



Approved: April 27, 2020

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
APRIL 13, 2020
6:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council Work Session at 6:00 p.m.

Note: On March 20th, the Mayor signed a determination allowing Councilmembers to participate in City Council meetings via telephone pursuant to State Statute 13D.021

Present via Telephone: Mayor David Grant; Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Dave McClung and Steve Scott

Absent: None

Also present: City Administrator Dave Perrault; Public Works Director/City Engineer Todd Blomstrom; and City Clerk Julie Hanson; Recreation Coordinator Sara Grant and Recreation Programmer Joe Vaughan (via telephone)

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Met Council Regional Solicitation Grant

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated every two years, the Metropolitan Council and the Transportation Advisory Board solicits applications for the Regional Solicitation grant program. This program provides metro area counties and cities with the opportunity to apply for federal funding for transportation and infrastructure projects. The Regional Solicitation specifically provides funding to communities within the greater metro area for highway, road, transit and other transportation improvements. He briefly discussed the categories within the program.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom reported if the Council wishes to pursue grant funding, staff recommends that the City apply for funding opportunities within the “Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities” category of the Regional Solicitation Program. Three funding areas are available within this category. The Regional Solicitation Grant program deadline is on May 15, 2020 and the awards will be announced later this year in the fall, barring the timeline is not pushed back as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated the Metropolitan Council recognizes that there are many road improvement needs. He explained that the Transportation Advisory Board has made previous decisions to prioritize funding for roads that serve a regional purpose, and funding has been available for approximately half of the projects submitted during past solicitations.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom indicated project sponsors are able to construct projects early via “Advance Construction”. This would allow the City to have their project programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program in 2024 and construct with local funds early. The federal funds would be reimbursed in 2024, or earlier if there are additional federal funds available. He commented further on the proposed grant and requested direction from the Council on how to proceed.

Councilmember Holmes asked if the Snelling Avenue North Trail Extension from County Road E to Highway 51 was the same project the Council looked at last fall.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated this was the same project that was reviewed in the fall. He reported staff had a schematic layout for the trail. He noted the trail would be ten feet wide in most places, and a small portion would be eight feet wide.

Councilmember Holmes did not believe this project had been vetted enough to move forward.

Councilmember Holden questioned if a link would be made into the Roseville trail system.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom reported this would be the intent for future connection to the trail system in Roseville.

Councilmember Holden stated she would rather see the City spending its trail dollars on a regional trail from E2 to County Road 96.

Councilmember McClung indicated this was his preference as well.

Councilmember Holden commented on items that were being considered in the State’s bonding bill.

Councilmember Holmes asked if it made sense to make the water line a higher priority than the trail.

Councilmember Holden stated the Council had voted on this.

Councilmember Holmes supported the Mounds View High School trail and questioned if the Council also wanted to think about the E2 to County Road 96 trail.

Further discussion ensued regarding the City’s share for the trail projects.

Councilmember Holden stated she would recommend the City pursue the Mounds View High School trail. She noted there would be another grant for this next year.

Councilmember McClung commented another option would be to put a request in to do half of the distance from E2 to County Road 96 this year and at some point connect to the regional trail.

Councilmember Holmes supported doing different legs of the trail with different types of funding over the next several years.

Councilmember Holden asked how much solicitation funding is available for proposed trail projects.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated the minimum was \$250,000 and the maximum was \$4 million per project.

Councilmember McClung suggested the City submit the projects for grant dollars, including the segment along County Road 96.

Councilmember Scott commented he would rank the Mounds View High School project as the higher priority.

Mayor Grant recommended the City pursue letters of recommendation from the school district for the trail project.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated it would benefit the City to also receive a letter of recommendation from Ramsey County and the City of New Brighton.

Consensus of the Council was to direct staff to submit two grant applications. The first project consisting of the Mounds View High School trail segment from County Road E2 to Lake Valentine Road, along with the Lake Valentine Road segment. The second project consisting of the Snelling Avenue North/Old Highway 10 trail extension from Lake Valentine Road to approximately Parkshore Drive or Wedgewood Circle depending on estimated costs and grant funding limits..

