

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL  
Date of Meeting: August 7, 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 7:22 PM

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Murzyn Jr., Buesgens and Novitsky  
Also Present: Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resource Director/Assistant to the City Manager, Kevin Hansen; Public Works Director, Joe Hogeboom; Community Development Director, and Katie Bruno; City Clerk

#### Report from Goff Public, Communication Audit

Sara Thatcher gave an overview of the recently completed Communication Audit. The recommendations include hiring a communications coordinator, implementing a crisis communication plan, consolidating the current eight social media accounts, broadening the content on the City's cable channel, modernizing the city newsletter, continuing to hold community engagement events and provide translation services; especially in the area of community events and recreation brochures.

Mayor Schmitt questioned if the communication coordinator would be one full time position. Kelli Bourgeois indicated the 2018 proposed budget includes one full time employee, who would work flexible hours.

Frost Simula-1700 49<sup>th</sup> Ave NE commented that graphic design is complex because there is variety of media outlets on the city. Bourgeois indicated contracted services are included in the proposed 2018 budget.

Adam Davis; producer of city meetings indicated there are issues with the cable access channel. Davis questioned if his current position could be upgraded to the communications coordinator position.

Bourgeois clarified this is a full-time benefited position, being open to all applicants.

Mayor Schmitt expressed concern with a new person learning the systems. Bourgeois indicated we have outside support options. Councilmember Novitsky asked how much time per week is devoted to meeting production. Bourgeois indicated the budget allows for up to 14 hours per week. Schmitt stated she would like to discuss this position more during the budget meetings.

#### Incident update from Captain Austin

Captain Austin reported the Anoka County CID (Criminal Investigations Division) is investigating a recent complaint of shots fired at 4439 2<sup>nd</sup> St.

#### Police Department Information Meetings

Captain Austin invited the council to participate in ride along's with the police department. Austin also reported that the Department is planning to host a 4-6 week Council Academy this fall, and requested council submit various topics of interest.

The council tentatively agreed Tuesday evening would work best, and suggested beginning September 19<sup>th</sup>.

DeWayne Morrell questioned if speed control actions can be utilized on Reservoir Blvd. Mayor Schmitt suggested Mr. Morrell contact Captain Austin at a separate time. Councilmember Novitsky and Buesgens suggested the Traffic Commission review the request, and explain the process related to speed control.

Mayor Schmitt indicated she would like to schedule meetings with the Police Officers and Sergeants regarding the Police Chief recruitment. Councilmember Buesgens indicated she would like to think about this further, prior to scheduling the meetings. Schmitt indicated she intends to meet with both groups, and invited the council to participate. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. and Councilmember Novitsky indicated they would attend. The meetings were tentatively scheduled for October 5, 2017 at 6:30 and 7:30 PM at the Public Safety Building.

### MN/DOT Economic Development Program Grant for Central Avenue

Joe Hogeboom, Community Development Director reported MNDOT administers the "Transportation/Economic Development" grant program, or TED for short. TED funds up to \$10 million per improvement project to a state highway. Staff has identified the area along Central Avenue, between 47th and 43rd Avenues, as an area that it would like to focus on for the grant, extending the safety improvement work that is planned to occur north of 47th Avenue further south into downtown Columbia Heights. The work, if funded, would likely include new sidewalks, street lighting, decorative concrete treatment to roadway medians, enhanced pedestrian crossing(s), enhanced bus facilities and potential minimal right-of-way acquisition. The TED grant provides for 70% of total project costs. The City may also consider burying the utility lines along Central Avenue. The Community Development Director and Economic Development Manager would coordinate the application material. Staff would like to utilize the engineering services of SEH. SEH was the selected professional service provider for the Central Avenue project north of 47th Avenue, and has the project history and ability to facilitate with the potential extension of the project to 43rd Avenue. SEH would provide a location map with surrounding businesses and conceptual layout drawings and typical section renderings that illustrate the proposed sidewalk, lighting and other enhancements. Also they would prepare a high level project cost estimate including a review of right of way needs and costs. SEH has submitted a proposal with a fee of \$8,000.

