

**City of Columbus
Regular City Council Meeting
12.13.17**

The 12.13.17 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mayor Dave Povolny at the City Hall. Present were Council Members Bill Krebs, Jeff Duraine, Denny Peterson, and Mark Daly; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Bill Griffith, City Engineer Dennis Postler, and Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: Silke Bjork, Mary Bombard, Colleen Leemon, Dan Mike, Kris King, Paul Peskar, Myron & Cynthia Angel, Robert Davies, Jesse Preiner, Jody Krebs, and Julia Parent (Forest Lake Times).

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 City Council Meeting Minutes 11.20.17**
- 4. Motion – Approval of the City Council Meeting Minutes 10.25.17**
- 5. Motion – Agenda Approval with Additions**
- 6. Motion – Pay Bills as Posted**
- 7. Motion – Resolution Establishing Precinct and Polling Location for 2018**
- 8. Motion – Public Notice 2018 Schedule of Regular Meetings**
- 9. Motion – Resolution Accepting Gifts for 2017 Fall Fest**
- 10. Motion – Approve Summary Publication for Ordinance 17-03 Chapter 7A LI District Amendment**

Motion by Krebs to approve the Consent Agenda items 3-10. Seconded by Daly. Motion carried unanimously.

C. PRESENTATIONS

11. Planning Commission Report

The Planning Commission did not meet on December 6th, as such there is no report.

12. Public Open Forum

Dan Mike – 15123 Hornsby Street NE

Mike has been working with the Council to install a stoplight at the intersection of TH 97 and Hornsby Street, and came forward today to ask what the status of the project is. City Engineer Dennis Postler reported that at the last Council meeting, they were still waiting on the completion of a traffic impact study. The study is in its preliminary phases, and is being used to generate an intersection control evaluation (ICE) for MnDOT to evaluate. Postler continued to say that the intersection does not currently meet MnDOT's criteria for adding a stoplight, as there has not been any development at the intersection (which is one of MnDOT's requirements

for a traffic control device). However, Postler will continue to work for the stoplight because development will eventually come to that area. Krebs asked why a roundabout is warranted at the intersection of Lake Drive and the new CSAH 54, and not TH 97 and Hornsby Street? Postler replied that it is because both are County roads that have a higher traffic count than Hornsby Street (which is a City road). Mike asked what the City or residents can do to expedite the process? Postler replied that City staff are actively working on the project, it is on MnDOT's radar, and once remaining questions about funding for the Hornsby Street realignment are answered the project will move much quicker.

Silke Bjork – 9710 167th Lane NE

Bjork came forward to discuss Howard Lake Park. She has two special needs children who often use the park, and requested additional playground equipment and better maintenance, as the mosquitos are bad in the spring and summer if the brush is not cut back. Mursko asked Bjork what she thinks would be a good addition to the park? She replied that a slide and monkey bars are the top choices. Mayor Povolny said that he normally does not see anyone at that park. Bjork replied that her children use it often, and she has seen others at the park as well. Daly said that the park board has had some discussion recently about closing the park, based on the notion that it does not get used very often. He recommended that Bjork put together a petition to keep the park open, and see how many signatures she can get. The Council agreed that Bjork could post something at the park to get signatures, and suggested working with the City's Public Communications Coordinator to distribute information to a wider audience. Daly said the next Park Board meeting is on January 28th, 2018 and he suggested that Bjork bring the petitions to the meeting after January 28th so that she has ample time to collect signatures.

Motion by Peterson to grant Silke Bjork the ability to post information at Howard Lake Park regarding a petition to keep the park open. Seconded by Daly. Motion carried unanimously.

13. 2018 Columbus Levy & Budget

The Council has been working on the budget since August of this year, and have gone through several advisory proofs. Feedback from such proofs were taken into consideration and a final budget was produced.