B. Summer Recreation Programs and COVID-19 Discussion

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated staff is seeking direction from the City Council regarding how the City should plan to manage and modify the remaining spring programs and upcoming summer programs due to COVID-19.

Councilmember Holmes reported the City of Minneapolis has canceled all summer recreation programs. For this reason, she was inclined to cancel all City recreation programs.

Councilmember Holden was in agreement. She believed it was better to cancel the programs than to drag people along for the summer wondering if the programs will or will not be held.

Mayor Grant questioned how many people participated in tennis lessons each year.

Recreation Coordinator Knoll stated the City currently had 12 adults registered.

Mayor Grant asked if the City had spoken with the City of New Brighton to see what they would be doing for their golf lessons.

Recreation Coordinator Knoll commented the City of New Brighton has put their programs on hold. She discussed how other communities were responding to the crisis with respect to summer programming.

Mayor Grant supported the tennis lessons being canceled and that the golf lessons be determined by the City of New Brighton.

Councilmember Scott stated he was of the opinion summer activities were more than likely being canceled.

Mayor Grant asked how many teams participated in the summer softball league.

Recreation Coordinator Knoll reported the City partners with Shoreview on the adult softball program. She explained the Arden Hills had four teams and Shoreview had four teams registered in the adult softball program.

Councilmember McClung commented on the COVID-19 models and explained the months of May and June would not be conducive to bringing people together. For this reason, he recommended the softball season be canceled.

Mayor Grant agreed and requested staff speak with personnel from the City of Shoreview regarding this recommendation. He recommended that all programming be canceled through the rest of the summer.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom indicated another option would be for staff to place a hold on registration until further notice for summer programs.

Councilmember Holden supported the City canceling the programming because she did not want the City to bring on seasonal staff members if this programming would not be held.

Councilmember Holmes agreed with this recommendation.

City Administrator Perrault stated he had reached out to several cities and none had decided to cancel all of their summer programming yet, most are delaying this decision for another month.

Councilmember Holden asked if any of the City programming expenses were reimbursable.

Recreation Coordinator Knoll reported she would have to do some research to see if the City could be reimbursed for these expenses.

The Council consensus was to cancel City programming through the summer and direct staff to make the necessary contacts.

C. Public Works Temporary Work Schedule

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated on March 23, 2020, the Public Works Department implemented a temporary shift schedule change in response to COVID-19 with one-half of the maintenance staff working a morning shift and the other half working an afternoon/evening shift. He discussed that staff has implemented other strategies including extensive cleaning of office and break areas, a limit of one employee per vehicle, thorough cleaning of vehicle interiors between each shift, suspension of sanitary sewer system cleaning, and other recommendations from the CDC.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom reported while the temporary shift change has worked well over a short two-week period, the Public Works Department implemented a change to the shift schedule on April 13 in response to a request from IUOE Local 49 members.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained Local 49 bargaining unit employees acknowledged that the City is responding to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the provisions may remain in effect during the COVID-19 response as determined solely by the City. He provided further comment on the two separate shifts noting the hours and days each shift was working.

Councilmember Holden questioned what the Public Works staff members could do at 4:00 a.m. or 9:00 p.m.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom discussed the routine maintenance work that was occurring during these off hours.

Mayor Grant commented he supported splitting the shifts so long as it works for the City. He indicated when this split shift begins to not work, the City Council will have to take another look at this staffing model. The Council was in agreement with this recommendation.

D. COVID-19 and Personnel Consideration Update

City Administrator Perrault stated the Governor has extended the Stay at Home order to May 4th. He reported employees continue to work remotely with some employees working at City Hall when necessary. He explained that in light of the extension, one to two additional staff may be rotating in to the office to perform some duties for a limited amount of time.


2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Mayor Grant thanked staff for the updates and stated it was his understanding there needs to be further information sent to the Council regarding the Zoom meeting.


City Administrator Perrault discussed how the Zoom meeting would function for the City Council meeting that would be held at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 6:50 p.m.



Julie Hanson
City Clerk



David Grant
Mayor