City of West St. Paul
Open Council Work Session
January 25, 2016

1. Roll Call

Mayor David Meisinger called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Meisinger and Councilmembers Armon, Halverson, Bellows, Iago, Napier and Vitelli.

Others: City Manager Matt Fulton, Assistant City Manager and HR Director Sherrie Le, Community Development Director Jim Hartshorn, Police Chief Manila Shaver, Fire Chief Mike Pott, Finance Director Joan Carlson, Public Works and Park Director Ross Beckwith, Attorney Korine Land and City Clerk Chantal Doriott. Assistant Community Development Director and City Planner Ben Boike arrived at 5:19 p.m.

2. Approve Agenda

Council approved the agenda as presented.

3. Review the Regular Meeting Consent Agenda

Council approved the consent agenda items:

- Move 10.D. and 10.F. to new business and move 12.E. to 12.A. and shift the other 12. items.

4. Agenda Item(s)

4.A. St. Paul Regional Water System Discussion Regarding WSP Water Capacity

City Manager Matt Fulton gave an overview and introduced Dave Wagner, Engineer Manager at St. Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS). Mr. Wagner introduced engineer Ben Feldman. Representatives explained they were here to continue the discussion about how to address West St. Paul's future water capacity needs as well as review the City's current water system design.

Last fall the Council considered potential sites for the construction of an additional water tower in West St. Paul to strengthen the City's future water capacity. Neither of the sites proposed at that time were acceptable. The Council asked SPRWS representatives to consider additional options.

The SPRWS Board of Water Commissioners met on November 10, 2015 and discussed this issue. Because of the stated difficulty in locating an acceptable site for a tower, the Board directed SPRWS staff to explore the alternative of adding a fixed generator at the current pump house on Bidwell that would ensure water availability in the case of an electrical outage. This

action would be taken instead of adding any additional water capacity. Mr. Wagner reviewed lift station areas / pump plants on large maps.

Reliable water availability is a very important community priority. Water capacity is just as important. Water supply should be planned to protect a community under worst conditions, such as a dry and hot summer when consumer usage is highest and a significant fire incident occurs. Chief Pott and Manager Fulton indicated that during a major fire, the Fire Department could be expected to use 500,000 gallons of water per hour and it could last for several hours (at varying levels of water demand). Under this circumstance, the City's current water capacity could exceed its availability. West St. Paul has the least amount of water capacity of any member of the St. Paul Regional Water System stakeholders. While reliable power is definitely an important consideration, the Council should be equally concerned about having adequate water capacity available. Mr. Feldman offered additional comments about pumping, usage, and gallons at peak times. The 3,000 gallon per minute might be a little deceptive. In general, for St. Paul Regional Water, we are upgrading a lot of our stations. Power loss is more of a problem than water concerns.

Many of the City's multi-family facilities are not sprinkled. This increases the level of exposure for needing higher levels of water capacity if a fire occurred. In addition, given the commercial redevelopment and additional residential units being added to the community, the average daily water demand will definitely increase, leaving the community additionally exposed to potential capacity issues.

Locating an acceptable water tower site is undoubtedly a challenge in a fully developed community like WSP. The City Council is being asked to balance the difficulty of finding an appropriate site versus the need for additional water capacity.

Comments:

- Clpn. Bellows made comments: the system varies due to pipe size and other things. What is max water can come in as he is not getting a feel for the need. Is the system adequate to distribute the water to needed city areas? Mr. Wagner gave an overview of the system and areas of supply and demands. With a 3,000 to 3,500 per minute water output the system will be stressed. If the system is stressed in order to maintain safety we bring more water into the system – correct. Why does it matter if you pump into an existing tank or you use a lift station nonstop? There is no difference.
- Manager Fulton asked questions about this scenario and a potential community fire in which we would be over the limit. We don't build out for this scene said Mr. Wagner. Manager Fulton asked questions about storage and policy. Their big concern is with electricity and running the pumps. If we had a 2nd water tower will it help and make a difference to the Chief? Mr. Feldman said it depends on the location and the other thing is, you are not isolated as a system.
- Clpn. Vitelli asked if they are doing Mendota Heights; yes, said Mr. Wagner. He would like to see a new tower and a backup generator. Mr. Wagner said Mendota Heights will not serve the entire area. It will serve a limited part of the system.
- Mr. Iago said West St. Paul plans on building a great deal more and to err on the side of caution. He would like to see another tower and see a backup system. He would like to look at the ice arena site again.

- Clpn. Napier agrees saying the arena site is doable and we need a tower. Looking long term we need to do best by this community.
- Clpn. Bellows is not sure about a tower. He is not sure about national standards for pumping due to a fire.
- Clpn. Halverson agrees that we should explore further an idea of a water tower and a backup generator.
- Mayor Meisinger asked Manager Fulton to compile a list of questions for SPRWS.

The Council thanked Dave Wagner and Ben Feldman. SPRWS is still moving forward with the pumping and generator. Mr. Feldman said this generator is good for the area.

Com. Bellows would like to review meeting information prior to the meeting, not at the table.

4.B. Discussion about 2016 Street Improvement Projects

City Manager Matt Fulton gave an overview. The 2016 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) calls for certain street improvements and allocates $2.5M towards these improvements. The engineering firm of Bolton & Menk, Inc. was retained to oversee the 2016 Street Improvements. A feasibility report was recently received by staff which discusses the types of infrastructure improvements recommended for each street and an estimated cost. Street Improvement Projects are assessed in accordance with the City's Special Assessment Policy and Minnesota State Chapter 429.