Mursko started by comparing the budget from 2017 to 2018. There was a 2.8% increase in the budget from last year. Specific line items that saw a significant increase were public safety and the public works capital fund. The 25% increase in the public safety budget was for the new Anoka County Sheriff's Office contract which includes an increase in hours. The public works capital fund increased because the City would like to pay cash for new equipment going forward and in order to do that more money needs to be saved each year.

At this time Mursko asked the audience and Council for any questions about the budget. One question was whether the City has been able to sell any land, and if selling the land would help with the budget? Mursko replied that the City has not sold any land yet, however, if land does sell it would help with the budget. Mayor Povolny added that it would help by eliminating interest on the loan for the land.

Council Member Duraine asked about the blacktop fund, and whether the Council wants to continue to pursue paving gravel roads? He expressed his opinion that it is cheaper to have gravel roads than to do paving projects, and therefore the increase in the blacktop fund is concerning. Peterson argued that in the long run, having paved roads is more cost effective than gravel. Mayor Povolny asked if the City paved all of its roads, would Public Works get rid of the road grader? Public Works Superintendent Jim Windingstad replied that they would get rid of it in that scenario, however he doubts that Columbus will ever pave 100% of its roads. Mursko added that there were several years in which the City's budget did not keep up with the amount being spent on blacktop, so the past few years have required dedicating extra funds to that line item in order to catch up. Duraine finished by saying he believes less money should be dedicated to blacktopping roads, and that paving roads should be less of a priority.

At this time Mayor Povolny opened a Public Hearing on the final Levy and Budget.

Hearing no one the Mayor closed the hearing.

Motion to Peterson to approve Resolution 17-44, a Resolution approving the 2017 Final Levy Certification for Property Taxes Collectable in 2018. Seconded by Krebs. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion be Peterson to approve Resolution 17-45, a Resolution approving the 2018 Final Budget. Seconded by Krebs. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Fee Schedule

The Council considered a memo from City Engineer Dennis Postler containing recommended adjustments to the 2018 fee schedule in order to keep up with current costs and inflation. The memo shows adjustments to the Local Sewer Availability Charge (LSAC) and the Water Availability Charge (WAC), while the SAC charge is staying the same as the 2017 rate of \$2,485. Postler recommended that the LSAC rate increase from \$426 per SAC unity to \$443 per SAC unit, due to construction cost inflation. There is also a recommendation to increase the WAC rate from \$1,523 per equivalent residential unit (ERU) to \$1,585 per ERU, also to keep up with construction cost inflation. Other small fee schedule changes were made to escrow amounts, while everything else remained the same.

Duraine asked about the \$50 septic system fee, and what it is for. Mursko replied that it is for septic system maintenance, and elaborated by saying that septic pumping reports are \$10 a piece and are paid for by septic businesses and not individual homeowners.

Motion to by Daly to adopt Ordinance 17-04, an ordinance relating to and regulating the 2018 Fee Schedule for the City of Columbus. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Peterson to approve the summary publication of Ordinance 17-04, an ordinance relating to and regulating the 2018 Fee Schedule for the City of Columbus. Seconded by Duraine. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Street Light at TH97 & Hornsby Street

Tim McKenzie of 15161 Feller Street came forward to discuss a petition he and other business owners submitted for a street light and directional signage in Columbus' Freeway Business District. Businesses in that district claim that it is difficult for customers to locate their businesses and that is the reason for the petition. McKenzie recalled that at a previous meeting the Council had determined that the sign would be temporary and it would be replaced after the redesign of the I-35 and TH 97 intersection was completed, and he is wondering if this is still true? Mursko replied that the plan has changed, due to difficulty in finding a vendor that is interested in making the sign. She presented a proposal from a new vendor with three designs and prices. McKenzie said that a permanent sign would be preferable, however, the cost for these new signs seems expensive. Mursko replied that she was not sure whether the cost displayed with the design is for one or two signs. McKenzie replied that he would have to discuss with the other businesses petitioning for the sign, since the price is higher than what he previously communicated. He continued by asking if the City would consider sharing some of the cost with the business owners? City Attorney Bill Griffith advised the Council against this, as it would be setting a precedent that could prove to be undesirable.

