

**WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
JANUARY 22, 2019**

The workshop meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Gunderson at 5:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Heidi Gunderson, Council Members: Craig Johnson and Greg Urban. The following member was absent: Patricia Youker.

Also present were: City Administrator Kevin Watson, Assistant City Administrator Tim Sandvik, Planning/Community Development Director Nolan Wall, Finance Director Bob Sundberg, Fire Chief Ed Leier, Public Works Director Jesse Farrell, and City Attorney Caroline Bell Beckman.

Others present were: Bob Morse, Mary Buerkle, Buerkle Honda, Quinn Hudson, Buerkle Honda Architect, Scott Haupt, S.E.H.

**1. Discuss Buerkle Road Alternatives**

Public Works Director Farrell gave a presentation on two alternatives to address the condition of Buerkle Road. Scott Haupt, S.E.H., reviewed the two options: 1) rehabilitate the payment and do minor utility repairs, with all work within the curb line (\$560,000) or 2) a full removal and replacement of the existing curb and gutter and removing existing street section and reconstruction with new layers of sand, gravel and bituminous pavement to meet forecasted pavement design requirements (\$1,250,000). Haupt discussed also addressing the drainage issue in the area of the tracks and said that they have looked at a couple different solutions.

Farrell said that staff are asking the Council to give staff direction to do a Feasibility Study on the less costly alternative with the intent to do the work in 2019. He noted that staff will need to look into what funds would be available from State Aid and said that the City may be required to do an advance. The more robust/expensive project would have to be a 2020 project.

Mary Buerkle, Buerkle Honda, noted that she likes the less expensive option because it would last 15 years and even if you did it twice in 30 years it would be less expensive than the second alternative. Mayor Gunderson said that she agrees, especially with not knowing what may happen to the road with the implementation of the Rush Line BRT project.

Farrell also asked for authorization for staff to approach the railroad and the City of White Bear Lake to look at possibly doing in partnership a concrete crossing at the tracks. Farrell said this would be a separate cost and that other parties would participate financially, perhaps with the railroad covering 50 percent of the cost and the City of White Bear Lake 25 percent with Vadnais Heights covering the remaining 25 percent.

Council Member Johnson said he is also in favor of the less expensive project. He asked how much traffic there is on the road from heavy trucks. He asked if the useful life takes into consideration the amount of heavy traffic. Farrell said that additional traffic and our climate can impact the useful life of a road. Haupt said that we wouldn't get another 25 years out of the road but hopefully we would get 15.

Gunderson noted that she would support a Feasibility Study for Option 1 and directed staff to contact the railroad and the City of White Bear Lake to discuss the concrete pad issue. Council Members Johnson and Urban agreed.

## **2. Discuss Paperless Meeting Packets**

Mayor Gunderson noted that she has been working with staff on the idea of going paperless for a while. City Administrator Watson reviewed the spreadsheet staff prepared showing the costs incurred for creating the meeting packets and the amount of copies that are made over a year. He said that on an annual basis, the City spends about \$9,000 on meeting packets. There would be a cost to going digital. The City would possibly need to purchase iPads for Council and staff at the cost of about \$1,200 for each iPad. He said that they should last a couple years.

Watson went on to discuss different types of software/apps that could be used when accessing the digital copies. Assistant City Administrator Sandvik said he looked at iAnnotate and others like it, which would allow a person to take notes while looking at the document, and would cost \$10 per year per user. He said there is also Adobe pdf software that would allow you to manipulate a digital copy and this would run about \$15.00 per month per user. A different piece of software which could be used is agenda management software such as Granicus and BoardDoc. He said that this type of software could help to communicate better with the City's website. Watson said that his initial thought is to start small, get a couple of iPads for folks that want to start receiving the packets digitally and see how that works.

Gunderson noted that she sits on a couple boards where she is assigned an iPad and can only use that iPad for that Board. She said her iPads have lasted 5 years. She asked City Attorney Beckman if Council could use their own personal iPads to download the packets, and if City purchased iPads could be passed on from Council person to Council person. City Attorney Beckman said yes it would be best to have City owned iPads and only allow use for governmental use and no personnel data. She said that Council Members cannot communicate with each other through the iPads during a meeting, as doing so would be in violation of the Open Meeting Law.

