadway Avenue. Hegland asked if it was

true that this issue typically occurs in the winter? Postler said that is his understanding. Hegland replied that it may be a better decision to request the study in the winter.

Peterson asked what the cost to the City is for the study? Postler replied that he does not believe there is a cost.

The Council agreed that they would like to request that the County analyze the geometrics of the curve on Kettle River Blvd. Postler agreed that he would begin discussions with Anoka County for this study.

Transportation Project Status

Postler continued by giving status updates on City projects currently under construction.

The Notre Dame Street and 181st Avenue NE paving project is mostly completed. The contractor needs to finish shouldering and mailbox work, and Postler will be requesting that they redo some saw cutting and sealing due to quality.

The utilities expansion in the NE I-35 quadrant is nearly completed. The SW utilities expansion is on schedule to start next week with directional drilling under I-35 and lift station construction. The anticipated timeframe for this project is 3-4 weeks.

Postler noted that there is a meeting on 07.12.19 to talk about the status, schedule, and funding of the realignment of north Hornsby Street.

Lastly, Postler updated the Council on the TH 97 over I-35 bridge project. They have not closed the ramps as part of the project yet, but will give about a week's notice before they do. He added that part of the reason the closure date has been moved back is because of a shortage of product.

13. Attorney Report

Hotel Lodging Tax Ordinance

Based on direction from a previous Council meeting, City Attorney Bill Griffith presented a short memo with information on surrounding communities and what they charge for their hotel tax. Coon Rapids, Lino Lakes, and Blaine all charge the maximum allowable percentage. He noted that the Running Aces hotel will be opening in a short time and they would like to know if the tax will be instituted so that their systems can be set up properly.

Griffith added that 95% of revenue generated from the hotel tax must be used for a tourism/visitor's bureau. Many Cities have handled this requirement by creating a nonprofit such as a convention bureau. The bureau would likely have a mixture of at large members, members of the hotel industry, and members of the City Council. It is likely that some City staff time will need to be spent on marketing the community and its lodging or entertainment attractions.

Duraine said that he is not in favor of the tax and is surprised Running Aces is not opposed to it.

Griffith said that they are not opposed to the tax because it is standard for the market, so they will remain competitive with surrounding areas. He added that Cities generally like this tax because it is usually paid by nonresidents.

Griffith continued to say that the industry's biggest concern with a new hotel is the period of time right after opening, known as the period of stabilization. He said that there could be an advantage to passing the tax ordinance now, so that the convention bureau will be up and running and can provide marketing support after the period of stabilization is over.

Motion by Peterson to adopt Ordinance 19-02, an ordinance establishing Chapter 17 Lodging Tax in the City of Columbus Code of Ordinances. Seconded by Hegland. Votes as follows; Peterson – aye; Hegland – aye; Preiner – Aye; Duraine – Nay; Logren – aye. Motion carries.

14. Mayor and Council Members Report

Council Member Logren

Logren reported that she signed up with an organization that produces videos about branding a small town and will update the Council with what she learns.

Council Member Hegland

Hegland reported that she had a constructive conversation with residents on Humber Street about their complaints with the trucking company in the neighborhood. The residents agreed to document their issues and Hegland agreed to investigate the light problem with a light reader.

Hegland asked if anyone is aware of devices that measure noise on a long-term basis? Postler replied that he might and will get back to her.

Mayor Preiner

Mayor Preiner reported that he, Mursko, and Public Works Superintendent Jim Windingstad took the City's new Metropolitan Council representative Susan Vento on a tour of the City. He was pleased with her interest in what Columbus has to offer.

There was also a Fire Board meeting two weeks ago. The Fire Board has a new chairperson, the mayor of Forest Lake. At the meeting they discussed budget increases for firefighter's pay and an increase in the relief association. Final details about these increases will be worked out at the next meeting. Mursko noted that the relief association presented information on the increase and said that if the fire market is having a bad year and there is not enough money to cover pensions, they will add an increment to the budget to take care of the gap.

Council Member Duraine

No report.

Council Member Peterson

Peterson reported that the new stoplight at the intersection of Lexington Avenue and W. Broadway Avenue is mostly complete. At this time the lights still need to be wired.

15. Public Works Report

No report.

16. Public Communications Coordinator Report

No report.

17. City Administrator's Report

Columbus Forfeited Property

Mursko presented a report from Anoka County on properties going through tax-forfeiture in the City.

The first property is a small sliver of land in the Freeway District. Mursko explained that the property owners were hoping that MnDOT would purchase the land remnant when I-35 was constructed, but that did not happen.

The second property is just north of Coates RV in the Freeway District. The property was taken over through tax forfeiture in 2010.

The third property is on 170th Avenue NE. This property has a fair amount of wetland. Mursko said that today the City requires soil borings with a subdivision to ensure that all sites created are buildable. However, this property does not have soil borings on record, so it is unclear whether it is buildable.

Anoka County presented a question to the Council about special assessments, and whether the Council will reinstate them for the property north of Coates RV. The property had five special assessments having to do with sewer and water; trunk sewer, freeway sewer, sewer pipes, watermain, and trunk water. Mursko noted that roughly \$46,000 of assessments were not paid at the time of forfeiture in 2010, and roughly \$81,000 was certified to taxes by the City of Columbus.

Mursko continued to explain that when a property goes into tax forfeiture the Council has the opportunity to cancel special assessments. She noted that the City carries special assessments when they are not paid. In total this property has roughly \$127,000 in assessments outstanding. Mursko said that it is the Council's decision to reinstate special assessments or leave them as canceled. If the assessments remain canceled the next person to purchase the property will not be responsible for paying them.

Mayor Preiner asked who is responsible for the difference when special assessments are

canceled? Griffith replied that the City does. He continued to say that the Council should consider whether the property has enough value to both attract a buyer and cover assessments. This property is mostly high ground, which could be attractive for development or for storage by a neighboring property. He said that there would be no reason to forgive assessments if the Council believes it is a useful piece of property. On the other hand, if the Council believes the assessments would prevent the property from being sold, then they should cancel them. In general, most Cities prefer to reinstate assessments so that the cost is not spread amongst the City's tax payers.

Duraine asked what the history of the property is? Mursko replied that this property has never abutted the freeway. Coates RV owns a strip of land between this property and the Freeway. Mursko added that the property has been up for so through tax forfeiture twice and it never sold.

Mayor Preiner said that he believes the assessments should be reinstated because the property seems buildable and all other property owners on that road have been required to pay assessments. The Council agreed.

Motion by Logren to approve special assessments to be considered on parcel 25-32-22-34-0002 in the amount of \$127,906.75. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Rice Creek Watershed District Joint Powers Agreement

Mursko reported that she received a Joint Powers Agreement from the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) relating to the Thurnbeck Development Phase II. Mursko requested an agenda item for the boundary issue between the Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization (SRWMO) at the 07.18.19 RCWD meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Receipts:	\$ 2,007,073.02
Disbursements:	\$ 266,498.11
Balance:	\$ 9,943,480.10

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

18. Calendar of Meetings.

The next Planning Commission meeting is on 07.17.19 at 7:00 p.m.

The next City Council workshop is on 07.24.19 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The next City Council Meeting is on 07.24.19 at 7:00 p.m.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Duraine to adjourn. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator