

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL  
Date of Meeting: February 5, 2018  
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 7:42 PM

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Williams, Murzyn Jr., Buesgens and Novitsky  
Also Present: Walt Fehst; City Manager, Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resources Director/Assistant to the City Manager, Joe Hogeboom; Community Development Director, Elizabeth Holmbeck; City Planner, Gary Gorman; Fire Chief, Lenny Austin; Police Chief, Justin Pletcher; Police Sergeant, Erik Johnston; Police Sergeant, and Katie Bruno; City Clerk

#### Update on Comp Plan-Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.

Mark Koegler and Lance Bernard; Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. gave an update on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan project. Preliminary drafts of the Land Use and Economic Competitiveness chapter were referenced. Changes between the 2030 and 2040 plans were highlighted. Councilmember Buesgens asked if zoning could be changed to allow alternate uses in the event that smaller churches become available for sale. Planner Holmbeck indicated that applicants could apply for rezoning if necessary. Buesgens requested a section be added to the "Trends and Challenges" section, titled "Young Families," in order to reflect the city more accurately.

Met Council affordable housing allocation and average median income parameters were reviewed, along with density goals.

Koegler reported the next steps will include working with staff to get public feedback on the draft. Completion is scheduled for June 2018.

#### Community Survey Results

Lenny Austin, Police Chief explained that Sergeants Pletcher and Johnston would be reporting on two recent surveys. One being a follow-up to a 2014 survey, including a few additional questions from various departments. The second being a survey from the Circle Terrace neighborhood.

Sergeant Johnston reported volunteers and Community Service Officers conducted door-to-door discussions with 274 residents in various areas of the City.

Key demographic findings were shared including the following: 78% of respondents own their home, over 50% have lived in the City for longer than 10 years, 30% have school age children and about 50% of these children attend Columbia Heights schools. One-third of respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher. The majority of respondents drive, and about 20% of respondents use a combination of transportation options. 32% of respondents live in multi-generational households.

Findings specific to the Police Department were shared. Overall responses were favorable.

Sergeant Pletcher shared information on surveys done in the Circle Terrace neighborhood and surrounding areas: a total of 104 responses. Most residents on Circle Terrace have lived there less than 5 years. The majority of residents are employed, and over one-half of these residents earn less than \$40,000 annually. The survey indicated the current park is being used regularly, and these residents are interested in a variety of programming at the recently constructed neighborhood center. Sergeant Pletcher reported the residents indicated that they may want to use the facility for various events and as a gathering area. Councilmember Novitsky questioned if the rental fees have been established. Pletcher indicated fees will be discussed going forward.

Chief Austin stated the purpose of the building is to provide stability through offering services. Manager Fehst indicated that city programming and fees will be run similar to those through the recreation department. Mayor Schmitt suggested rental fees be waived for community events and private rentals be charged a fee.

#### Discussion of snow and ice removal from sidewalks

Gary Gorman, Fire Chief reported he has received questions from councilmembers regarding the snow removal policy. Gorman indicated that although reminder letters are sent out annually, there are a small number of properties along Central Ave. that do not clear their sidewalks as required. Gorman suggested increased enforcement can be used at the direction of the council. Councilmember Buesgens recommended repeat offenders be fined, as it is unfair to the other businesses in compliance.

Manager Fehst suggested looking at policies in other cities and bringing these options to the council for consideration.

#### Goals & Objectives Updates

Kelli Bourgeois, Human Resources Director/Assistant to the City Manager gave an update from all departments on the recently adopted Goals & Objectives.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:57 PM

Respectively Submitted,

  
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Katie Bruno, Council Secretary/City Clerk