Gunderson asked how long she would need to keep any notes she makes on meeting materials/documents. Beckmann said that this may be discoverable data especially if it's on government issued equipment. Watson said that we could talk to Roseville IT and see if perhaps documents could be saved on the Cloud.

Gunderson noted that she likes the idea of something such as Granicus and what it can do, but right now she would be interested in trying out using an iPad with the ability to access the documents and take notes. Others indicated that they would also be interested. Urban said that he would decline getting a City owned iPad and that he would just download the packet on his own laptop. Beckman said that if you choose to use your own computer you shouldn't take any notes on it but only use it to read documents.

Johnson said that he is not opposed to the idea. Gunderson said that she would like to eventually look at software such as BoardPac because she likes what it is capable of doing.

Gunderson directed staff to figure out the implications of using personal devices and asked that everyone think about what their preference would be. She also thinks the Council needs to continue the policy discussion.

### **3. Future Council Meeting Schedules**

Mayor Gunderson said that she and City Administrator Watson have been talking about whether our current meeting structure/format is the best structure for the Council to get work done. She said that it seems like we're always cramming in information in at the end of a workshop and cutting discussions short. She said that she would like to look at what other cities are doing and how they structure their meetings. Watson said there are several options. He said that some do it the same as Vadnais Heights, and then some have workshop meetings in the off week. Those meetings could be started earlier in the evening, and we could move the Council meeting around if there wasn't a workshop before it. Watson said that consistency is the key, so that the public knows when the meetings are.

Johnson suggested that when there is something important to discuss, we try not to schedule anything else for that workshop but hold them off until the next workshop. Gunderson stated that she is not in favor of adding a third Tuesday. She noted that some cities have a long Council meetings, and then the next meeting there would be a long workshop with a small business only Council meeting. She said that the Council could hold a workshop, adjourn, go into the Council meeting, and then reconvene the workshop after the Council meeting to finish up business. She asked what others think about this idea. Urban noted that the Council always has the option of coming back into the Workshop after a Council meeting. He said it is important to him to work it out within the two meeting times.

Gunderson said she would be open to hearing from others on how to structure the meetings and that the consensus now was to continue as we've always done and that we can always come back to a workshop after the Council meeting, if needed.

### **4. Discuss Upcoming County Road Improvements**

Public Works Director Farrell met with the County about upcoming work on McMenemy (Koehler Road to County Road F, pavement), Edgerton (pavement resurfacing) and

County Road D (full reconstruction near Edgerton extending a couple blocks, sometime between 2019 and 2023). They also talked about Centerville Road (candidate for resurfacing in 2020, pedestrian ramps in 2019), Koehler Road (alternatives analysis) and Hodgson (at Rice Street, possibly with a roundabout) sometime in the future.

City Administrator Watson said if County Road D were to happen in 2019, there may be the need for the City to participate in the cost of the project, as far as the trail goes and we would share in that cost with the County and Little Canada. Farrell said that the City's share of 10% would be around \$150,000. Council Member Urban asked how the City's share is determined. Farrell responded that the County has a process that communities compete for funding for cooperative projects. So the 10 percent rate is based on the County's prescribed cost split formula for projects. Urban said that he doesn't see a benefit to the City participating in a cost share for the County Road D project. Watson said that the City's cost share would be related to storm water and trails. Urban said he doesn't know that there is a great need for pedestrian facilities in that area.

Mayor Gunderson said she would like to see the plan for Hwy 61 and what its initial timeline is.

#### **5. Policy Discussion on Fund Spending**

Finance Director Sundberg summarized the City's account structure and spending policies which are guided by GASB. He said that fund accounting is the control for spending. If you want to spend money not in a fund, you need to transfer (by Council action) funds to an account that would allow the expense. He said that the Council may want to look at the City's financial controls.

Council Member Johnson raised concerns about spending. He said the City needs to be transparent when moving money around and that the City isn't taking money from one fund to support the City in a different area and artificially keeping the levy low. Mayor Gunderson said that there is transparency in the way the City sets its budget. She is also disappointed with the discussion last fall regarding the building and facility report. Over the next couple months, she would like to take a look at the budget and look at what the levy should be. He said that the levy needs to be accurate to cover the City's costs. Council Member Urban said it comes down to spending and are we spending the City's funds properly and that he believes it is.

Gunderson said perhaps the Council should take another look at this when it digs in deeper to the funding needs for the various City departments and facilities.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.