

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL  
Date of Meeting: April 3, 2017  
Time of Meeting: 7:00 PM (Following the EDA Meeting)  
Location of Meeting: Conference Room #1  
Purpose of Meeting: WORKSESSION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Murzyn Jr, Williams and Buesgens  
Also Present: Walt Fehst; City Manager, Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resource Director/Assistant to the City Manager, Kevin Hansen; Public Works Director, Scott Nadeau; Police Chief, Joe Kloiber; Finance Director, Jackie Zillmer; Assistant Finance Director, Joe Hogeboom; Community Development Director and Katie Bruno; City Clerk

#### MnDOT Rehabilitation of TH 47, 27<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Director of Public Works Kevin Hansen gave an overview of the proposed MnDOT project, scheduled for 2018. MnDOT has been in communication with the City; assuring detours will be well marked and businesses along University Ave. will be signed appropriately. Hansen noted he will have another update for the council in the Fall of 2017.

#### Goose Management Plan

Director Hansen reported Staff is seeking Council input on a Goose Management Plan. The City is now required to secure a state permit. In the past, the company performing the trapping has been able to obtain a permit on behalf of the City. The DNR now requires the City to obtain the permit, and are now required to have a management plan in place before future permits will be approved. Director Hansen presented plans that address and control water fowl population in the city. The city has been using habitat modifications, various plantings and physical barriers. The most effective approach is population reduction. Labelle Park, Sullivan Park and Highland have all seen problems with geese. This item will be brought to the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting for council consideration.

#### Public Info Meetings-HSIP Final Plans

Director Hansen reported a Public Informational Meeting was held, comments were generally positive. The next step for the project will be bidding in early June, the project is scheduled to start in July.

#### Public Info Meetings-39<sup>th</sup> Avenue Public Hearing

Director Hansen reported a Public Informational Meeting was held, comments on a proposed sidewalk were mostly favorable. Hansen reported the next step would be to establish a Public Hearing date at the April 10<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Hansen suggested including the sidewalk in the public notice.

#### Chief Nadeau's trip to Somalia

Police Chief Scott Nadeau reported he has been invited to participate in an initiative to assist Somalia with the establishment of effective policing. Nadeau would use vacation time to travel to Somalia for about ten days in July, 2017. Councilmember Buesgens requested Chief Nadeau host an event when he returns to share his experience with the community.

#### Embedded Somali Officers Initiative

Chief Scott Nadeau reported there is also an initiative to host Somali National Police Officers in Minnesota in the fall of 2017. Nadeau indicated Columbia Heights would be a great community to mentor the officers, there would be no cost to community.

#### Non-Traditional Police Officers Accelerated Program

Chief Scott Nadeau reported the Minnesota Legislature has approved an accelerated program for officers to obtain POST certification. Several agencies in the metro have adopted various scenarios to assist with the recruitment and hiring of non-traditional candidates.

Nadeau stated currently there are two CSOs in the department that he would recommend for the LETO program. The cost of tuition is \$6,000-\$8,000; the city would cover that cost and request a 3 year commitment from the employee. Nadeau stated funding could come from the training budget.

Nadeau reported the most recent recruitment process had 27 applicants, and we are not finding hireable candidates. Councilmember Buesgens agreed this would be a good option, and compared it to an apprenticeship program. City Manager Walt Fehst reported the City has looked at various ways in the past to attract competent Officers of various ethnicities, and commended Chief Nadeau and Kelli Bourgeois on their CSO hiring practices. The council agreed this is a good program and offered their support.

#### Circle Terrace Stakeholder Meeting/Questions

Chief Scott Nadeau reported a stakeholders meeting was held on March 9<sup>th</sup>. It was determined to conduct more surveying of the residents who will be utilizing the building, many programs and activities are being considered.