The main question to be answered was which design is preferable and if there should be any major changes to it. Some suggestions were made for the design such as adding an arrow and/or decreasing the size of the Columbus logo. Mursko said she would take these suggestions into consideration, with the caveat that the sign has to remain under 64 square feet (which is the maximum size allowed for directional signage).

McKensie then asked if it would be possible to add a light on the corner of TH 97 and Hornsby Street? Mayor Povolny replied that the City's Public Works Superintendent could look into the cost of adding a temporary light at that corner, since it is likely that any traffic control device added to that intersection in the future would include a light. It was agreed that at a future meeting Windingstad will bring in a quote for a temporary light and Mursko will report back with a final design and whether one or two signs were included in the quote.

D. STAFF AND CONSULTANT REPORTS

16. Engineer Report

2018 Proposed Road Improvement Projects and Petition Results

City Engineer Dennis Postler presented the results from a formal petition which was sent out to gauge interest in paving a selection of gravel roads in the City. The selection of roads were split up into four (4) areas; Area 1 (161st Avenue, 164th Avenue, 164th Lane, Kwei Street, Indus Street, and MacKenzie Street), Area 2 (Cornell Street and Gehrig Street, Area 3 (162nd Avenue and 159th Avenue), and Area 4 (165th Avenue and Xingu Street [from 162nd Avenue to 165th Avenue]). The petition results were significantly negative for Areas 1, 3, and 4. Area 2 was also negative, but if you singled out just Cornell Street, the majority of responses were in favor of paving. Krebs asked Postler what he felt the main reason was for residents voting against road paving? Postler said that a risk for increased speed was a common topic during the

neighborhood meetings, and added that many people simply enjoy living on a gravel road. He further noted that because this process was City-initiated, the Council could still choose to order the projects despite the negative feedback. Mayor Povolny asked if Postler felt that people may change their mind if the City contributed to a portion of the cost for 165th Avenue? Postler said that his interpretation was that cost was not the biggest issue for residents. Peterson asked how long the proposed improvement of Cornell Street? Postler replied that it was roughly a quarter mile, however, the estimate is for the entire project so it would likely be more expensive to single out just Cornell Street for paving. Peterson suggested that Cornell Street be included as a potential paving projects for 2019.

Final Pay Request for Ziegler Water Tank Conversion Project

Postler is requesting approval from the Council of a Final Pay Request to Forest Lake Contracting, Inc. for the Ziegler Water Tank Conversion project. The total amount for the final payment is \$7,364.07.

Motion to by Krebs to approve the Final Payment Request to Forest Lake Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$7,364.07 for the Ziegler Water Tank Conversion project. Seconded by Daly. Motion approved unanimously.

Regional Surface Water Plan for parts of Freeway District

Postler met with the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) recently, and is reporting back to the Council on some items from that meeting. RCWD mentioned the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is due in July of 2018. Part of the Comprehensive Plan is an updated surface water plan, and RCWD had some suggestions for approaching the City's Freeway District within the plan. RCWD suggested that the City consider a comprehensive storm water plan in the Freeway District, to help aid future development in the area. The comprehensive storm water plan would be utilized in a way that helps developers deal with issues related to ponding; such as best practices, piping, and ditch creation. There is also a new cost sharing mechanism that would help cover ponding expenditure. RCWD proposed coming to a Planning Commission meeting to do a presentation for both the Commission and the Council on what a comprehensive storm water plan might look like. The Council agreed that if RCWD can come to the December 20th Planning Commission meeting, they would also attend to hear the presentation. Mayor Povolny commented that he thinks it is a good idea, but wants to ensure that it preserves as much upland as possible.

