

The meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Jake Spano, Tim Brausen, Steve Hallfin, Rachel Harris, Anne Mavity, Thom Miller, and Margaret Rog.

Councilmembers absent: none.

Staff present: City Manager (Mr. Harmening), CFO (Mr. Simon), Building and Energy Director (Mr. Hoffman), CIO (Mr. Pires), Director of Operations and Recreation (Ms. Walsh), Police Chief Harcey, Fire Chief Koering, Engineering Director (Ms. Heiser), Finance Manager (Mr. Ebensteiner), Deputy City Manager/Human Resources Director (Ms. Deno), City Assessor (Mr. Bultema), Director of Community Development (Ms. Barton), Sr. Management Analyst (Ms. Solano), and Recording Secretary (Ms. Pappas).

1. Future study session agenda planning and prioritization

Councilmember Mavity asked if the study session on Oct. 21 could be moved to the end of the EDA and council meetings. Councilmember Hallfin agreed this was a good idea for future meetings as well, given the 6:30 p.m. start time.

Mr. Harmening stated staff will move the study session to the end of the council meeting going forward.

Councilmember Miller proposed a study session topic for as soon as possible regarding the dangers of vaping products.

Councilmember Hallfin agreed with Councilmember Miller and asked if staff had spoken with the city attorney yet. Mr. Harmening stated yes and added there are some options for the city on this matter. He stated this topic could be discussed at the Oct. 28 study session.

2. Review of proposed 2020 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Long-Range Financial Management Plan (LRFMP)

Mr. Harmening stated all department directors are present for questions from council related to how the long-range plan fits into CIP and available funding. He noted looking forward, staff does see some challenges with funding street improvements, and this will be shared with council tonight.

Mr. Simon stated this evening staff will present the financial overview, debt modeling, and additional detailed data. He added Ms. Walsh and Ms. Heiser will provide brief overviews of major 2020 projects as well.

Mr. Simon added that the LRFMP is updated annually and always looks out 10 years. He stated staff will come back to council on Nov. 12 for further review on the long-range plan, as well as the tax levy and CIP.

Mr. Simon stated the city continues to maintain their AAA bond rating, which reflects very strong financial management, budgetary flexibility and liquidity, and strong budget performance and debt profile.

Ms. Walsh stated in 2020, four playground structures will be replaced in the city. She added safety standards change over time, and typically the city updates 3-4 playground structures each year. Ms. Walsh also noted in 2020 the outdoor pool entrance will be updated, which is in line with the Climate Action Plan as well.

Councilmember Rog asked if playground structures on multi-family properties are replaced by the city as well. Ms. Walsh stated no, they are not, adding that the school's playground structures are funded by the school district.

Councilmember Rog asked if the city inspects for safety on private multi-family playground structures. Ms. Walsh stated no; however, the city does inspect the playground structures at the ERA Apartments. She added ERA has said they do want to purchase the playground at their location and maintain it themselves going forward.

Councilmember Mavity asked about electricity at Minikahda Vista Park. Ms. Walsh stated this park does not have electricity, but added with the use of solar, there are more opportunities to add lighting at lower costs here.

Mayor Spano asked about the decision-making process related to putting building shelters at city parks. Ms. Walsh stated 10 years ago, there was a master planning process and analysis. At that time, staff made sure all playgrounds were looked at in quadrants, and playground shelters and buildings were replaced at that time.

Councilmember Harris asked if these buildings were equally distributed throughout the city. Ms. Walsh stated yes, they were, and added staff will research solar lighting for picnic areas.

Councilmember Hallfin asked why Fern Hill Park had a warming house in the past, and now does not. Ms. Walsh stated staff looked at parks that were most heavily used, and added the neighborhood wanted a picnic shelter instead of warming house. So, some parks that previously had warming houses, got them, and others did not.

Councilmember Rog stated the skate park is great and heavily utilized and asked if there are any plans to upgrade that. Ms. Walsh stated no, not currently, but staff is open to discussing and asked residents to contact her.