Based upon the current project timeline, bidding will not occur until May with construction starting in late June. This schedule isn't ideal for bidding/construction. In addition, some of the recommended streets are in close proximity to the section of Robert Street under construction this year which may add to detour congestion and driver frustration. Another factor is that residents may not have completed necessary repairs to their sewer services, as part of the City's I/I program, prior to construction. Discussion is needed to weigh all of these factors and determine the best action to take this year. Public Works Director Ross Beckwith further commented and said the I/I program would take a lot of staff time this year. Other existing projects would also take up staff time. There are options to package in smaller streets but typically bidders like larger projects.

Comments:

- Clpn. Napier is in favor of an I/I in home inspection this year. He is in favor of adding smaller streets to current projects. Director Beckwith said the I/I program changes with Clpn. Napier's comment and Mayor Meisinger said that is a conversation for another meeting.
- Clpn. Vitelli said Humboldt Ave. is a really bad street but he is in favor of waiting until 2017.
- Clpn. Bellows said all these projects except Kraft and Humboldt are in Ward 3. Pushing back a year is not a problem for him right now. He does have an issue with bids going out later and he wants to make sure that February is bidding time. On Edgewood there appears to be discussion of a project. We need to get this done so we can move ahead. Clpn. Bellows requested a copy, from Manager Fulton, of the Bolton and Menk report.

On I/I make sure there is a plan so the inspections are done ahead of time and done with respect to the streets.

- Mayor Meisinger does not see a happy ending and is in favor of holding off to 2017.
- If a project is petitioned and you approve it, then you can choose to assess and move forward. Comments about a dirt road getting upgraded ensued. Clpn. Napier said it's "in line" to get reconstructed.
- Clpn. Iago said we should not be bidding at the wrong time. He doesn't know how this happens and is at least the 4th time this has been an issue. Clpn. Iago is not in favor of Bolton and Menk. Mayor Meisinger said is not liking them much either.
- Clpn. Vitelli said there is too much on our plate. Clpn. Iago said he doesn't disagree but when we pay consultants a lot of money and they give us bad information … I don't want to work with them again.

Council is in favor of putting street projects on hold in 2016 for repair in 2017. Director Beckwith will get a list of all affected projects for an upcoming meeting. Director Beckwith reminded the Council that we can still consider doing seal coat and crack seal this year.

4.C. Potential Zoning Amendment 260 Wentworth Ave.

Community Development Director Jim Hartshorn said at the last meeting Council asked staff has invited the perspective buyers of 260 Wentworth Ave. to tonight's meeting to discuss the proposed use.

The perspective buyers are proposing a banquet hall/commercial kitchen at 260 Wentworth Ave E. (formally the RMS building).

Parking was brought up at the last meeting. The site currently has approximately 140 striped stalls on-site with room for additional stalls in the far rear lot (at least 80 additional stalls could be striped). The 140 existing stalls are more than adequate for the proposed use per current parking requirements, although the proposed capacity of 400 persons may create the need for additional parking.

Zoning does not currently allow "Commercial Kitchens" or "Banquet Halls" in the I1 District. Should Council be in favor of amending the code to allow them in the district, Staff recommends allowing them through a Conditional Use Permit to provide the Planning Commission, Council, and the public an opportunity to review the proposed use via a public hearing process.

Ms. Se Xiong and Simon Yvain, husband and wife team, introduced themselves. They are interested in opening a catering and banquet hall. They are planning on putting $1M into the project which consists of three buildings.

Comments:

- The events would consist of weddings, cultural sensitive event opportunities.
- They are looking at purchasing the buildings and waiting on zoning.
- Clpn. Armon questioned parking – there would be 160 (maybe more) parking spaces.
- Clpn. Halverson questioned the parking since the space would offer space up to 400 people.

- There would most likely be events on Saturday evenings and Sundays – most likely one to two nights per week.
- They would need a liquor license and she thinks they could close liquor sales/distribution around 12:00 midnight. Catering would be for the Twin Cities area. Her husband just sold his Thai restaurant last year; which was was not in the Twin Cities.
- They like the diverse variety of population in St. Paul and working in West St. Paul is a nice area. We are close to transportation and other positives.
- Clpn. Bellows is a little concerned about the one page business plan. This seems like a larger area than might be needed. Did you look at other places due to size? She said they have been looking for about a year. Signal Hills is not a good location. There is a building on Wentworth they considered, which did not work well. Their concern is parking and trucks being able to come in and out. They like the area because they won't bother people. The one page is a summary. Clpn. Bellows thinks the multicultural experience is very positive.
- Will there be exterior renovations? Judging by others comments the exterior is ok. The interior will need renovations. Ms. Xiong said the roof will need to be redone but the exterior is ok.
- Council asked the applicants to discuss this proposal with the neighbors to see if there are any objections.
- Clpn. Armon asked about employment. Ms. Xiong said there could be a couple of full time positions but mostly part time positions.
- Will the events be outside or inside? All inside; there will be no patio or tent.
- Clpn. Napier said we don't have anything like this and you might find people getting really excited about this project.
- Council said since there are no objections (from Council) walk over and say hi to the neighbors and let them know about what you have in mind.

Mayor Meisinger reminded everyone to get their questions and comments to Manager Fulton, about the water tower, which will then be forwarded to Manager Wagner at SPRWS.

Attorney Land offered comment on the pylon sign litigation which was declared a legal non-conforming sign. She is seeking additional information on the court's position.

5. Adjourn

The work session adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

David Meisinger
Mayor
City of West St. Paul