

REGULAR MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

March 7, 2002

The regular study session of the Des Moines City Council was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Mayor Wasson in the Council Chambers, 21630 11th Avenue South, Suite B.

ROLL CALL – Present: Mayor Don Wasson, Mayor Pro Tem Richard Benjamin, Councilmembers Gary Petersen, Bob Sheckler (via speaker telephone - Executive Session), Maggie Steenrod, Scott Thomasson, and Susan White. Also present were City Manager Bob Olander, Assistant City Manager Tony Piasecki, City Attorney Gary McLean, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell, Finance Director Scott McCarty, and City Clerk Denis Staab.

MOTION: Mayor Wasson moved, without objection, to grant Councilmember Sheckler's request to participate in Council meetings by speaker telephone for his current disability. There were no objections. Mayor Wasson instructed the City Clerk to contact Councilmember Sheckler by telephone.

City Attorney McLean announced that Councilmember Sheckler had conveyed to him that based on the Agenda as submitted, he did not feel the need to participate actively on those items. However, the Mayor has indicated that there is likely to be an Executive Session at the end of the regular Agenda and based on that, Mr. Sheckler has requested to participate in that Session. City Attorney McLean advised that the Executive Session will be part of this meeting and therefore Councilmember Sheckler will be allowed to participate under the Mayor's motion.

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Thomasson read a statement into the record from Councilmember Sheckler concerning the dismissal of City Manager Olander. The letter expressed his distress to learn that new Councilmembers have taken steps to terminate the City Manager and noted that there simply is no performance-based reason for this action. The letter expressed the feeling that this action was taken to prevent the City Manager from taking action to enforce the findings of the State Attorney General and State Auditor regarding Councilmember Petersen's conflict of interest, as the responsibility of addressing this issue falls to the City Manager. The letter concluded by advising the use of official power to thwart conflict of interest laws is a serious offense that will not go unchallenged.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Off-Leash Dog Area

Park and Recreation Director Thorell informed Council that in January of 2001, the south King County cities of Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Renton Tukwila, SeaTac and unincorporated King County formed a Dog Off-Leash Area Task Force to review the need and level of public interest in their respective communities. Issues studied included criteria for site selection and development, funding options, management concerns, and for the future potential development, maintenance and operation of a regional off-leash site in south King County.

Park and Recreation Director Thorell informed Council that a portion of Grandview Park has been identified as a potential off-leash site consisting of approximately 40 acres. The Park is

located between SeaTac, Kent and Des Moines, just east of I-5 and Military Road and the area to be used now contains two soccer fields. She further advised that there is parking and minor amenities already exist.

Park and Recreation Director Thorell noted that the Task Force will be holding two public open houses to solicit citizen input on April 25, 2002 at the Kent Memorial Park Building between 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and at Kent City Hall from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. She encouraged everyone to attend.

In regards to funding, she advised that the Task Force is recommending initiation of a \$1-2 surcharge on pet licenses as a potential source of funds for operation and maintenance, and that member cities and King County contribute a one-time capital development funds, along with submittal of a joint Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation grant application for construction of the off-leash park. She informed Council that Des Moines Animal Control and park staff have received numerous inquiries regarding where a Des Moines' dog park is located and complaints that there is no off-lease area.

In conclusion, Park and Recreation Director Thorell noted that all City Council's are being briefed by Task Force members this month and will report the conclusions to the full membership. She briefly reviewed the proposed tentative development schedule and requested whether Council would be interested in pursuing participation in such a joint undertaking.

Councilmember Thomasson expressed concern in taking on more expenses with the City's limited resources, but would support an interlocal for grant application to IAC.

Upon questioning by Mayor Wasson if a user fee could be charged, Park and Recreation Director Thorell responded this would increase costs for personnel. She further noted that the City's cost would be proportional and maintenance would be paid for by dog license fee increases.

Councilmember Thomasson advised that soccer fields are at a premium and he would choose recreational opportunities for children over dogs. He requested that this be communicated to the task force.

Councilmember Steenrod noted that the cost for capital improvements needed for this scale of a project may be too much.

Park and Recreation Director Thorell stated that after a business plan is completed she will be able to present Council with a better idea of the total dollar amount involved.

City Manager Olander summarized Council's direction as follows:

- Prefer the soccer fields remain unless they are closed for budgetary reasons.
- Need clearer understanding of dollars involved in capital expenses.
- Need to know if this is something that Des Moines' residents would want and use.

Councilmember Thomasson reiterated his concerns about closing a sports field when they are in such short supply. Requested a strong message be sent that this is not the place to put a off-leash dog area. He suggested the Task Force look at some of the land in the Port buy-out area.