CSAH 54 Realignment Update

Postler had a short update on the new alignment of CSAH 54 because there have been small changes since the last City Council meeting. Postler presented a map of the new alignment, which shows a "T" intersection on the second curve going south, which previously was a roundabout. The new alignment also does not show a ¾ access anywhere on the road. Lastly, Anoka County would prefer to let development dictate where right in and right out locations will end up on this road. Mayor Povolny commented that without a roundabout, there will be problems caused by people being unable to turn around at the south end of the street. He added that this issue would make selling property abutting this road more difficult. Postler replied that

the reason the roundabout was removed is the amount of traffic on that road is not large enough to warrant one. Previously plans showed another City road going through the area and an entrance to Running Aces Harness Park, which added to the amount of traffic anticipated. Krebs asked if it would be possible to add a roundabout there in future years? Postler said yes, if the amount of traffic warrants one. City Attorney Bill Griffith added that the City's position is best at this moment, when transferring land to the County, and encouraged the Council to pursue the issue.

A second point made by Mayor Povolny was that the new design eliminates a decent amount of upland, so he would like to see the road curve at less severe of an angle to preserve more upland. Griffith added that it would be smart to start discussions with the Holiday gas station about potentially adding southerly access from their property. Krebs said it would be ideal if Anoka County could send a representative to a Council Meeting to talk through these issues directly. Mursko suggested the January 10th meeting as a possibility. Postler agreed to take the Mayor's two concerns back to the County, and to ask County representative about attending a future Council meeting.

Hornsby Street and TH 97/I 35 Interchange Project

Postler had a conference call with MnDOT recently regarding this project and is reporting updates to the Council. The Cooperative Agreement originally had a requirement that the bid must be let by June of 2018, however with the issues that Anoka County has run into with the MMB funding, MnDOT has agreed to extend the deadline to June of 2019.

17. Attorney Report

No report.

18. Mayor and City Council Member's Report

Mayor Dave Povolny

At a previous City Council meeting, Mayor Povolny suggested holding a joint meeting with the Forest Lake City Council to discuss some mutual projects. There is an opportunity to hold this meeting on 02.19.17, since the Forest Lake City Council is already holding a workshop that day. Daly commented that he would have to miss a meeting held on that day. The remaining Council Members agreed to attend this joint meeting on 02.19.17.

Council Member Daly

No report.

Council Member Peterson

No report.

Council Member Krebs

Council Member Krebs wanted to thank City staff and Council for a productive year. He listed some highlights including the expansion of City View Electric, Freeway Mini Storage, ZTS Trucking, as well as new developments Thurnbeck Farms and Preiner's Preserve.

Council Member Duraine

Council Member Duraine attended the most recent cable commission meeting. He reported back that the commission finished the year well under budget, and there are some changes happening with staff. He added that the commission is working with Tierney Brothers to obtain a quote for updates to the Columbus City Council Chambers.

19. Public Works Report

No report.

20. Public Communications Coordinator Report

No report.

21. City Administrator's Report

Anoka County Park Veterans Memorial

Mursko updated the Council on a project happening at Coon Lake Park. It is a joint project with Anoka County Parks, installing war memorials throughout the County. The memorial at Coon Lake Park will be a World War 2 memorial, and is currently under construction.

Vacant Property Assessment Deferral

Mursko asked the Council for direction on a request for a large lot deferral on an assessment from a road paving project on 141st Avenue NE. The lot is an unimproved parcel, with PIN # 29-32-22-44-0001, and was given four (4) assessments. The person requesting the deferral does not qualify for the Green Acres deferral nor the Senior Hardship deferral. The caveat to the large lot deferral being considered is that the Council can add any conditions they would like to it. Griffith listed which conditions would trigger payment; construction of improvements to the property, death of property owner, and/or a transfer of property. Mayor Povolny said he would be okay with granting the deferral. Duraine asked if the City could require partial payment? Mursko replied that it was possible, but the deferral policy does not lay out the criteria for this, so it would be up to the Council to make a motion with such an intent. Daly asked what would happen if she donated her land to the DNR? Griffith replied that that would be a transfer of land, which would trigger a payment requirement. Peterson asked what the time frame of the deferral is? Mursko replied that it is 10 years, and includes interest at 4.5%. Duraine expressed his concern that the City must carry four (4) assessments as part of this deferral. Griffith noted that the City has granted these deferrals before, and it is the City's program. The remaining Council Members agreed that they would like to grant the deferral.

