

## **North Branch City Council**

### Work Session

Date of Meeting: February 19, 2015

Present: Councilmembers: Theresa Furman, Kathy Blomquist, Joyce Borchardt, Robert Canada, and Kirsten Hagen-Kennedy.

Also Present: City Administrator Konrad, Planner Roberts, Finance Director Hill and Public Works Director Williams

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#### ***I. Call To Order***

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

#### ***II. Initiative Foundation Presentation***

A Representative from the Initiative Foundation provided an overview of their programming.

#### ***III. 2015 Street Projects***

Holly Wilson from WSB provided an overview of proposed 2015 Street Projects. The project would be maintenance projects to try to buy time for the full Northwest Old Town project. The City's State Aid Funds would be utilized to pay for the overlays of Elm Street from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue; Ash Street from CR 30 to Golden Avenue and Falcon Avenue from 370<sup>th</sup> Street to the City limits. Williams provided overview of his plans for street maintenance in 2015 and asked for Council consensus to move forward and bring items to a regular meeting for approval. He suggested taking some funds from gravel, shouldering and crack sealing budgets in the 2015 budget to do a small seal coating project. Furman expressed concern with the streets in Northwest Old Town. Williams noted that we need to begin maintaining our streets so they don't need to be reconstructed which is more costly. Staff explained that there is not enough budgeted to complete the project this year and that is why some maintenance is planned to try and buy time to build up funding for the full reconstruction. Konrad noted that we are starting to feel the effects of deferring maintenance and we will need to begin addressing that in upcoming budgets. Council agreed to the proposal by staff and asked that the items be placed on upcoming agendas for approval.

#### ***IV. 20 Year Growth – Zoning Ordinance vs. Comp Plan***

Roberts indicated that staff is looking for direction on how to handle the inconsistencies that currently exist between the zoning ordinance and Comp Plan. When one acre lots in the rural residential district was approved the Comp Plan was never amended. There are three options for consideration: do nothing; amend the zoning ordinance or amend the comp plan. The Mayor indicated that there is too much of a negative impact to the City if one acre lots do not connect to City services. Canada asked whether it would be prudent to have a study or review of the proposed 20 year growth area based on the fact that, due to the recession, the City is years behind no projected growth. Blomquist said that half of residents are on well and septic and half are on city services. Council and staff discussed the necessity of a 4/5<sup>th</sup> vote for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Konrad suggested staff put together a preliminary scope of work to be done to address concerns within the 20 year growth plan for Council to review. She noted that if the comp plan is changed it will have an impact on sewer and water rates and Council would need to be committed to amending the sewer and water comp plans in addition to the land use plan which would be costly. Council discussed with staff when the rate structure was last reviewed. Hill indicated that rates are reviewed on a yearly basis but a rate structure study has a cost to it. Williams reviewed rates for sewer with Council and said that he's open to change but the numbers have to work. Williams indicated he does not believe it is necessary for the City to pay for a sewer rate study. Williams noted the City needs 140 homes per year to sustain the system. Williams said he thinks there are better ideas to keep property on the system than are

currently being considered. He suggested looking at cheaper alternative utility options rather than changing the current plan. Hagen-Kennedy said she does not see the need to spend money to redo the Comprehensive Plan at this point and she would like the Council to support City services. Furman would like to see the options Williams discussed. Blomquist asked if there were the four votes required to change the plan as she and the Mayor were not in favor of changing the comp plan. Konrad indicated she would work with staff to lay out what the options are for Council to consider. Staff will continue to work on this.

***V. Code of Conduct & Ethics Policies***

Borchardt felt that the Cambridge policy was good because it covered information from the League of Minnesota Cities and the Handbook for Mayors. Furman said she likes the Code of Conduct from Cambridge with a few amendments because it also includes Roberts Rules. Blomquist said she did not like the example from Cambridge. Blomquist would like a Code of Conduct to be in addition to State Statute. Canada would like to see Councilmembers sign a piece of paper saying the Code of Conduct has been read and the Ethics Policy. Blomquist said she likes the information on respect for staff time and knowledge. Blomquist would like to add items specific to North Branch. Furman said that Staff can let Council know if the information is time consuming and whether they can complete the task. Council is to review the provided information and email Konrad with thoughts and suggestions.

Motion by Furman, seconded by Canada to adjourn.

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridgitte Konrad, City Administrator  
jrl/TOSS