Mayor Schmitt questioned the timing of the project, noting University Ave. will be reconstructed in 2018. Public Works Director Kevin Hansen indicated the Central Ave project would not begin before 2019. Mayor Schmitt commented that she would like to see a bus shelter near the HyVee as well as additional benches along Central Ave.

### Authorization to seek bids Keyes Park

Director of Public Works Kevin Hansen reported that the Park and Recreation Commission developed a Master Plan for Keyes Park. The Park Planning consulting firm of ISG prepared the Master Plan including many elements, staff is recommending the following elements:

- Realigned athletic fields (2)
- New playground
- Reconfigured parking lots
- Rain gardens/infiltration basins for water quality
- Walking path from parking lot to facilities
- 11. Site landscaping
- 12. Preserve sliding hill
- 13. Introduction of a soccer field (partial)

The following are recommended as add alternate bids:

- 6. Addition of a paved walking trail around entire park
- 7. Sidewalk along the east side of McLeod from 44th to 45th Avenues

### Solar gardens subscription

Director of Public Works Kevin Hansen reported the City of Columbia Heights has the opportunity to subscribe to a community solar garden through Xcel Energy's Solar Rewards Community Program. There are no costs to the City for subscribing. For each kWh that is subscribed, the City will receive a bill credit and a Renewable Energy Credit. The Solar Garden is being built and paid for by a Third Party Tax Investor. Because the City pays nothing for the Solar Garden or the subscription, they must buy the electricity that the Garden is producing from the owner of the actual Garden (the Third Party Tax Investor). The end result is that the City will receive a net profit of 1 cent for every kWh they subscribe for. Hansen indicated there are no capital costs; the only possible downside is the 25 year commitment.

#### Refuse cart purchase (garbage and recycling)

Director of Public Works Kevin Hansen explained that by purchasing the refuse carts currently in use, the upcoming bidding process will be more consistent. DeWayne Morrell suggested residents be given the option to purchase their own carts. Hansen expressed concern with residents maintaining their own carts, as well as the potential injury to drivers.

#### City Hall Master Plan

Director of Public Works Kevin Hansen reported that in In 2014 staff contracted with Braun Intertec to perform a building envelope analysis of City Hall, considering the exterior masonry and windows. It identified over \$640,000 of recommended repairs or mechanical replacements to the building.

Staff has delayed any major investment in the building considering the age, condition and deficiencies of the current structure, and instead has focused only on keeping the building mechanical systems running.

During the 2017 Council goal setting process, the replacement of the existing City Hall was discussed and a short-term objective was established to create a City Hall Master Plan. The creation of a Master Plan will take 4-6 months and would involve:

- Site Evaluation and Selection
- Site Assessment and Site
- Concept Layout Development
- Develop preliminary building systems:
- Develop a detailed cost estimate based on the preferred site.
- Develop funding scenarios based on the detailed cost estimate.

Hansen indicated it will take 4-6 months to complete the analysis.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. questioned the source of the funding, noting he would like to wait until the Liquor Store, Public Safety Center and the Library are paid off. Hansen indicated that bonding may not be necessary. Hansen commented that it would be beneficial to have the Master Plan completed prior to planning the financial aspects of the proposed project. Mayor Schmitt stated the current building needs to be maintained as necessary.

#### Review of updated council documents

Human Resource Director/Assistant to the City Manager Kelli Bourgeois distributed an updated Council Agenda and an updated Council Letter for the council to review. The members suggested using the updated forms at the upcoming meeting. Bourgeois stated she would pass that along to staff, noting it may take a couple of meetings for everyone to make the change.

Bourgeois distributed a draft Council Handbook, requesting the council review the content and contact her with questions or suggestions.

#### Adjournment

Motion by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., seconded by Councilmember Buesgens to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:06 PM

Respectively Submitted,



Katie Bruno, Council Secretary/City Clerk