Motion by Daly to approve Resolution 17-46, a resolution authorizing a special assessment deferral for Betty M. Thissen on her vacant 40-acre parcel, PIN #29-32-22-44-0001. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Conduit Bonding Question

Mursko asked the Council if it is their intention to take on any proposals for conduit bonding? Mayor Povolny said he would be interested in that. Mursko agreed that it was also her recommendation to go for it. Remaining Council Members agreed as well.

Personnel Committee Report

Mursko presented a report to the Council with recommendations from the Personnel Committee. The first recommendation is to increase the City employee's medical health benefit from \$753 to \$783 per eligible employee prorated if employee works more than 30 and less than 40 hours per week, effective December 30th, 2017. The reasoning for the increase is to keep up with market and the increased cost of premiums. The majority of City employees are on the Public Employee Insurance Program (PEIP).

Motion by Peterson to approve the recommended health benefit increase from \$753 to \$783 per eligible employee if employee works more than 30 and less than 40 hours per week, effective December 30th, 2017. Seconded by Povolny. Motion carried unanimously.

2018 Columbus Pay Scale

Mursko is recommending adoption of the pay scale as presented for the year 2018. The City participated in a wage survey this year which compared wages among similar Cities, and after reviewing the results, the personnel committee is recommending the presented 2018 pay scale.

A second recommendation is to give the City's Building Official a 3% step increase. The City's Building Official is at the top of the City's pay scale, however he has been at that scale for five years and not received an increase.

Motion by Daly to approve the recommended 2018 pay scale as presented and the Building Official's 3% step increase. Seconded by Krebs. Motion carried unanimously.

The last recommendation from the Personnel Committee is to post openings for three different roles with the City. The first would be the Senior Accountant role, which remains unfilled. The position would be advertised at 24 hours per week. The second role would be a new Planning Commission Secretary as the current Planning Secretary Karen Boland will be leaving in 2018. The new Planning Commission Secretary position will be advertised at 20 hours per month. The third recommended position would be a new role, advertised as an Administrative Assistant/Account Clerk. This person would be responsible for taking care of gaps in the work flow. Mursko is recommending adding the new position to handle an increase in work load, due to a sharp increase in the number of building permits and the anticipated work generated from new scanning software.

Krebs asked the Personnel Committee why the plan is not to increase the current employees to full time hours instead? Mursko replied that she has considered all options, and at this time this is her recommendation. She added that eventually she would also like to see the Deputy City Clerk and the Public Communications Coordinator's hours increased to 38.5 per week, once the three positions mentioned above are filled. Mayor Povolny expressed his concern that the City has not increased its budget for staff over the past five (5) years, and believes that it will have to increase at some point to keep up with market. He cautioned the Council that moving work flows around rather than increasing the budget for staff could result in turnover. Mursko added that this year in particular the workload increased for all sectors of the City, and due to some particularly involved applications, work was delayed all around.

Motion by Krebs to approve the recommendation to post ads for an Accountant (Sr.) at 24 hours per week, an Administrative Assistant/Account Clerk at 15 hours per week, and a Planning Commission Secretary at 20 hours per month. Seconded by Peterson. Votes as follows: Peterson – aye; Daly – aye; Povolny – aye; Duraine – nay; Krebs – aye. Motion carried.

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

The next Planning Commission meeting is 12.20.17. This will be a joint meeting with the City Council, Rice Creek Watershed District, and will include Comprehensive Plan discussion.

Calendar of Meetings.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Daly to adjourn. Seconded by Krebs. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator