

REGULAR MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

February 5, 1998

The regular study session of the Des Moines City Council was called to order at 7:34 p.m. by Mayor Thomasson in the City Council Chambers, 21630 11th Avenue South.

ROLL CALL - Present: Mayor Scott Thomasson, Mayor Pro Tem Terry Brazil, Councilmembers Dave Kaplan, Bob Sheckler, Dan Sherman, Gary Towe and Don Wasson. Also present were City Manager Bob Olander, Assistant City Manager Tony Piasecki, City Attorney Gary McLean, Public Works Director Tim Heydon and City Clerk Denis Staab.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

City Efficiency and Effectiveness Measures and Public Opinion Survey

City Manager Olander reminded Council that one of the major administrative goals has been to work aggressively and continuously to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of City services. He noted that Council authorized funding for a citizen survey in the 1997 budget and the firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maulin and Associates was retained to assist in designing, implementing and evaluating the survey. He introduced Paul Maslin to present the results of the survey.

Mr. Maslin briefly described the process used, noting that the telephone survey was responded to by 400 registered voters in October of 1997. He advised that the purpose of the survey was to assess satisfaction and perceptions of the City among its residents, specifically regarding the issues of general perceptions, communication with the City Government and evaluation of the City's services. Mr. Maslin proceeded to give Council an overview of the survey results stressing that the City enjoys a very strong and positive reputation among residents. He noted some of the following highlights:

- General Perceptions

- The overall quality of life is described as excellent or very good by 70% and another 26% cite it as somewhat good, bringing the total who say the quality of life is good to 96%.
- 73% say things in Des Moines are headed in the right direction.
- 80% would recommend Des Moines as a place to live to friends or relatives.

- Perceptions of Problems (This did not include Crime or the planned addition of the 3rd runway at Sea-Tac as the problems were cited the most in the focus groups)

- Residents cited traffic and growth and development, and education as the most important.

- Communication

- Over a majority of residents noted they are aware of when City Government meetings take place, however, only 21% attend them at least sometimes.
- The vast majority of residents get information from the City Currents Newsletter, the Des Moines News and the City Recreation Brochure

- Services

- Cleanliness and appearance of the community was the highest rate service. Also high were safety and security of neighborhoods and the condition of City Streets.
- The services with lowest ratings were: controlling flooding and drainage and the availability of parks.

City Manager Olander advised Council that since the Des Moines News has gone out of business, and the fact that many citizens requested more frequent publications of the City Currents, he plans on increasing this publication to every two months.

Assistant City Manager Piasecki proceeded to review surveys sent to external and internal customers from various City departments. He noted that overall, the results showed a very high level of satisfaction with the services the City provides. He advised that there are areas upon which we can improve and our customers offered many suggestions for improvements or new services.

City Manager Olander informed Council that he will be meeting with the various departments to review strategy for ways to increase our goals and improve scores. He stressed to Council that some policy issues are in need of further Council consideration. One of the major issues that he feels Council needs to address is crime on Highway 99, both immediate and long term solutions. He suggested this is a good topic for Council's June retreat. In conclusion, he stated that he would recommend this type of survey be undertaken every two years and felt the \$15,000 cost of the surveys was well spent.

Interlocal Agreement With Federal Way Regarding Lakehaven Utility

Mayor Thomasson advised that this is a continuation of discussion from the January 22, 1998 Council meeting. He noted that he will allow the City of Federal Way and the Lakehaven Utility District representatives, 15 minutes each to address Council on the issues they feel are pertinent.

Lakehaven Utility District

Don Perry, Manager of Lakehaven Utility District, addressed Council on the concerns expressed by the City of Federal on the District's utility operations. He noted the following items:

- Water Main Replacement - All pipe has a useful life depending on a number of factors. The District determines the condition by checking increased unaccounted water, frequent leaks, review of material removed from water mains, review of pipe condition where any work is performed on the pipe. If any pipes exhibit problems it is tested for strength, estimate length of time pipe has remaining and then program it for replacement..
- Corrosion Control - The Corrosion Control Study for the District will be submitted to DOH prior to the due date of April 1, 1998. The District plans a more aggressive program than the study recommends and the average residential customer would see less than \$0.40 increase in rates for corrosion control.
- Disinfection of Water Supply - The District estimates that if all water supplies are disinfected with chlorine the average home owner would see their monthly water bill increase less than \$0.40.
- District Comprehensive Planning - The 1980's Sewer Comprehensive Plan is being updated to meet GMA requirements. It is expected to be completed by late fall 1998. The 1991 Water Comprehensive Plan was approved by all agencies except King County. The District put this plan on hold until Federal Way completed and adopted its land use Plan.

- Communications - The District welcomes open communications and publishes its agenda for meetings, Mails the City of Federal Way the District's Board Agendas. Federal Way can request the District to send staff to the City to review with staff or Council what actions are being proposed.
- Inflow/Infiltration of Water Into Sewer Collection System - The District has programmed \$100,000 for Inflow and Infiltration work on its collection system in 1998 to handle the following problems: Inflow water getting into manholes through covers, illegal connections from roof drains and footing drains, sump pumps, etc., and infiltration water that leaks directly into pipes in the street or on customer's property.