#### Discussion regarding Delinquent Utility Accounts

Finance Director Joe Kloiber reported at the March 6th work session, the Finance Director discussed with the City Council the need to interpret the water shut-off policy in light of the unusual circumstance that the annual special assessment of delinquent utility accounts was unable to be levied for the 2016 levy year/2017 payable year. Staff surveyed 22 municipal utility billing departments located in the North Metro Area. The principal findings are:

1. The only respondent that uses shut-off for routine collection is the City of Becker.
2. The reported policy implementation commonly occurred from 10 to over 20 years ago.
3. 25% of the respondents report that they still retain the ability to shut-off for collection. We suspect that several of the other respondents also retain the ability to shut-off for collection, but their current staff may not be aware of this, due to turnover.
4. The reported volume of delinquent assessments is 3% - 5% of annual utility revenue. For the City of Columbia Heights, that would be approximately \$300,000 in delinquent bills.
5. The City's one-time late fee of 5% is on the low end of the reported range of late fees, with 10% being both the highest and the most common rate reported.

Staff recommends discontinuing the use of shut-off for routine collection. Staff strongly recommends however, that the following related steps also be taken:

1. Adopt a revised fee structure that keeps the financial burden of the dramatic increase in delinquency from being carried by the customers that pay their bills timely. The logical point to implement this change is August 1st, concurrent with the annual cycle for the special assessment process.
2. Discontinue grandfathering tenant names on customer accounts established prior to 2014.
3. Retain the current shut-off ordinances as an infrequently-used option for circumstances where collection by special assessment is problematic.
4. Amend Resolution 2002-40 to simplify the shut-off fee to only \$75 per occurrence, removing the additional \$25 surcharge for each repeated recurrence.
5. Remain aware that this policy change will increase the financial consequences of misunderstandings between landlords

Councilmember Buesgens asked if the city shuts off water at vacant properties. Kloiber indicated there

are typically red flags that come up with vacant properties. Community Development Director Joe Hogeboom indicated there is a difference between vacant and abandoned properties. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. stated he has done a number of shut-offs, and the problem has gotten worse over the years. Director Kloiber suggested that because we are currently on the low end of fees, using the median fee. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. asked when shut-offs will be stopped. Director Kloiber stated he would anticipate being done in June.

#### Discussion regarding Comp Plan Steering Committee

Community Development Director Joe Hogeboom reported the consultant has suggested creating a steering committee of 10-15 people. Staff has reached out to residents and business people in the community who have expressed in the past to participate in the production process of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The City Council also made recommendations of various individuals to serve on the Review Committee.

Staff is proposing the following individuals who have shown a positive interest in serving on the Committee: Tom Kaiser, Louis Sacta, Connie Beusgens, John Gianoulis, Degha Shabella, Jenny Ketchum, Eric Penniston, Amada Simula or Frost Simula, Joe Schluender, Faustina Allen, Sean Broom, Adam Schill, Rob Fiorendino, Ann Carder, Dave Payne, and Marsha Stroik. The consultant will schedule a time to meet with the group in late April, and continue to meet through the end of the year. The council supported the recommendation.

#### Discussion related to Adult Day Care Ordinance

Community Development Director Joe Hogeboom explained there has been an increased need for families to have a place where elderly family members can go for safe community oriented activities during the daytime hours. Hogeboom shared his experience with Adult Day Care Facilities in his former city of employment. The two facilities were very different; one being more organized, and offering a different experience for the user.

Director Hogeboom explained an applicant recently approached the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council regarding a proposal to waive several required development standards in City Code to allow for the operation of an Adult Day Care Facility within the Central Business Zoning District.

Staff recommends that the specific development standards for Adult Day Care Facilities be amended, so that an alternative approach to providing on-site outdoor space can be considered. Staff does not recommend modifying the development standard that requires dedicated loading and unloading space for Adult Day Care Facilities. Because of the nature of this type of business, providing a safe, formal location in which clients can be loaded and unloaded from vehicles is critical.

Councilmember Williams commented on the problems with the adult rehabilitation facilities in the City.

Mayor Schmitt suggested addressing the rehabilitation facilities at a future time.

Hogeboom clarified that staff would propose an ordinance to allow an alternative to the outdoor space requirement, with no change to the dedicated loading and unloading space requirement. Hogeboom stated the ordinance will likely come before the council in May.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectively Submitted,



Katie Bruno, Council Secretary/City Clerk