



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
January 20, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The work session meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm.

Present: Mayor: Randy Gilbert; Council: Sam Rettinger, Sharon Henderson, Brian Carpenter, and Liz Olson

Staff Present: Interim City Administrator: Terrance Post; City Engineers: Dan Boxrud and Brad Wozniak; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

Absent: None

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Henderson, seconded by Olson, to approve the Agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Presentation: Stormwater Ravine / Filtration Basin Improvement Project at Nelson Lakeside Park

Interim Administrator Post stated that the purpose of the agenda item would be to offer the Council an opportunity to gain a common understanding of the proposed stormwater improvement project at Nelson Lakeside Park. The City did receive an extension of the Metropolitan Council grant funding the project through 2009; however, whether or not the project proceeds remains up to the pleasure of the City Council.

City Engineer Dan Boxrud, with the assistance of Brad Wozniak, provided a Powerpoint presentation reviewing the rate control, treatment, and ravine stabilization goals of the proposed stormwater improvement project; displayed exhibits of the area's current condition; discussed the changes in the project that had occurred since initial approval in 2005; and explained the current project in detail.

Brad Wozniak, SEH, discussed the type of plantings that would be used in the floodplain area of the project and how the plantings would function to take in nutrients undesirable in the lake.

Mike Wyatt, representing the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), noted that the water body of Long Lake itself has experienced problems over the years including severe algae blooms. Long Lake will be on the state impaired waters list some time in the future, and once on that list the City will have a legal obligation in resolving water quality issues. The MCWD hopes to be a partner in improving the lake water quality, but it will be the city's legal responsibility in the future. Mr. Wyatt stated that water quality improvements are more effective when targeting areas of high impervious surface and the downtown area provides an opportunity to do so. Future developers would also have an obligation to contribute to stormwater improvements, and besides the stormwater benefits to be realized from the project, it could be an incentive to developers. He also reviewed the history behind the stormwater ponds constructed previously in the park. Mr. Wyatt

noted he believes it would be beneficial to enlarge the stormwater ponds or improve stormwater rate control, and the MCWD has worked with other communities to create water quality benefits that still allow for park use. He discussed water quality improvement efforts that had been made in other cities in the watershed, but the largest impervious area within the watershed is in Long Lake and Orono. Impervious surface contributes undesirable nutrients to the water body of Long Lake. He further commented that a project that tries to incorporate natural elements can be compatible with a park use, as wildlife will often increase activity in those areas.

The following concerns were raised:

Council member Henderson took issue with the loss of usable park land, and was concerned that the end result of the project would be unattractive. She asked how the project could be made to be attractive and usable by citizens. With no redevelopment plan currently in sight, she did not see the value of pursuing the project at this time.

Mayor Gilbert commented on the effects of the ponds Mn/DOT had built during the bypass project, noting that Rav 1 which drains into Long Lake seems to have more water flow now than every before. He questioned whether Mn/DOT should do more to improve rate control from their facilities.

Council member Rettinger stated that one of Mn/DOT's selling points for the bypass project had been that when the road was finished the overall improvements would solve Long Lake's drainage problems.

Council member Olson agreed with Council member Rettinger. She also noted though that if the project did not proceed and future development opportunities arose, she would think development could be hindered by a need to accommodate stormwater improvements on development sites.

Council member Carpenter commented that he was not overly concerned with the loss of 0.6 acres of park land in the affected area, as without the lake, there would be no park. He stated his opinion that efforts to preserve the park could in the long run be at the expense of the lake. In the current financial environment, he would be hard pressed to agree with a "do nothing" and not using the grant funds to make what improvements could be made. As a resident of Martha Lane he has witnessed the effects of increased water flow from the highway corridor and the resulting erosion along the banks of Wayzata Boulevard. He said that while the project would certainly help runoff from the industrial area it would be a small part of an overall solution.

Park Board member Donny Chillstrom objected to the project and any potential loss of park land, as in his opinion Long Lake is not the primary contributor of runoff and most runoff comes from the north.

Mayor Gilbert requested the MCWD provide the Council with information on what other options or measures would be necessary in the future should the project currently proposed not proceed. He further stated that while he was sensitive to losing some of the park for this purpose, the ravine is in terrible shape and if the ravine would need to be stabilized anyway with or without a lake purpose, that may also be a reason to consider the project further. He also asked that the City Engineer provide estimates on annual or biannual maintenance costs for upkeep of the project area if the project were completed.

Post suggested that the City Engineers could mock up and flag the project area in the park for the Council to get a better visual of the proposal. Boxrud indicated a mock up could be created.

Mayor Gilbert stated that if Mr. Wyatt could provide the Council with a few options for future improvements, if information about maintenance costs could be made available, and if the project area could be marked for a walking tour in advance; with that information he believed he could make a decision about the project at the next Council meeting. He asked that all parties keep in contact with Administrator Post as information becomes available for the Council.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Gilbert adjourned the work session meeting by general consent at 6:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Moeller
City Clerk