

May 6, 2015

The City Council held a Work Session meeting on the above date. The following were present: Mayor Randall Simonson, Council members Bob Hegland, Dan Lee, Chris Ness, and Jim Schneider. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Public Works Director Tim Kieffer, Fire Chief Mike Hinz and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

Mayor Randall Simonson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ness, seconded by Lee, moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

LOG HOUSE LANDING UPDATE – CHRISTINE MAEFSKY

Christine Maefsky stated that she was present to provide the Council an update on a working committee formed for the continuation of research on the best solution for erosion control at the Log House Landing. Maefsky reported that members of the group include herself, Pam Plowman-Smith, Steve Kronmiller and Jim Shaver. Alternative surface materials such as bound aggregate will be explored along with possible sources of revenue for the project. Maefsky, as Chair of the Planning Commission, said that she will act as a liaison between the City and Watershed to provide reports to the Council.

Administrator Handt stated that it needs to be made clear that this is not an advisory committee to the City and that the City did not appoint Maefsky to her position on the committee. Car-Mar Watershed District Administrator Shaver stated that the WD Board is willing to support preliminary design work for the ramp and landing portion but that this is not a committee of the Watershed either. Retiring Board Manager Kronmiller was asked to continue with efforts to ensure the project moves forward and if a promising design comes about, the Watershed would support having their engineer being involved.

Kronmiller stated the two objectives – to explore alternative surface materials and alternate funding and grants that may be available for the project to control erosion into the riverway.

Mayor Simonson reported on an emergency response recently made at the site in which he provided video showing the congested roadway and landing area with a number of emergency vehicles present. He said that this was a safety concern that could have been made worse if it happened on a weekend when the area had many more boats and vehicles present.

Fire Chief Hinz agreed that the road needs to be made wider and adequate signage provided to direct vehicles to the site – the responding ambulance could not find the landing that evening. Two lanes would be best, or the road should be left alone so that they can use the whole width along the shoulder. Council member Hegland asked if they could launch out of the William O'Brien landing for river emergencies. Hinz stated this is not very feasible due to the distance that the landing is off the river and the rocky navigation to the main riverway.

Administrator Handt stated that the initial project was proposed with 75% cost share with outside entities and if the Council wants the street improved, it is fiscally important to move forward.

Council member Schneider agreed that it is a Council decision, but doesn't believe the alternative gravel solution is the magic answer to erosion control. A plan to pave the road was studied and agreed on months ago if the funding level remained based on DOT specs. Maefsky asked if the Council would be willing to wait through the summer for a study on bound aggregate. Council members Lee and Schneider didn't believe they could.

Handt offered a timeline such that a report could be made at the July Work Session for the project to remain in the 2016 Capital Improvement Plan and budget. The planning process for the road improvements needs to start this fall to stay on schedule. The alternative is to remove it from the CIP and leave the road as it is.

Lee moved to direct staff to engineer an asphalt road 20' wide, with curb on one side and bump out parking spaces, and have the Car-Mar Watershed work on the landing area. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Schneider, seconded by Lee, moved to receive a plan from Maefsky's committee at the July 1st Work Session and make a decision on the project at that time. Council continued discussion.

Council member Ness stated that he is tired of this as the City has spent lots of engineering funds on this so far and the project is no further along. He will give the committee a chance to present what they find out, but wants no city involvement until then and would not authorize engineering expenses towards that.

Mayor Simonson called for a vote on the above Schneider/Lee motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Public Works Director Kieffer added that if there are concerns of an alternative gravel surface, neither the City Engineer nor the Watershed Engineer would sign off on the plans. They would not agree to use an experimental product without a long-term warranty.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT DRAFT ORDINANCE NO. 161

The Planning Commission has been working on an ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units on properties as a way to provide more affordable and life cycle housing in Scandia. A public hearing was held on April 7th that had many positive remarks from residents.

Administrator Handt walked through the ordinance that is scheduled for adoption at the May 19th Council meeting. The references to accessory apartments in the development code will be deleted and replaced with accessory dwelling units allowed in all districts with an Administrative Permit.

Council member Schneider asked if conditions are placed on the permit, who would inspect the properties for compliance. Handt this would be done as complaints are made using the complaint procedure.

Schneider asked if minimum room sizes would be designated in the code. Handt explained that the owner would need to get a building permit and pass inspections that meet all code requirements before the dwelling could be occupied. Schneider asked if a non-conforming shed could be converted to a dwelling unit. Handt stated that existing structures could be converted and conditions put in the administrative permit to address issues related to the non-conformity.

Schneider asked how the number of extra cars on the property would be handled. Handt stated that parking of cars is addressed in other parts of the code and didn't need to be restated in this section. The property owner would have to provide a garage or park the vehicles out of view. This could be made clear in the conditions of the administrative permit.

Schneider asked if any rental standards would apply if landlord complaints came in. Handt said these would be referred to the state since Scandia does not have a rental property ordinance.

Mayor Simonson asked if portable housing units which are becoming popular could be allowed. Handt replied they could as long as they comply with the state building code and meet setbacks.

Schneider asked if having a secondary dwelling unit would affect property taxes. Handt reasoned that this could be considered an improvement to the property and the assessor would determine any changes.

