

CLOQUET CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, January 5, 2016

Present: Bjerkness, Kolodge, Langley, Maki, Rock, Wilkinson, Mayor Hallback

Absent: None.

Staff: Fritsinger, Klassen, C. Peterson

Other: Andy Hubley, ARDC, Jamie Lund, Pine Journal, Jeff Lindstrom, Churchill Elementary

Slate Street Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Project

Per the request of the Council, Andy Hubley of ARDC reviewed how the Slate Street Safe Routes Project was identified. The process started in 2013 with MnDOT working with the community to come up with the plan. The plan is centered around non-infrastructure programs and enforcement. Process includes the city, schools, parent volunteers and a 9 month process with public outreach. The team analyzed which streets near schools lack sidewalks. Other recommendations going along with the plan include a bicycle safety curriculum at the schools, walking school buses, and events that enforce and encourage such as bike/walk to school days that promote safety. Mr. Hubley stated there may be a bigger push in the future with the older population walking and biking. Discussion highlights are as follows:

- Mr. Bjerkness questioned if the Slate Street residents were involved with the planning process? Up to this point, only the residents that have children in school were involved. The City held a public meeting in September and those in attendance were not in favor of the project. The general feedback was this project offers a solution to a problem that doesn't exist. From a staff view, it's a neighborhood project, not just safe route for kids and it makes sense as part of the transportation corridor.
- Jeff Lindstrom, teacher at Churchill School, offered the school's view. There is a concern with the number of parents dropping off kids at school. Child safety is their #1 concern. The amount of traffic is an issue, if they can get more kids to walk to school via a sidewalk, it would help.
- Caleb Peterson asked the Council to identify where they would like to see the project go. It is a time consuming process for staff when dealing with federal funds. If there is a chance the Council would not like to proceed, the sooner the decision, the better. Mr. Peterson also noted that he feels this project may benefit the park more than the school.
- Question on the funding, if this is phase 1, how long before funding for phase 2? Mr. Peterson stated the City can apply each year. There are other focus areas in that same area that have been identified to fit in with the plans. Mr. Hubley stated that the funding has moved into a state source, making funding easier to obtain for future projects. Future infrastructure dollars may be used as a possibility if this project is done. If you turn the money back and don't do project, you may not get funding again.
- Ms. Wilkinson asked if there is any flexibility with the design standards and funding? Mr. Peterson answered that design standards won't change. This project has been approached from the beginning as minimal impact to the residents. Matching driveway

cuts will be the most intrusive issue, with possibly some trees being cut. The City has no issue with replacing some of the trees.

- Mr. Rock voiced his concern over the crosswalk safety at the schools. If there is the opportunity to increase the safety around the school, he feels passing on this project is the wrong choice. However, the school needs to also do their part to advance safety.
- Mr. Fritsinger reminded that the intent of this discussion is for a review of the plan. There is a resolution on the regular agenda for approval to hold a public hearing for this project, with the intent of gaining public feedback. It is not a formal project improvement/assessment hearing.

City Council Pay

At the request of Council, Mr. Fritsinger put together information on the current City Council/Mayor pay in comparison with cities of similar size. No action to be taken, just information on where Cloquet sits in comparison and what the process entails if they want to move forward with a discussion. Salaries have stayed the same since mid-1990's.

- Discussion of number of meetings attended and salary limitations.
- Ms. Wilkinson feels Council salary is different than a job. It is a commitment.
- Mr. Bjerkness stated a higher salary may be an enticement for quality people to run for Council.
- Mr. Rock said Council members are making sacrifices to attend meetings.
- Mr. Kolodge is satisfied with the current salary, but 20 years is a long time for no change. There is a big difference when comparing to County Commissioner salary.
- Mr. Langley asked about changing committee meeting times noting day meetings are hard for members to attend due to work.
- Mr. Fritsinger asked if there is interest in continuing the discussion, or leave alone? If there were to be a change, it wouldn't take place until 1/01/17.
- Mr. Hallback feels this should be addressed.
- Mr. Kolodge suggested the possibility of a percentage each year. Mr. Fritsinger hasn't seen any communities who have done that.
- Mr. Langley feels the biggest issue is only being paid for 2 meetings a month.
- Mr. Fritsinger will do more research and bring back to Council.

Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Fritsinger updated the Council on the current status of identified goals and stated progress is reasonable with the amount of items identified. Some items will require more discussion regarding where they stand. He is continuing to work on community visioning with the biggest challenge being public discussion regarding taxes.

City Administrator's Evaluation

Reminder to return Mr. Fritsinger's evaluation. Review of the evaluation will take place during a closed portion of the meeting.

Future Agenda Items

- Joint meetings will begin, Planning Commission will be the first. Parks Commission. Agenda items will be limited during the joint meetings. If there are major topics that need to be addressed, we may need to schedule special Work Session meetings.
- Acting Mayor – there has never been a formal rotation process. Ms. Wilkinson volunteer for 2016.

- Boards/Committees/Commissions – Discussion on reappointments and vacancies. Mr. Fritsinger noted someone from the Council may want to be on the HRA Board due to the number of projects they are getting involved in. Mr. Fritsinger will check if the 3 members on the WLSSD Board are attending those meetings. Typically one seat has been held by a Council member.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Fritsinger
City Administrator