

Meeting of: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL  
Date of Meeting: April 2, 2018  
Time of Meeting: 7:00 PM  
Location of Meeting: Conference Room #1  
Purpose of Meeting: Work Session

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmembers Murzyn Jr, Williams, Novitsky and Buesgens  
Also present: Walt Fehst; City Manager, Kelli Bourgeois; Human Resources Director/Assistant to the City Manager, Lenny Austin; Police Chief, Joe Kloiber; Finance Director, Kevin Hansen; Public Works Director, Joe Hogeboom; Community Development Director, Elizabeth Holmbeck; City Planner, Keith Dahl; Economic Development Manager, and Katie Bruno; City Clerk.

Update from Lona Schreiber (Met Council)

Lona Schreiber introduced Kyle Burrows and Lesley Kandaras. Kyle Burrows addressed the following questions received from the council in advance of the meeting.

- *What would make projects in Columbia Heights more eligible for Met Council-administered Transit Oriented Development (TOD) grants and Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) grants?*

Burrows indicated that grants are very competitive and are guided around Thrive Goals. It was suggested city staff work with Paul Burns at the Met Council.

- *Can we please continue to advocate to Metro Transit for bus service to SACA (627 38th Avenue NE.)? We initiated this process in 2015 with Metro Transit and still no changes have been made. As we see it, Route 11 and/or Route 801 could be slightly rerouted to serve SACA.*

Burrows distributed a transit map of Columbia Heights. The area to SACA was reported as difficult for transit service. The current route (#11) is a well-utilized route, and an additional stop would add 6-8 minutes to the overall route. Changes to the 801 route would not allow enough time for layover/driver rest breaks. Burrows stated that Metro Mobility and Transit Link are options that could be used as well. Joe Hogeboom, Community Development Director suggested a future meeting with Met Council and City Staff for further discussion.

- *Is the Met Council and/or Metro Transit interested in partnering with the City of Columbia Heights for a creative co-use of the municipal parking ramps?*

Burrows stated that currently there is not a great need for Park & Ride facilities, but he suggested discussing various options with city staff.

- *What is the status of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) planning for the Central Avenue corridor?*

Burrows stated two additional lines are planned, following that, there are not specific plans. The Central Avenue corridor is high on the list of future plans. Burrows indicated they continue to seek funding sources.

Sean Broom, a resident of Columbia Heights, requested the Met Council consider enhancing the University Ave bus lines if the BRT is installed along Central Ave.

- *Are there any programs available through the Met Council that could help preserve and enhance "naturally/organically occurring affordable housing"?*

Lesley Kandaras reported the Livable Community Act Grant Funding is very competitive, and she offered to meet with city staff to work on options.

### City Hall Master Plan

Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director introduced Cindy McCleary, representing Leo A. Daly.

McCleary reported a space needs study was completed. It was determined that approximately 17,200 square feet is recommended. McCleary reviewed concept plans for seven various sites; three at or near the Public Safety building, two at the Library, and two at or near the current City Hall.

Director Hansen asked the council for feedback. Councilmember Buesgens asked if there is any interest in a shared building opportunity with other government agencies. McCleary indicated that the revenue received from government entities is far less than what could be received from a commercial entity. Councilmember Buesgens indicated she prefers rebuilding at the current location. Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. is not in favor of blocking Mill Street at 40<sup>th</sup>. Councilmember Novitsky agreed that he likes the current location, although he is not in favor of closing Mill St.

Councilmember Williams expressed concern with the possible \$8,000,000 cost. City Manager Fehst clarified that most of the cost would come from internal financing, with about \$2,000,000 obtained from bonding. Fehst commented that the costs associated with maintaining the current aging, oversized building are not economically smart.

Mayor Schmitt suggested eliminating the library sites, and instead she suggested considering the current City Hall site and the Public Safety Center sites. Finance Director Joe Kloiber stated that if the current location is chosen, temporary relocation costs are included in the estimated cost.

Councilmember Williams questioned the possibility of adding on to Murzyn Hall. Mayor Schmitt asked Chief Austin what he thinks of sharing spaces. Austin indicated the police and fire departments are very busy, and they could be disruptive during council events.