Council member Lee stated that he is very pleased with the ordinance as it is a simple, inexpensive alternative to provide life cycle housing, a goal of the EDA. Simonson agreed and said he is supportive of the ordinance.

Handt stated that she will recirculate the draft ordinance to the Planning Commissioners and have the ordinance ready for adoption at the May 19th Council meeting.

Council member Ness stated that he had a concern of allowing these units through an administrative permit and not a public hearing through the Planning Commission. Handt stated that the feedback was not to make it a cumbersome process and to make it business friendly. Notification will go out to adjacent property owners and decisions can be appealed to the Council.

Fire Chief Hinz asked if the accessory dwelling units will be assigned a separate address, especially for the purpose of emergency response to an address – it may be confusing to determine which unit made the call and timing can be critical. Handt will check with the County on the addressing system.

Council member Hegland said it's a great thing for Scandia. Schneider agreed and added that it will be a learning process for the City once they are in use. He suggested it be made more explicit that the structures must meet the state building code, especially if an older shed or barn is intended to be a dwelling unit.

Handt stated she will make some minor changes based on this discussion and have it ready for the May 19th meeting.

REPLACE/REFURBISH TANKER 5177

Tanker 5177, acquired in 1992, is scheduled to be replaced in 2015. Fire Chief Hinz had received an estimate of \$150,000 to \$180,000 to replace and repair the worn out parts. At the April Work Session, Council directed Hinz to get a bid on a new truck to compare costs.

Hinz reported that a bid proposal of \$213,000 was received. He researched sales of similar used tankers and estimated the old tanker could be sold for \$25,000 to \$35,000 with these proceeds going towards the cost of a new tanker. The Equipment Replacement Fund has a balance of \$415,000 to replace the tanker. Staff has recommended the purchase of a new tanker given the uncertainty of repair costs which could be as high as 85% of the cost of a new tanker.

Council member Schneider said that he had a problem believing the cost to refurbish the old tanker could be so high. Hinz explained that this would involve a new chassis, lights, radio controls, transfer of the tank, and recertification for stability control. A more exact estimate could not be provided due to unknown factors of repair and extent of labor once the work began. Hinz stated that recertification to NFPA standards is a huge cost. Schneider said that he found 9 to 10 year old used trucks in the \$103,000 to \$125,000 range.

Council member Lee asked if there is a need for the department to have this tanker. Hinz stated that they need to have enough trucks on rotation and circulating with tanker fills in order to provide a continuous source of water to a fire. If they provide less capacity, the ISO rating would go up which affects homeowner insurance rates. Lee thought that companies may be moving away from using ISO ratings to insure properties. Hinz said that he gets many calls from insurance firms asking for the department's rating.

Council member Ness asked if the truck is in working order, could replacement be pushed back a few years. Hinz stated that the valves are leaking and need repair, and delaying this truck pushes off the replacement schedule on future equipment. Ness agreed that the truck should be new instead of buying used or fixing up an old truck as repair costs add up over time.

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to direct staff to prepare a resolution for the purchase of a new tanker to be presented at the May 19th Council meeting. The Council continued its discussion.

Schneider stated that this cost is a lot of money while other options are on the table. He asked again if there could be written quotes for repair. Hinz said that no contractor could provide this since they do not know the extent of the work and repairs until they begin dismantling the tanker.

Mayor Simonson asked for a roll call vote on the above motion. Lee – yes; Ness – yes; Schneider – no; Hegland – no; Simonson – yes. The motion carried 3-2.

OFFICE HOURS

Administrator Handt asked for the Council to consider changing the office hours to M-F 9am-4pm and by appointment. Beginning in 2011, it was decided to have the office open until 6pm on Tuesdays but very few people come in after 4pm. Handt explained that it would be a more efficient use of staff time and productivity to eliminate the late work hours and have more support staff available during regular hours. Staff has frequently accommodated those who cannot be in during posted hours and could continue to make off-hour appointments.

Officially the office is posted as closed during the lunch hour but this very rarely happens. Handt stated that posting hours as open during the noon hour would serve the public better than staying open late one night per week.

Council member Hegland stated that the hours make sense and special requests can be accommodated.

Schneider, seconded by Lee, moved to direct staff to place new office hours as proposed on the May 19th Consent Agenda. The motion carried 5-0.

ADMINISTRATOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Administrator Handt requested the Council approve 9 weeks of leave following the birth of her baby in late August/early September, with tentative dates of leave being August 31-October 30, 2015. The personnel policy allows for 6 weeks of parenting leave; additional leave must be approved by the City. Handt said that she will be using her earned PTO during the leave.

Handt explained that the Treasurer will work with the Council on any budget changes there may be after the August 19th meeting, and that she will be back more than a month before the budget is finalized. Handt stated that she will have her laptop at home and available by e-mail but response time will not be immediate.

Lee, seconded by Hegland, moved to direct staff to put approval of 9 weeks leave for the administrator on the May 19th Consent Agenda. The motion carried 5-0.

CLOSED SESSION – LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved that the Council go into Closed Session under MN Statute 13D.03 for the purposes of considering strategies for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or development or discussion of labor-negotiation proposals. The motion carried 5-0.

The Council went into Closed Session at 8:20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Ness, seconded by Schneider, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.
The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Eklund, Deputy Clerk