

CITY OF EXCELSIOR
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES

City Council Work Session

Monday, October 1, 2012

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Ruehl called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Councilmembers present: Caron, Fulkerson, Miller (arrived at 6:13 p.m.),
and Mayor Ruehl

Councilmembers absent: Olson

Also Present: City Manager Luger, Finance Officer Tumberg,
City Engineer Dawley, and City Clerk Johnson

2. Agenda Approval

Fulkerson moved, Caron seconded, to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carried 3/0.

3. Utility Billing Upgrade

Tumberg said the City had explored outsourcing utility billing to the City of Shorewood. Shorewood is in the process of purchasing new accounting and utility billing software so Excelsior has been completing utility billing functions in house. The cost for Excelsior to partner with Shorewood on a new software system appears cost prohibitive and unnecessary since staff has made the utility billing process more efficient.

Staff is recommending that the City purchase an automatic bill pay module and barcode receipting module for the City's current utility billing system. The automatic bill pay module is an add-on module to the City's current system and would enable residents to sign up for automatic payment of their utility bill on the date the bill is due. The barcode receipting module is another add-on module which will print a barcode on each utility bill and enable staff to scan the barcode on the stub that residents return with their payment, which will read the account, dollar amount due, and person or business associated with the account and automatically populate the information in the utility billing system. The cost for purchasing the automatic bill pay module and barcode receipting module is approximately \$1,300.

The Council directed staff to move forward with purchasing the automatic bill pay and barcode receipting modules.

4. Metropolitan Council Forcemain Project

a. Timing of Construction

Dawley reported that staff met last week with representatives from the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) and Oppidan to determine whether there would be any conflicts with the two construction projects along George Street. He's happy to report that no conflicts were identified.

Dawley also reported that MCES is considering beginning on the opposite side of the City than originally planned. In 2013, the plan would be to work along Excelsior Boulevard through Greenwood, Shorewood, and Excelsior and end around Division Street. The remainder of the work through the center part of the City would be completed in 2014. Part of the reason for changing the route is that MCES needs to acquire rights for a number of parcels from property owners for the project. The City also has a lot of private projects within the central area of the City that are expected to begin in 2013, such as the hotel, the new Hennepin County library, the redevelopment of the Mason Motor site, and the MCES substation. If all of the private projects begin at the same time as the MCES project there will be too much happening at once. The downfall with waiting to do the center area of Excelsior is that there will be two years of disruption with construction activities.

Fulkerson asked if there would be any difference in costs for the City if the project is delayed. Dawley said it was always considered to be a two year project, so he doesn't anticipate any changes in the cost. There will be only one cost agreement in place between the City and MCES for both years of the project.

Mayor Ruehl asked if the majority of the disruption will be in the first year. Dawley responded yes and that the MCES chose Division Street as a stopping point because it seemed to break out the portions with Shorewood and Greenwood. If the Council wants, staff can request that MCES do a portion of the work past Division Street in 2013.

b. Shorewood Emergency Watermain Interconnect

Dawley said that the City of Shorewood recently communicated support for the inclusion of a water system emergency interconnect with Excelsior on Excelsior Boulevard in conjunction with the MCES project. He noted that over the years, there has been discussions about doing an emergency watermain interconnect with Shorewood. Basically, the watermain between Excelsior and Shorewood are connected, but the valve remains closed. The valve is only opened if there is an emergency. This location makes sense for a connection. The Shorewood City Council has discussed this and put funding in their 2013 budget for the watermain interconnect.

4. Metropolitan Council Forcemain Project

b. Shorewood Emergency Watermain Interconnect – (Continued)

Dawley said there would be some cost savings if the interconnect is done in conjunction with the MCES project because the road will already be open. The preliminary cost for the work is \$400,000 to \$500,000, which would be split 50/50 between Excelsior and Shorewood.

Wisdorf said the only other area that could be connected is adjacent to the Garden Patch, and that would be driven by redevelopment.

Dawley said if there is interest in doing the watermain interconnect he will move forward with a more detailed cost estimate. Staff is also looking for input from the Council on whether there are other things underground that the City should be doing in conjunction with the MCES project.

Mayor Ruehl said this is a good long term solution that would be extraordinarily expensive to do later. Dawley said it would probably be double the cost.

Miller asked if a part of the cost could be covered by Greenwood for providing additional service to Greenwood residents.

Mayor Ruehl said he is not sure if the City has the ability to charge a water availability charge to Greenwood residents if they connect to the City's water. Dawley said there are only ten homes that could be served and it doesn't appear that those homes are interested in connecting to city water at this time. He also doesn't think that the City of Greenwood is willing to assess and provide service to their residents.