Mayor Schmitt questioned if 17,000 square feet is necessary, stating that the council chambers would not need to be inside City Hall. She would like to consider adding a second floor to the Public Safety building, noting that the building was built to accommodate additional space. Schmitt suggested a shared customer service area for Public Safety and for Finance and Community Development, where employees would be cross-trained. Director Hansen clarified that the library sites, as well as the parcel to the north of the Public Safety Center, are no longer being considered. Manager Fehst requested Cindy McCleary provide plans for an addition to Murzyn Hall. Hansen suggested considering the item at the May or June work sessions.

*The council recessed from 9:21 P.M. - 9:26 P.M.*

### Draft Ordinance amending the City's Zoning Code as it relates to institutional uses

Elizabeth Holmbeck, City Planner, reported both Religious Facilities and K-12 Schools are permitted in all five Residential Zoning Districts and the Limited Business Zoning District. The proposed Ordinance would remove K-12 Schools and Religious Facilities as permitted uses, from the Limited Business Zoning District. Both uses would still be allowed in all residentially zoned areas with a Conditional Use Permit. Staff believes that this effort will help to maintain the intent and purpose of the Limited Business District, which according to the Columbia Heights Zoning Code is to "provide appropriate locations for limited retail sales and services for the convenience of adjacent residential neighborhoods."

Staff is not proposing to change where other types of schools can locate.

Mayor Schmitt suggested *Chapter 9.110, (D)(3) (b) Convent or monastery, when accessory to a religious facility* be removed, because *Item (a) Religious facility/place of worship* is being removed. Mayor Schmitt requested *item (g) Government maintenance facility* be removed. Holmbeck will make the changes, and she will bring the item to a future council meeting.

#### Discussion of organizational restructuring for the Police Department

Police Chief Lenny Austin reported he is planning a structural change to the current Command Structure of the Columbia Heights Police Department. The organizational structure will change from one Captain to two, and from five Sergeants to four. Austin reported the department is currently four officers short, and once those positions are filled, 11 of the 18 officers will have 3 years or less experience. The additional Captain position would allow for the oversight of some initiatives to be redirected from a Sergeant to a Captain. This would allow Sergeants to spend additional time in supervising, mentoring, and developing officers. The costs associated with the changes are minimal, and they will be reflected in the 2019 Budget; there would not be an amendment to the 2018 Budget.

#### Central Avenue Medians Feasibility Report

Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director, reported the project is only partially State Aid eligible for funding. The City's construction allotment could be used for landscaping costs. Other funding opportunities are being sought. Three options for two segments were prepared; the improvements include increasing pedestrian safety while being aesthetically pleasing. Cost is estimated between \$400,000 and \$500,000. Hansen indicated he would like council to accept the feasibility report at their April meeting. Councilmember Buesgens questioned if we could fund the improvements if we were to delay two street reconstruction projects. Hansen advised against that. Councilmember Novitsky suggested hiring an additional police officer to cite jaywalkers and speeders.

#### Designating Temporary No Parking on 39th Right of Way

Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director reported construction is scheduled to begin on April 21<sup>st</sup>, and there will likely be parking issues along 39<sup>th</sup>. Staff is suggesting temporary "No Parking" signs be installed for a period of 8 weeks. Hansen stated a portion of the Huset Park parking lot may be used for during this period.

#### 2020 Census

Joe Hogeboom, Community Development Director, reported the Census Bureau requested the City confirm addresses with their database. There are about 300 discrepancies; staff will work on finding the errors in the coming months. The Census Bureau is requesting all cities in the metro area establish a Complete Count Committee. This Committee will be instructed on ways to count populations that may be difficult to count. Councilmember Buesgens asked if there will be any additional cost to the City related to the Census. Hogeboom stated if there are additional events hosted by the Complete Count Committee, then they would be funded by the City, but other census-related costs will not be passed to the City.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:12 PM

Respectively Submitted,



Katie Bruno, Council Secretary/City Clerk