Community Technology Advisory Commission
Nov. 10, 2020
OFFICIAL MINUTES

1. Call to order – roll call
   Meeting started 6:10 p.m. by videoconference
   Present: Bruce Browning, Kelly Heitz, Cindy Hoffman, Abe Levine, Theo Pohlen, Mike Siegler
   Absent: Mohamed Mohamud, Rolf Peterson
   Guests: Aaryn Anderson, Sandeep Sinha, Shawn Wood
   Staff: John McHugh, Clint Pires, Jacque Smith

2. Adoption of agenda - Agenda adopted as presented

3. Approval of minutes: Sept. 16, 2020
   Browning moved, Hoffman seconded. All voted in favor of approving the minutes as presented.

4. Smart Cities
   Anderson, Insight, gave a short presentation recapping the smart cities workshop of Oct. 22 and its continuation Oct. 28, 2020. He explained the exercise for use case definitions in terms of what they are and what they provide to St. Louis Park residents, and what opportunities exist for smart cities initiatives. Those initiatives were then sorted according to the value they provide to the city, and how they align to the city’s strategic priorities/goals. From there, themes emerged including connected community, GIS, environmental/sustainability, citizen safety and citizen awareness.

   Anderson provided a definition of each of the five themes, along with their supported use cases. He offered to answer any questions from the group. Browning said it was a good summary and it was helpful to see it in a condensed form.

   Levine suggested looking at the chart and asked Anderson to share it, showing use case prioritization and the items that came through as high value and high alignment with city goals. Levine observed that the top three themes are foundational and enable other things, but don’t do things on their own. This includes connected community, GIS and environmental. Levine asked the commission members to provide their thoughts on foundational versus active services. Heitz agreed and said at the end of the last workshop, she felt these are good focuses but need refinement to be actionable. She also thinks more collaboration will be needed to understand where the opportunities are.

   Levine said he thought it would be helpful to look at other items on the chart that are of good value and align with city goals and would be worth having a committee to discuss how to do that. Pires added that for example, we could grow our GIS products, but the city has a lot of capability right now. He mentioned tracking snow plowing on the Cedar Lake trail, which will have a public-facing application for users interested in knowing trail conditions. Pires said the question is, what is the application of the foundational item? Another example is telemedicine, which can’t be promoted without a connected community. We’re looking at two levels: foundational, then what do you with
those foundations? That may be the work of the committees. Is the technology driving the use, or is the use driving the technology? Pires said if you have a good use providing benefits to the community, that’s what drives the justification to invest in technology to support the use. He said now is where the hard work comes, with committees thinking about how the foundational pieces can be used to benefit the community – those are the applications. Pires suggested the Insight staff may have some ideas for how to proceed.

Sinha talked about some use examples, such as smart light poles, water quality monitoring and others. He suggested the city think about the business benefit to the city, such as if water quality monitoring would help with understanding pump performance. He sees four or five opportunities looking at the chart, that would be applicable to citizens.

Levine asked the group to identify two to three committees. He suggested it be simpler items to start. Siegler said he likes the concept of the connected community and fleshing out specific examples, along with goals that tie back to council strategic priorities. Browning said that seems like a very basic foundation as without connectivity it’s difficult to do anything else. Levine said he likes the idea of public 5G or WiFi, but said it will take some time to work through specific ideas.

Siegler said if several ideas are brainstormed, can we then get feedback from the community on how they’d prioritize them? Levine said yes, but need to be really careful about how we get feedback. He said every committee would probably want to know something from the community, so should there be a committee that focuses on public input? Siegler said it makes sense, but asked how public input has happened in the past such as for trail snow plowing. Smith said in that case it was an idea from a city council member, and no public input was obtained. It was in line with the strategic goal of transportation and providing ways to get around the community safely. Levine asked about telemedicine; Pires said it would likely be a collaborative effort with the health care community. Siegler said we want a community that people want to live in with a superior environment, which will be part of gauging importance of various initiatives.

Levine said the first committee had been created with Siegler, Browning also joined – connected community. Levine asked who would like to be in charge of the community input committee; Browning volunteered. Levine moved onto the GIS committee, Heitz volunteered for that committee. Levine asked Heitz what interests her; she said the use of already existing data internally to identify where processes can be improved. Pires volunteered to serve as staff liaison for this group since he supervises the GIS coordinator for the city. Hoffman asked about Vitals app that is in use for people in the city and participation is voluntary; she asked if GIS was used for this app. Pires said the app uses GIS but he recollects this is a Hennepin County program. Hoffman said it was a county project.

Anderson said he wanted to be sure that just because it’s being done, doesn’t mean it’s being used to best advantage. Smith brought up the public input committee and said it was very important, but wanted to ensure we come up with initiatives and bring them to the council before going out to the public. She also mentioned a community needs assessment conducted earlier in the year as part of cable franchise renewal that may have useful data for the committees. Smith will send out that
information to the commission members. Hoffman said she’d also work with Heitz on the GIS committee.

Levine revisited citizen awareness and asked if it should be a committee. Pohlen said a lot of things in citizen awareness go back to connected communities. For that reason he wasn’t sure it should be a separate committee. Siegler said he could see citizen awareness being the dashboard or mobile app for residents, where connected community is how we get the information to the public. Pohlen said he’d be on citizen awareness and Siegler also volunteered.

Levine said the first charge for the committees is to provide basic requirements to get this done. Levine then showed a suggested committee structure. Pires said there will be overlap between the committees. Pires said environmental shouldn’t be overlooked since the city has a 2040 climate action plan and he would strongly recommend a group of people look at that, then work with Emily Ziring on city staff. Levine agreed, he volunteered to work on the environmental committee.

Final committees:
- Connected community: Siegler, Browning
- GIS: Heitz, Hoffman, Pires
- Citizen awareness: Pohlen, Siegler
- Environmental: Levine, Pires (with Pires to recommend other city staff with environmental expertise in his place)

Levine shared his proposed smart cities committee framework which outlines deliverables, including charter goals and deliverables and have those ready by the week after Thanksgiving. Siegler agreed. Levine asked if it would be a public meeting; Smith said any time there’s a quorum it’s a public meeting and needs an official notice. Levine asked who’s available the week after Thanksgiving; but had also stated the first week of December. Smith suggested an email collection of ideas rather than a meeting, since Dec. 10 is already on the calendar. Levine asked for the commission input. Siegler said he’d like more collaboration. Levine said that argues for writing it up and sending it out. Siegler said if we plan on Dec. 10 public meeting, then work to take place prior to that with committees meeting and coming up with deliverables.

Pires asked if Anderson and Sinha could chime in with any suggestions. Anderson said it was a good outline. Be sure to focus on objectives first, rather than solutions, and this is a good place to start in defining the goals. Levine recapped the committees; it was decided that a public input committee wasn’t needed. He reminded everyone of the Dec. 10 meeting. Smith reminded everyone to be careful of open meeting laws, which applies to email, text and in-person meetings.

5. Communications from the chair/commissioners—None

6. Staff items—None

Browning moved, Siegler seconded to adjourn, all voted in favor. Meeting adjourned 7:18 p.m.