

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL
Date of Meeting: April 1, 2019
Time of Meeting: 7 pm
Location of Meeting: Conference Room #1
Purpose of Meeting: Work Session

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The meeting was called to order at 7 pm

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Murzyn Jr, Novitsky, Williams, and Buesgens

Also present: Kelli Bourgeois-City Manager, Kevin Hansen-Public Works Director, Joseph Kloiber-Finance Director, Lenny Austin-Police Chief, Elizabeth Hammond-City Planner and Shelley Hanson-Administrative Asst.

1. 53rd Avenue Site Layout/Trail

Hansen explained this would be a joint project with the City of Fridley. Grant funds have been awarded to help pay for the reconfiguration of this roadway and added pedestrian trail. Hansen explained that easements must be obtained in order to locate the trail on the south side of 53rd. This process will take about one year. The trail would run from the Sullivan Park connection towards Central Avenue where it will connect to a five foot sidewalk as it approaches Central Avenue.

Hansen assured members that there will not be any lanes of traffic lost and businesses will still have their access points. Hansen said that a Mill and Overlay for 53rd Avenue from the west side of this project all the way to University will probably be done at the same time to make the roadway surface consistent. Hansen stated decisions will need to be made for crosswalks and the location of the bus stop.

It was noted that Mayor Lund from Fridley would like to host a joint meeting to explain the project to interested parties and detail the actual work to be done. There will be some storm water work needed on the north side and Fridley has extra grant money for a walking trail along 7th Street that could be tied into this one along 53rd.

2. Annual Renewal of Property & Liability Insurance with the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust

Kloiber reminded members that the renewal of insurance coverage for the City is June 1st. He reviewed areas that need to be considered prior to submitting the application for coverage:

1. Choice to waive or not waive state limits on certain liability claims.
2. Choice of dollar amounts for a) deductible per claim, and b) Deductible per year
3. Understanding the differences between coverages/liability for sewer and water backups and flooding.

Kloiber stated that the City has chosen not to waive state limits on certain claims for the past several years, and that is the practice of most cities. He told members he would seek quotes with this same provision.

Kloiber then discussed options for deductibles and how our experience rating affects our rates. Out of 42 cities of similar size, the majority chose \$1,000 deductible—which is what we have also had over the last several years. Kloiber told members he would provide quotes of varying deductibles to the Council so they can decide if they want to stay with the same coverage we have had the last few years.

Kloiber then reviewed the differences between liability for sewer and water backups and what Insurance coverage is needed, both on the City's behalf and by homeowners. Most homeowners are unaware that

they should carry coverage for this. He explained when the City's insurance pays and when it is up to homeowner's policies. In the past we have carried no fault coverage which provides limited coverage as a last resort to those that experience damage. Kloiber explained we usually get 3-4 claims per year who receive some compensation. They don't usually get enough to pay for the repair, but politically it is better than no assistance. Schmitt and the other members seemed in favor of keeping this coverage.

3. CSO Staffing Levels Discussion

Austin passed around an organizational chart for the Police Dept personnel. He said recruiting officers is getting tougher. The last officer opening we had resulted in 13 applications and we used to get over 100. He has a couple of part time CSO's who will be taking time off to take classes in law enforcement. Therefore, he would like to add part time CSO positions to the Dept to ensure coverage. Austin stated no additional funds will be required for 2019 or 2020 just the number of hours would be dispersed between 7 positions rather than 5. He said the CSO's help a lot at night especially by transporting detainees to the Anoka County jail, and with outreach programs. Austin stated we are short one now so he would like to hire someone soon, and the other two would be added by late summer.

Schmitt asked if he has considered adding another full time CSO. Austin said he is considering that since the one full time position we have is very busy. Schmitt asked how many Reserves we have. Austin told members that there currently are 4 or 5 Reserves who are used mostly for special events.

4. City Hall Location Discussion

Stacy Kvilvang and Keith Dahl from Ehlers were present to discuss a potential offer from a developer who is interested in doing a complete tear down and redevelopment of the 3989 Central Avenue site, including the parking ramp. The proposed development would include partnering with the City of Columbia Heights to house a new city hall on the first floor and possibly a coffee shop, with 4-5 floors of market rate apartments on top. It would have underground parking for employees and residents, along with some surface parking for visitors. The developer feels it would add foot traffic to the area and make it a more vibrant downtown area.

Buesgens stated she likes the Huset Park location best, but would be open to this idea also.

Murzyn asked if it would save the City money to put it there. Kvilvang said it would save some costs, such as design/architectural fees, and the fact that City Hall could share some of the amenities like a fitness center. She told members this developer is an experienced party who wants to begin construction in 2019 so decisions will have to be made quickly. She said they would proceed whether city hall goes in there or not.

Schmitt questioned whether there would be enough parking for employees and residents and the other businesses in the area as the ramp is now open to the public. Dahl stated that is something that would be studied and a suitable plan would be drawn up to provide enough parking for the area, along with green space. Schmitt asked how much space has been allotted for City Hall. Kvilvang stated 25,000 sf has been set aside for City Hall. Bourgeois said the Huset Park site proposed 17,500 sf for City Hall and possibly an additional 2,500 sf for Engineering staff, so this plan would provide adequate room as part of the development.

Novitsky and Schmitt were interested, but want to have a cost comparison done. Kloiber stated that contractual services should also be included in the price analysis. They would also need information on financing details including cash vs. debt financing. Depending on the debt load, it may need to go to a referendum which could hold it up a bit. Kvilvang said they have several options to make this work.

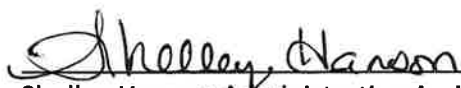
5. Discussion regarding changing location of City Council meetings

Bourgeois told the council that they could hold their upcoming meetings in the Library Community Room. The meetings would not be broadcast live, but could be taped and replayed. The elevator needs to have the check valve replaced which will cost approximately \$15,000 and will take about three days to repair. According to the elevator company it is not something that needs to be done immediately. However, before the next election time (February 2020 Presidential Primary), it will need to be repaired.

Murzyn, Novitsky, and Schmitt, all agreed it should be fixed now while the use of it is low and while we can hold meetings at an alternate site. It should only be down for a meeting or two depending on scheduling. It was decided to hold the April 8th at the Library. Bourgeois stated the meeting of April 22nd will have to be held at City Hall as it is also the Board of Review and this address has already been advertised. Depending on when the repair can be scheduled will determine if any other meetings will need to be held at the Library.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:07 PM

Respectively Submitted,


Shelley Hanson-Administrative Assistant