Ms. Heiser discussed the 2020 construction projects, including; water main replacement, street rehabilitation, and proposed sidewalk. She also noted alley reconstruction projects and second phase of the Historic Walker Lake Project.

Ms. Heiser further referenced the Louisiana Avenue bridge replacement project for 2020 which includes pavement rehabilitation of Louisiana Circle, a cycle track bikeway, sidewalk construction as well as the connection of the walking path under the bridge.

Councilmember Harris asked about the trail under the Louisiana Avenue Bridge along the creek and if there will be artwork along that trail. Ms. Heiser stated yes, that is correct.

Ms. Heiser pointed out the work to be done at Monterey Drive, from Excelsior to 36th Street and also to Beltline Boulevard. She noted the southeast area bikeway, which is being studied currently, and will go through Wolfe Park. This project will come up for council review early in 2020, she stated.

Ms. Heiser noted projects also related to storm water management housekeeping and the exploration of a new lift station at Cedar Lake Road and Highway 169, to address flooding in that area.

Councilmember Mavity asked where water would be pumped to from that location. Ms. Heiser answered Cobblecrest Lake.

Councilmember Brausen noted sandbagging going on at residences in the Cedar Lake area, and asked staff to investigate this further as it relates to impervious surface at Highway 169.

Ms. Heiser referenced the Dakota bikeway and bridge, which will receive \$3 million in federal funding. She noted this will be brought to council in December for review and approval.

Councilmember Rog asked if there is flexibility to move the Fern Hill pavement management project to 2021, so it will not be too difficult to get around that area.

Mr. Harmening stated the Fern Hill project will be staged and the whole area will not be torn apart at the same time.

Councilmember Rog asked staff for more details about the parking behind the Lake Street businesses, including how many parking stalls will be there and the cost per stall.

Ms. Heiser stated that she did not have that information with her. Further explaining that in 2016, the council approved the assessment policy which directed staff to assess the costs for public lots to the businesses in the area. She added no feasibility study has been done on the parking area there yet, but the study would detail the number of stalls, cost per stall and how those costs would be shared by the individual property owners.

Councilmember Rog stated she has significant concerns for the businesses there being responsible for paying for the parking lot improvements.

Councilmember Miller added he thought the parking lots were owned by the city.

Ms. Heiser stated they are municipal lots, but the city's assessment policy is to assess 100% of the cost to the private businesses that use them. She stated the cost to build the lots initially

were paid for by the businesses adding, however, how the lots are paid for is a policy question for the council.

Councilmember Harris asked about a private alley off Texas and Highway 100, stating it floods often and asked if there are any permanent solutions.

Mr. Harmening stated staff is working with homeowners there to have this alley dedicated to the city, so the city can incorporate them into the CIP program for alleys over the next 10 years.

Councilmember Rog asked if it is worth looking at the return on investment for the city to pay for alley projects. Ms. Heiser stated assessments ended for alleys in 2016 when the council changed the policy.

Councilmember Rog asked how critical alley replacement is in terms of improvement on infrastructure projects, and if these projects can be pushed off for now. Ms. Heiser stated from staff's perspective, the unimproved alleys are an erosion issue, snow removal is a challenge, they require extensive regrading in the spring and drainage is also not good. However, it is a policy question for council.

Related to Connect the Park, Mr. Harmening noted the council had discussed taking a pause on this for now, to just keep moving forward on projects in the queue, and then discuss other projects at a later date. The council agreed.

Councilmember Harris asked in relation to the climate action plan and capital outlays for Connect the Park, with more challenging projects coming up that will be more expensive, how might the city address carbon if no improvements are made in sidewalks and bike lanes. She also asked what the consequences would be if folks don't have alternatives to not using their vehicles. Ms. Deno stated there are mixed variables included, like electric cars. She noted there will need to be more study of this issue in order to quantify.

Mr. Simon noted staff continues to study other revenue sources and/or adjustments needed to the pavement management fund. Mr. Harmening added another option to save costs is to reduce projects, adding that franchise fees will not increase for 2020, but will increase in 2021.

Councilmember Mavity expressed concerns on coming forward with additional revenue sources. Ms. Deno asked if the council would like to discuss a city sales tax.