Miller said the logical next step would be for Excelsior to see where Greenwood stands with this. Greenwood has to either contribute or be willing to assess the residents who benefit. Mayor Ruehl agreed that the City needs an answer from Greenwood.

Mayor Ruehl asked why Excelsior's portion of the costs is so high. Dawley said that there is a fair amount of pipe and hydrants.

Miller said that the Council discussed that it wanted a 12 inch watermain installed. Wisdorf said the City wants a 12 inch line for Excelsior's portion and up to Christmas Lake Road.

Mayor Ruehl asked if there was a good reason for the line to be 12 inch through Greenwood. Dawley said there isn't information to support the need for a 12 inch line through Greenwood.

4. Metropolitan Council Forcemain Project

b. Shorewood Emergency Watermain Interconnect – (Continued)

Fulkerson asked if the City has adequate water capacity to cover all of these properties. Dawley said that the City had a modeling done that incorporated the hotel and brewery and there were no issues with capacity. As for the watermain interconnect, this would need to be monitored and adjusted accordingly. Both cities would actually have more capacity in an emergency.

Caron said she is really struggling with this. She understands it's cheaper to do the work when the street is open and she is hearing that this is a good thing to have long term, but is it a necessity. She is trying to weigh the \$200,000 to \$250,000 against the other things that the City needs to spend money on. It doesn't seem like this is an urgent need.

Luger said the City doesn't have an issue now, but if there is an emergency there would be no way for the City to provide water to its residents. Caron said if there is a catastrophic event it would probably affect the other cities too.

Miller said if you have a new development and put in a water line there are households that will need to pay for that. How do you recapture the costs? Dawley said you'd charge for future connections and incorporate the costs within your water rate structure. Miller said based on that, he doesn't understand why the cost for the watermain interconnect wouldn't be divided into thirds between Excelsior, Shorewood, and Greenwood.

Luger said staff will put together more information to answer the questions raised by the Council.

c. Configuration of Five Corner Intersection

Jupe Hale, Transportation Senior Project Manager, WSB & Associates, Inc. presented revised drawings for the five corner intersection. He noted that a second roundabout is added where the three stop signs are. He explained how the traffic will flow and the safety benefits that can be gained. The operations are simplified by not making a full circle. This also helps channelize all of the movements. Mill and Morse Street were also combined into one roundabout, which allowed them to shrink the area down and give them more flexibility and not negatively affect the post office corner.

Hale noted that the driveways for the post office will not be changed and can continue to function the way they currently do. One driveway from the post office comes onto the roundabout. Hale discussed Lake Street and how that would be accommodated. The impacts to the right-of-ways have been significantly reduced. He noted that MN/DOT and Hennepin County both acknowledge and use roundabouts, but neither will comment without more engineering data. He is comfortable that if they have engineering solutions that work that both MN/DOT and the County will be acceptable to the plans.

4. Metropolitan Council Forcemain Project

c. Configuration of Five Corner Intersection – (Continued)

Hale said that there may need to be a retaining wall installed near the wooded area by the Excelsior Bay Gables. There is also a small impact next to where the City lift station is located, but there is flexibility. He noted that the signage for the roundabout will need to be clear. The Wyer Hill property will also have a much safer in and out for the residents.

This design has minimal impacts on the veteran's memorial corner and will solve the issues with congestion. There may even be an opportunity to connect to the LRT trail.

Caron asked how much the roundabouts would cost. Hale said based on his experience, he would estimate the cost to be around \$600,000 to \$1,000,000.

Mayor said this will be a figure "8" instead of a roundabout. He is impressed that a plan could be developed that addressed the concerns the Council identified and make a safer intersection. He wonders what additional cost there would be above what the MCES would put in and whether there would be any grant funding available. This would have an extraordinary positive impact on the City.

Caron said she thinks the design is great. This intersection is a real problem, but there have been a lot of different projects identified and the Council needs to understand the priorities and figure out how these big ticket items will get paid for. This needs to be a work session topic.

Hale said he thought that funding would come from MCES and other grant funding. Existing problems tend to get the funding, so it would be helpful to get any information that is available with regard to accidents and/or traffic congestion. MN/DOT may also help with funding because they have a ramp that comes into the roundabout.

Hale suggested going to MCES to see what they are willing to put toward the intersection and then go forward with looking at other funding options.

Miller said he would like the City to aggressively pursue this.

5. Other

None

6. Adjournment

Miller moved, Fulkerson seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m.
Motion carried 4/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Johnson
City Clerk