Bev Tweddle, Commissioner for Lakehaven Utility District, advised Council on the following:

- The Commissioners approved a resolution to allow the resident ratepayers of the District to determine who should run the Utility District and noted the Board would support, through the residents votes, the appropriate course of action.
- If Federal Way assumes operation of the District, residents of Des Moines residing within the District's boundaries will be deprived of the ability to influence any measure of real control of the water and sewer services they receive.

City of Federal Way

Councilmember Mary Gates noted that the cities of Des Moines and Federal Way have a good history of cooperation with each other. She noted the following to support Federal Way's assumption:

- Water Supply - District has acknowledged that it does not have a firm water supply after 1999.
- Interlocal with Des Moines will provide reasonable rates to Des Moines' citizens.
- There are major water system maintenance needs including mandated water disinfection, corrosion control, asbestos-concrete water pipe replacement that the City of Federal Way has the reserve funds to address.

Ms. Gates concluded by noting the real issue is who can serve the citizens best interests in assuring water availability and quality.

Cary Roe, Federal Way Public Works Director, cited what he termed critical problems with the current operations of the Lakehaven Utility District as follows:

- No firm water supply after 1999 - No agreements in place with Tacoma or Auburn
- Major Water System Maintenance Needs not included in the District's 10 year CIP:
 - EPA Mandated Drinking Water Disinfection approximately \$23.1 million
 - Corrosion Control \$10.4 Million
 - Asbestos Concrete Water Pipe Replacement - 155 year replacement cycle is not adequate
 - Environmental Permit Violations at Redondo Treatment Plant
- Rates are too low, therefore Utility is operating at a loss
- 1983 Comprehensive Plan is not in conformance, should be updated every 5 years or sooner

In conclusion, Mr. Roe outlined Federal Way's staff experience in running public utilities. He noted that the current proposed interlocal provides that the Des Moines City Council would have input into Federal Way decisions on capital improvements of \$200,000, and on rate increases.

9:02 p.m. Mayor Thomasson called for a 10 minute break.

Public Works Director Tim Heydon explained that he has an extensive background in water and sewer utilities. He informed Council that with his research into this issue he has concluded that utility customers would be best served with the City Federal Way taking over the operations. He outlined some of the reasons for this conclusion:

- Future planning needs of the District would be kept more current.
- The current Lakehaven Utility has failed to properly push Tacoma for pipeline to ensure future sources of water supply.
- Has concerns that Lakehaven cannot meet the EPA mandated drinking water disinfection, they are way behind now.
- Lack of Capital Improvement maintenance especially in getting rid of the Asbestos-concrete water pipe.

In conclusion, Public Works Director Heydon advised Council that Lakehaven's rates are the lowest in the area, and "you get what you pay for". Needs are very great and the rates need to match the needs. He expressed concern that when Des Moines informed Lakehaven District that they would be doing some street overlayment, Lakehaven had no interest in replacing the old AC pipes.

Upon questioning, City Attorney McLean noted that Des Moines has approximately 2,500 residents being served by Lakehaven Utility District. He stated that he believes the proposed interlocal agreement to be flexible, allowing for negotiations of the best interests of both cities. He reminded Council that they would have input on large capital improvement projects.

City Manager Olander informed Council that past state governance studies favor urbanized cities in taking over utility districts as it is felt that the cities are more efficient and offer better accountability to the citizens they are serving. He noted that GMA mandates that cities have the primary legal responsibility to provide levels of service. He advised Council that Des Moines' staff recommends that the City of Federal Way would do a better job of running Lakehaven Utility District and therefore, Des Moines citizens would be better served.

A number of questions were asked by Councilmembers with responses as noted:

- Concern over loss of water supply - Public Works Director Heydon advised that Pipeline 5 already has waterway rights, and an agreement can easily be reached with Auburn in the meantime.
- Rates going up but no capital improvements - Federal Way Public Works Director advised that rates would gradually increase to match capital improvements in the CIP and Comprehensive Plan.
- Concern over citations at Redondo Treatment Plant - Lakehaven Commissioner Tweddle commented that there had been no direct links to any health problems and these problems only occurred during heavy rainfall when water gets into the manholes through manhole covers, illegal connections from roof drains, sump pumps, etc.
- Questions as to why rates stayed so low - Lakehaven Commissioner Tweddle stated the main reason rates could be kept so low was because of the large rate of growth in Federal Way during the mid 1980s and 1990s.

Several Councilmembers indicated that they had more questions, therefore, due to the lateness of tonight's meeting, Mayor Thomasson declared that this subject will be continued to the February 12, 1998 Council meeting.

City Manager Olander encouraged Councilmembers to submit technical questions to staff so that the various city or utility representatives could be present and prepared at the next Council meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:08 p.m. Mayor Thomasson announced that Council will go into an Executive Sessions for approximately 30 minutes to discuss with legal counsel representing the City litigation or potential litigation to which the City is, or is likely to become, a party and about which public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the City.

10:30 p.m. Motion was made, seconded and passed, to continue the meeting to 10:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:45 p.m. the Council reconvened into open session and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Staab
City Clerk