

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING AND WORK SESSION OF THE
INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2017 –7:00 A.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a work session of the Independence City Council was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 7:02 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Postponed until regular meeting.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Johnson, Councilors Betts, Fisher, Grotting and McCoy

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Interim City Administrator Kaltsas, Administrative Assistant Beth Horner, City Attorney Vose, Public Works Director Ende

VISITORS: Gary Kroells

4. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

a) Overview/ Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Process

Kaltsas stated he could lead the City through the process. He is also doing the same for Watertown and Maple Plain. Kaltsas said the Planning Commission could be the point of contact if the Council would like to go that route. He said the process would involve meetings jointly with the City Council and inviting public participation as well as a community survey. Johnson noted that times have not really changed since ten years ago and asked if there is a lot of pressure to change the plan. Kaltsas said there really has not been any pressure. He said the biggest issue for the City will be to address what to do with the urban development in the area surrounding Maple Plain. Kaltsas said the City may want to look forward to 2040 and plans for commercial/ industrial area and guidance around that plan. He noted Met Council is saying they will not go further west for sewer access.

Spencer asked what the budget looked like as far as development through Met Council. Kaltsas said 15k was set aside to start the process noting it was a two-year window. Kaltsas said the timeline included in the packet addresses the nuts and bolts of what is going to be needed. He said he would also utilize the City engineers and water resource professionals. Grotting asked how we would work with Maple Plain on the plan. Johnson stated all surrounding cities give input. Kaltsas said it was important to have some joint meetings to make sure the plans align. Spencer said they could hold expanded planning commission meetings and invite the community members to get their input. Johnson said a city-wide questionnaire would be useful and would provide a better cross section. Kaltsas and Spencer both agreed it would be good to use the Planning Commission as the core group. Kaltsas said he would refine the process and move forward with planning. Johnson said the original comp plan stated that Independence would not build a downtown area as they did not want to pull from Maple Plain and Delano but rather wanted to keep those areas vibrant.

5) DISCUSSION/ UPDATE ON SEWER RATE STUDY

a) Added an additional scenario to the findings

The two scenarios considered by the City would have the following increases:

Scenario 1

Connected Properties:

2016 (CURRENT): \$168 per quarter

2017 (8% INCREASE): \$181 per quarter

The recommended 2017 rate represents a \$13 quarterly increase.

Stubbed Properties:

2016 (CURRENT): \$32 per quarter

2017 (285% INCREASE): \$91 per quarter

Scenario 2

Connected Properties:

2016 (CURRENT): \$168 per quarter 2017

2017 (8% INCREASE): \$181 per quarter

The recommended 2017 rate represents a \$13 increase.

Stubbed Properties:

2016 (CURRENT): \$32 per quarter 2017

2017(231% INCREASE): \$74 per quarter

The recommended 2017 rate represents a \$42 quarterly increase.

Kaltsas said there is discussion around having non-connected users pay the full-rate as users. The current rate will also have to be increased as it is not sustainable ongoing without raising the rate. Spencer said the costs are associated with the maintenance of the system not the flow rate which was an argument presented in the past. Johnson asked if Hennepin County could help at all. Kaltsas said he did not find anything other than help for non-affordability and elderly. He said most would not qualify for assistance. Kaltsas noted he received one comment and that was from a user that said they hoped those that have not connected would have to pay as much as the users did.

Motion by Spencer, second by Betts to approve scenario 2 for sewer rate increase for 2017. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, Spencer, McCoy and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

6. PLANNING COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT

Vose said that Betts was not legally compelled to excuse herself due to her son applying for a spot. Spencer said the last two candidates had the most relevant experience and could hit the ground running. Johnson said Simpson would like some training and Spencer said she would be helpful to be involved in the Comp Plan process. Kaltsas noted three more positions would be opening up after terms are completed this year. Grotting

thought Dumas was the well-equipped candidate and has a lot of experience and knowledge that would be an asset.

Motion by Spencer, second by Grotting to approve the appointment of Dumas as the new Planning Commissioner. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, McCoy and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: Betts. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

7) PUBLIC WORKS ITEMS

- a) Discussion on Public Works Status
 - i. Vehicle for Sewer Department

Kaltsas said the department only has two vehicles for three employees. He said more often than not the third person has no vehicle to use and so he budgeted 35k for a sewer vehicle. He said a ¾ ton single cab pickup would be ideal for a third vehicle. Ende said it would be a basic model and they would be able to put a snowplow on it as well. Kaltsas said it will be brought for a vote before council with formal bids and more information.

- ii. Mower

Kaltsas noted the park mower is five years old and needing work. It will need a complete overhaul this year and the trade-in value right now is so good it may make sense to trade it in for a new one. Kaltsas said they could go with a mower with a bigger deck which would be more efficient. Johnson said it made sense while it still had value to trade it in for a new model if costs stay the same.

- iii. Building Inspector Vehicle

Kaltsas said the current car is a little Chevy Cobalt and it is not an appropriate vehicle for our needs in this rural setting. He said a pickup would be much more appropriate and the trade-in quoted on the car would be fairly decent right now should Council think it is something that could be pursued. Spencer said he would like to see it as a budget discussion item for next year's cycle.

8) GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- a) Discussion relating to vacation policy

Kaltsas said there is a max of 4 weeks' vacation after 15 years and after that there was no increase. Kaltsas looked at other cities for comparison and noted Medina is reviewing their policy. He said Rockford has a sliding scale and Orono also had a sliding scale based on yearly service. Kroells noted 5 weeks was the max at WHPS and that was after 20 years of service. Spencer said he would be interested in extending the level to match that of the police department. Johnson said Orono's system was unique. Kaltsas said he thought the Orono model was interesting as well. He said he could look at different proposals and present them back to Council for incorporating into the employee handbook.

- b) Discussion on possible ordinance updates

Kaltsas said Maple Plain has a massage parlor ordinance as there used to be an issue with a business in their City. Their ordinance requires background checks and licensing which Kaltsas and Kroells feel it is important to incorporate a like ordinance for Independence. Kroells noted there are zero state requirements to be a

masseuse. Vose said there are ways for cities to distinguish legitimate massage businesses. Johnson said the City also needs to look at instituting a sexual predator ordinance.

c) Discussion regarding city paid maintenance for horse trails

Kaltsas said the City pays to maintain the City owned horse trail by the Polo Club. Johnson said it runs through the Henning property to County Road 6. Betts said she thought she remembered public works employees mowing it in the past. Ende said he was not aware of this being a public works function and was surprised to receive a bill from a third party recently. Ende said he would research it further and see who authorized this in the past and what was actually mowed for 2016. He said he would report back to Council with his findings.

d) Discussion regarding snow fences in right of way

Kaltsas said a complaint was received from a resident saying that another resident had blocked the right of way. Ende noted the ordinance does not allow these fences and snowmobilers do have the right to utilize the ditches. Kaltsas said it is a public safety issue and fences are not allowed in the right of away. Spencer said that the state law actually does not apply to the City roads so the snowmobilers are actually not entitled to automatically use the city ditches. Vose said the City could be liable should someone get hurt and they did not enforce the ordinance.

9. ADJOURN

Motion by McCoy, second by Betts to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 a.m. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, McCoy, Betts and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Bemmels, Recording Secretary