

**CITY OF EXCELSIOR
Hennepin County, Minnesota**

MINUTES

**City Council Work Session
Tuesday, September 6, 2011
6:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Ruehl called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m.

Councilmembers present: Caron, Fulkerson, Miller, Olson (arrived at 6:32 p.m.), and Mayor Ruehl. Also Present: City Planner Richards, Public Works Superintendent Wisdorf, and City Clerk Johnson.

2. Agenda Approval

Fulkerson moved, Miller seconded, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4/0.

3. Creating a Revenue Generating Plan for The Commons and Other Spaces

Mayor Ruehl distributed a work paper that the Finance Advisory Commission had produced regarding potential incremental revenue in November 2005. He said that a number of questions will need to be answered if the City were to move forward with any of these items. Will the City hire temporary staff to run the service? Would the City lease out a facility or service, and possibly lose control over that piece? Who will finance the improvement? He said that anyone who finances an improvement will want a long term lease.

Mayor Ruehl said there is a subcommittee who wants to raise up to \$1.5 million for a new bandshell. If that kind of money is raised, is the City willing to invest in the kind of venues that will need to take place?

Miller said the Finance Advisory Commission had brought forward the idea of fencing off the beach and charging a fee to use the beach. At the time, the Council discussed wanting the beach to remain open for the public. He said that he does not think it's possible for the City to do much of anything unless it has a partnership. Maybe it's possible to structure a lease so the City can accomplish some of the goals.

Olson said everyone he talks to has good ideas on how the City can increase revenues and improve the parks. The City needs to build on the Comprehensive Plan it has and marry into the creativity of that. Everything would need to be pulled together into a revenue model. The City would need to hire someone to do that unless the Council has another idea on how to accomplish that.

3. Creating a Revenue Generating Plan for The Commons and Other Spaces – (Continued)

Miller said that there can be a plan, but can they follow through once they have the plan. He said some ideas that have been suggested were a shift in philosophy.

Olson said the issues will start when they stop the thinking in its tracks. It's not a philosophical shift. He does not want to commercialize everything, just enhance the quality of life. Once the Council has a vision then it can pick it apart. He understands the issue about spending the money, but doesn't everyone agree that they want to come up with a way to enhance the quality of life?

Mayor Ruehl said there will be people who will think its commercialization and it will create more traffic and bring in more people.

Richards read the new section in the City Charter Amendment that was added recently with regard to the use of parkland. He said the City will want to be careful so it doesn't overstep the boundaries.

Olson said he wanted to have this discussion because there are Excelsior residents who want a better quality of life. Residents don't want dumpy structures; residents want the parkland enhanced.

Miller said at what point does the City cross the line and it's too much. The Master Park Plan says to make things better for the people who use it.

Olson said the other goal is to create revenues and find ways to get others to pay for it.

Mayor Ruehl said if dollars are being raised from the community for a new facility, there would need to be an understanding of how that facility will be used and maintained.

Olson said he's talking about a public/private partnership. He thinks there are companies who have worked with cities that will have great ideas.

Richards said that the City of Minneapolis has a number of public/private partnerships.

Caron said she was impressed with the person she had spoken with from the Minneapolis Park systems and that person was willing to come in and speak with the Council on this topic. This might be a good place to start.

Mayor Ruehl said he doesn't disagree that everyone would want to make improvements and produce revenues, but how much is too much.

3. Creating a Revenue Generating Plan for The Commons and Other Spaces – (Continued)

Miller said he would agree, but there are always going to be people on both sides of the issue.

Olson said he's seen groups make significant improvements in Minneapolis through a combination of donations and economic interests. What he doesn't know is how to get there. He doesn't think it's possible to get there with just volunteers. The City will probably need to get a national expert in this sort of thing to tell them how to do it, bring all the ideas together, and crunch the numbers.

Richards said the first step will be to collect all of the ideas and put them down. Olson said yes, but he thinks the dialogue lacks vigor.

Caron said she agrees that there can be improvements. Ideas for revenue generating are something that should be looked into. There are people who say everything is good the way it is, but she doesn't think it will be the majority. The City does tend to approach things by utilizing a task force or group of people. Something like this would require more expertise. Maybe they should begin with getting some people in to talk to the Council first. Olson said he would be agreeable to that.

Richards said that there are some legacy funds available through the watershed districts and there may be funds or grants available for doing research. He said he would research this.

Olson said no one will want to write a check until there is a vision. Once people know the plan, the costs, and how it will work, then they'll be willing to fund them.

The Council directed staff to contact the Minneapolis Park System to see if someone would be willing to attend a Council Work Session to discuss this item with the City Council.

4. Council Liaison for Bandshell

Mayor Ruehl said that some of the members from the group working on the Bandshell have asked to have a Councilmember attend a meeting with them this Thursday morning at 8:30 a.m.; Olson agreed to attend the meeting.

5. Other

None

6. Adjournment

Caron moved, Fulkerson seconded, to adjourn the Work Session meeting at 6:57 p.m. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Johnson
City Clerk