Mayor Spano stated yes, he would like to analyze the sales tax to determine how much would come from both inside and outside of the city. There was consensus from the council to study it.

Councilmember Miller asked about a possible EDA levy Ms. Barton stated staff has been discussing this, adding it would raise \$1.3 million. She added this is being considered as the development fund is a finite fund, so this is a way to replenish that.

Councilmember Mavity stated she wants to understand all costs from the housing rehab fund, the HRA levy and housing trust fund. She added she would like to see this all dedicated to

housing and see the strategy all in one place. Ms. Barton stated this will come to council in December and will outline how the housing trust fund will be used and will outline proposals for funding resources and what is available.

Councilmember Mavity added she did not see the cost of a dog park listed at Walker Lake, would like to better understand this, and public parking behind businesses. She asked if there is an opportunity to sell any of the parking lots back to owners or is there a public interest to keeping them. Mr. Harmening explained his long-term concerns are related to MSA roads and figuring this out sooner rather than later will be important.

Mayor Spano noted the four following items for more council discussion, adding he would like to study a local option for a city tax for roads, especially since how the city maintains roads is part of its brand:

- Return on alley investments – repavement and replacement
- Assessment policy for municipal parking lots
- Pavement management fund
- Additional funding source for MSA road rehabilitation

Councilmember Harris added tiered water sewer rates as another topic for more discussion.

Councilmember Rog stated she was surprised by the \$1 million lift station for Cedar Manor water issues and asked if staff is being forward thinking on this and future emergency infrastructure issues. Ms. Heiser stated yes, adding there is a city-wide comprehensive model of all the storm water pipes and ponds in the city. She stated that this has been used to add regional water treatment projects into the CIP, and staff is also looking at other land locked basins, and trouble areas. She noted St. Louis Park is one of only a few cities in the state that has this level of detailed modelling to help us look at volume and flood risk areas.

Mr. Harmening added this will need to be discussed further when doing parks and adding underground water storage systems to help with water control rates and quality.

Councilmember Harris asked how the city tracks rain events. Ms. Heiser stated they are tracked like traffic accidents and modeled as areas prone to localized flooding.

Mayor Spano asked Fire Chief Koering if he is still considering adding replacing part-time with full-time staff. Fire Chief Koering stated that staffing, schedules and making sure the functions fit with the community and business needs are always under review along with budget and response to calls.

Councilmember Rog asked staff to review commercial and industrial water rates, which are not proportional to residential rates. Ms. Deno stated this adjustment has been made and is being monitored by staff. She also noted tiers are being used here as well, and staff will be reviewing tiers and usage data prior to setting 2021 rates.

Councilmember Brausen stated when the discussion comes to council again about public parking lots, he would like to see references back to reports from 2016 on this issue.

Councilmember Mavity added as the city begins to move forward on public parking lots, she wants to make sure there is sufficient notice to property owners.

Communications/meeting check-in (verbal)

Councilmember Mavity asked how the city references today – Indigenous People Day – on the website and calendars. Mayor Spano stated it is listed as Indigenous People Day and Columbus Day on the online calendar and listed at Columbus Day on the printed calendar.

Mr. Harmening noted the Dec. 9 study session will be held at the Wat Prom temple. He also noted Scott Morrell will be presenting on crises communication at the Nov. 25 study session.

Mr. Harmening stated this year his performance evaluation would be a more in-depth evaluation. He stated staff considered bringing in a consultant to meet with each council member individually and also with department directors and combine all information for the review conversation.

Councilmember Mavity stated she would like the consultant to be a female or a person of color, in order to bring in different perspectives.

Mr. Harmening stated the joint school board and city council meeting will be held next week on Oct. 22. A draft agenda was presented to councilmembers.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Written Reports provided and documented for recording purposes only:

- 3. Fair housing policy**
- 4. Request to acquire public land at 2501 Edgewood Ave. S.**
- 5. CMAQ grant agreement with the Metropolitan Council for SWLRT Beltline Blvd. Station park & ride**

Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

Jake Spano, mayor