

Committee of the Whole
January 5, 2021 – Meeting Minutes

Due to public health concerns related to COVID-19, and as authorized by emergency proclamation of the Governor of the State of Iowa, this meeting was conducted electronically, pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8, as holding the meeting in person is impossible or impractical. Interested persons could participate in the meeting via videoconference or by phone. Christensen called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Members present: Christensen, McAdon, Miller, Ockerman, and Selby. Others present: City Administrator Brown, Police Chief Shepherd, Fire Chief Nemechek, Finance Director Sandquist, Public Works Director Overton, Parks & Recreation Director Schenck, Library Director Jayne, Code Compliance Officer Nichols, Assistant Fire Chief Knipper, Water Operator Foster, and Aquatics / Recreation Supervisor Mudder.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Potential Improvements to HWY 169 / Nile Kinnick Drive South

Brown stated that the City had met with the DOT several times in 2020. Christensen stated that the increased costs since the planning began in 2018 have made it a challenging project. Miller stated he would support moving forward with phases. Selby stated that a stoplight at the Fareway / high school intersection should be carefully reviewed for drivers coming down the hill. Ockerman suggested advocating for decreased speed limits before any project begins. McAdon suggested focusing on the Fareway intersection. Schug will coordinate with the DOT.

b) Potential Improvements to Meadow Road

Christensen stated that Meadow Road, which is half-owned by Dallas County, has some gravel and paved sections but no sidewalks, curbs, or storm sewer. This road will be a major route once the new elementary school opens. Christensen suggested setting up a meeting with the school to understand the future traffic patterns. Nichols noted that the school will require some students nearby will have to walk or drive instead of using the bus. Selby asked whether the school would have before or after school care. Christensen suggested that annexation south of Meadow Road would need to be reviewed. Schug noted that any work on Meadow Road should factor in the City's future 40-acre recreation complex.

i) Water Tower Park Development (moved up)

Schenck stated that the City purchased 30 acres across the Adel Family Aquatic Center in July 2020 to add to the 10 acres purchased in 2015. A subcommittee is being formed to consider ideas for the area, which has been intended as a recreation complex. McClure is preparing a proposal to develop concepts for the land that tie in storm water and street issues. The committee agreed that the City should work closely with the school to share parking, storm water, elevations, and other design elements. Christensen stated that the price will be a factor in whether to use McClure or to seek quotes.

j) Potential Drainage Project with Dallas County on RRVT near HWY 169 (moved up)

Brown stated that the Dallas County Conservation Board is interested in improving the drainage along the Raccoon River Valley Trail near HWY 169. The County has asked if the City would be willing to share in the costs. Ockerman stated that any improvements could affect the greater drainage area and that the County retains ownership of this. Christensen stated that he would prioritize other projects. Overton stated that many questions would need to be answered prior to any commitments.

f) Design Guidelines for HWY 6 / 169 Corridors

Brown stated that *Envision Adel 2040* suggested developing design guidelines for the HWY 6 / 169 corridors through town. These guidelines could be brand-new or borrowed from a community in the metro. Christensen stated that guidelines were very important and should emphasize our brick heritage. The Iowa Economic Development Authority has architects that could assist with guidelines for the downtown area.

c) Salaries & Employee Retention Considerations

Miller stated that discussions have occurred surrounding several departing employees and that much data has been gathered to review. Miller stated that some departments and positions may need to be prioritized over others. Brown stated that retention efforts here near the greater Des Moines metro have been challenging. The City has seen tremendous growth over the past five years, and several positions have changed or expanded in that time.

Christensen advised that an internal review was important to determine how to keep the right people in the right positions. Ockerman stated that the immediate concern is the Water Superintendent position. Selby stated that the City needs to pay competitively to compete with the metro, though it cannot match cities like West Des Moines. Succession planning is also important. Miller stated that phasing in salary increases can help motivate staff. Christensen stated that any surveys should factor in the metro's cost of living.

Jayne stated that the library needed to increase its salaries and lower its requirements to fill two positions. McAdon stated that the City's budget and valuation growth should be considered along with how to prioritize those dollars. Shepherd stated that three officers have joined the Sheriff's Office due to salaries. Sandquist stated that it could take several budget cycles before all positions are evaluated. Christensen asked to review more information about the current salaries.

d) Federal COVID-19 Leave Extension

Brown stated that the COVID-19 leave mandated by the federal government technically expired last month. Several cities have extended or are considering extending the leave voluntarily. Christensen asked about the FMLA portion. Ockerman suggested extending the leave through March. Selby stated that the City should encourage its employees to stay home if they are sick. Miller suggested working with the City Attorney to review whether this could be extended through March.

e) Site Plan Ordinance

Brown stated that he and Nichols are working with the City Attorney to review this further.

g) Economic Development / Annexation Strategy

The committee suggested that conversations should begin with properties south of Meadow Road.

h) Future of the Public Safety Building / New Fire Station

Selby stated that the City should begin to consider building a new fire station, especially to accommodate a ladder truck. Christensen stated that a comprehensive building strategy should be developed for all City buildings. Ockerman stated that the County has provided data on fire calls. Ockerman will reach out to Urbandale and Ankeny regarding their new fire stations. Shepherd stated that the Police Department could utilize the current Public Safety Building for at least another decade if the Fire Department moves out. Selby will be coordinating with Nemechek for a future Public Safety Committee meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. Brown provided an update on the Water Superintendent hiring process.**
- 2. Brown asked whether any form of recognition for City staff working through the pandemic would be appropriate. Miller stated that he, as Personnel Chair, would discuss this with Budget Chair McAdon.**
- 3. Christensen suggested some form of recognition for Van Harden's retirement.**

ADJOURNMENT – 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Anthony Brown, City Administrator