2002 Parks, Recreation & Senior Services Master Plan

Park and Recreation Director Thorell briefed Council on the purpose of the Master Plan and advised that it is a plan that establishes a business plan and goals. It is important to have in place in order to qualify for State funding and various grants. She continued by reviewing the following:

- Park lands acquisition progress 1997-2001, including cost breakdown
- 1997 Master Plan completed acquisitions:
 - for active park projects
 - for passive park projects
- Property transfers through annexation
- Completed facility repair and renovations
- Remaining renovations
- Summary of new development projects
- Interlocal development projects

Park and Recreation Director Thorell informed Council that the purpose of the 2002 Plan update is to:

- assess the recreation needs and interests,
- provide a vision, goals and priorities based on the program and service needs,
- to research and analyze opportunities for collaborative projects and programs with other agencies,
- establish long-range project and program priorities,
- evaluate project and program based acquisition, development and ongoing maintenance and operation cost estimates and economic impacts,
- research project funding options
- review current level of service standards and strategies for achieving the standards, and
- integrate Parks, Recreation and Senior Services needs into the Des Moines Comprehensive Plan.

She proceeded to brief Council on a proposed timeline and advised that staff recommends that Council endorse a process that would engage a broad base of Des Moines citizens and recreational special interests by establishing an Ad Hoc Citizens Committee. She noted that the Committee would host a series of neighborhood and user group workshops to inform and receive feedback regarding recreation needs and priorities. The Committee would work closely with staff to assist with an analysis of Master Plan data and present project recommendations to the Council for review and adoption in the fall of 2002.

City Manager Olander informed Council that careful consideration will be given to the City's development of new recreation and park facilities regarding on-going costs and the City's ability to financially maintain any such facilities.

Upon questioning by Councilmember White, Community Development Director Thorell advised that options for the Senior Center Dining Hall repairs will be brought to Council for consideration in the future.

City Manager Olander advised that those projects that are already in process will continue.

Upon questioning regarding implementing the Park Plan with the Comprehensive Plan, Planning Manager Loch advised Council it is a stand alone document, but it will be fully integrated in the Comp Plan as a separate chapter.

In regards to having a broad based citizens ad-hoc advisory committee, Councilmember Thomasson suggested caution on exactly what their charter would be. He noted that a citizens committee is an excellent resource, however felt dollar commitments would be beyond their scope of duties. He felt clear expectations of the Committee should be detailed. Planning Manager Loch responded that each step the Committee takes would be brought before Council to be sure the Committee is heading in the direction Council desires, before moving forward.

City Manager Olander reminded Council that the task force would only make recommendations and that Council makes all the final decisions. He advised that staff will prepare guideline documents for such a task force for Council's review.

Park and Recreation Director Thorell informed Council that along with a review of the ad-hoc committee guidelines she will prepare a suggested timeline.

Councilmember Steenrod felt the establishment and make-up of the citizens committee may be a good retreat topic.

8:48 p.m. Mayor Wasson declared a 10 minute break.

Budget Discussion and Status Report

Finance Director McCarty proceeded to present a 2002 operating budget overview. With the use of pie charts he noted the following:

- Operating revenue in the amount of \$13.1 M, advising that the \$1.48 M in local government assistance may be lost in 2003
- Operating budget by Department, noting that public safety makes up 53% of the budget
- Operating expenditures, with payroll accounting for 63% of the expenditures
- Expenditure increase of \$685,000 providing for same level services as 2001, with increase due to cost of doing business

Finance Director McCarty reviewed projected operating reserves at December 31, 2001 as follows:

7% of Operating Budget per DMMC	\$ 900,000
Revenue Stabilization Fund	<u>\$1,400,000</u>
TOTAL OPERATING RESERVES	\$2,300,000

City Manager Olander pointed out the Revenue Stabilization Fund is an important prior Council foresight that during good times to set aside funds for economic recession. He noted some funds were used last year, and the City has still been able to keep the fund fully funded.

Finance Director McCarty reviewed a budget discussion calendar beginning with a review of the 2001 operating budget at the April 11th Council meeting, review 2002 operating budget and the 5 year operating projection at the May 2nd meeting and discussion of the 2003 budget options and Council policy direction at the May 9th meeting.

In regards to the preparation of the 2003 preliminary budget, City Manager Olander advised Council faces some major policy issues. Some of those items may be creating a park and recreation district, Council priorities whether to cut items from the budget, and possibly take some issues to the voters.

Councilmember Thomasson noted that King County is considering forming a park and recreation district and perhaps this is something Des Moines may wish to join, or consider an intra-City district with Normandy Park and Burien. City Manager Olander felt this idea may be worth exploring and will be bring back options for Council's consideration.

Councilmember Thomasson also suggested that perhaps consideration needs to addressed as to whether human services should be a separate issue.

Councilmember Steenrod felt that perhaps a Council committee should be formed to work more closely with the Finance Department, perhaps meeting on a monthly basis. She requested this item be placed on the upcoming retreat agenda.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed at the request of City Manager Olander, in honor and memory of the one year anniversary of fallen Des Moines Police Officer Steven Underwood.

9:30 p.m. Executive Session

At 9:30 p.m. City Attorney McLean announced that the Council will now recess into an executive session for two statutory purposes. One to discuss litigation or potential litigation matters involving the City about which public knowledge might have an adverse effect on the City's interests covered by RCW 42.31.10(1(i)), second item would be covered under RCW 42.31.10(1(g)) to discuss a personnel issue, the performance of a public employee. He noted the Mayor has indicated this executive session will take no longer than one hour and no further action is anticipated.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Staab
City Clerk