

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
FEBRUARY 4, 2010, 4:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Mayor Riddle called the meeting to order. Council members present were Mayor Jeremy Riddle and Councilors Paul Whitcomb and Lee Steinbrecher. Victoria Hallin and Dick Dobson were absent. Staff present was Mark Karnowski, Bob Gerold, Steve Jackson, Jay Blake, Brian Payne and Katie Hunter. Also present: City Attorney Damien Toven.

Request to Rename Parts of Smith System Road and Old Highway 18 South

Blake explained to the City Council that Old County Road 18 or Northland Drive has an inconsistency with the road names. With the newly proposed senior housing project being built across from the north side of Fairview Hospital, now is a good time to reconsider the road name(s).

AS for the history of the street, Smith System Road was originally platted as 10th Street and also called Service Road and renamed NEW Smith System on the new plat. In the early 1990s, the Hospital asked to rename the street Northland Drive. In the address file, there is reference to 10th Street, Smith System, Old County Road 18, Highway 18, Northland Drive, and Northland Boulevard. Blake requested that the council consider a new naming system.

Staff would like to call meeting of businesses and residents in that area to hear feedback on re-naming and solidifying the streets in that area. Blake has suggestions for street names but he would like to wait and lay those ideas out when the public is present. Whitcomb mentioned the importance of contacting the public so they don't order business cards or letterhead only to have their street address change.

Chief Payne suggested keeping with consistency of the way the streets and avenues currently run in the city.

STEINBRECHER MOTIONED TO APPROVE AN OPEN HOUSE ON THE 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2010 FROM 6:00 PM TO 7:00 PM. WHITCOMB SECONDED THE MOTION. ON THE VOTE: AYES – 3; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Resolution #10-10 Donation from Princeton Used Clothing Center for Flower Day

WHITCOMB MOTIONED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #10-10 ACCEPTING A \$300 DONATION FROM THE PRINCETON USED CLOTHING CENTER FOR PRINCETON FLOWER DAY. STEINBRECHER SECONDED THE MOTION. ON THE VOTE: AYES – 3; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Resolution #10-08; Dunn Bridge Municipal Consent Consideration

City Engineer Mike Neilson handed out a Preliminary Construction Cost sheet for State Project 4810-17 (TH95); the bridge project. He explained the cost sharing portion for the city. Mr. Dave Thompson with Public Utilities had agreed that the city would pay the 'decorative' portion of the lighting. The total city cost share for the lighting is about \$30,000.00. With engineering costs, the total city construction cost comes to \$88,747.82.

Neilson explained that to move forward with the project, the county needs municipal consent, hence Resolution #10-08.

Steinbrecher asked what will be done for lighting if the city doesn't contribute the \$30,000? Nielson said that the bridge will still be lighted but not decorative to match the original lighting and not a Light –Emitting Diode (LED) lighting with high pressure sodium, which is an energy

efficient lighting. Nielson explained that the advantage of LED lights are the energy savings. Thompson also believes he can get a rebate of up to \$15,000 if the LED lights are purchased.

Whitcomb motioned to approve resolution #10-08 approving mille lacs county state aid project within the municipal corporate limits of Princeton, Minnesota the bridge and street improvements. Steinbrecher seconded, but with comment.

Steinbrecher expressed that he has a hard time spending \$30,000 of tax payers' money on something people won't even notice.

Nielson reported that a study was done on LED lighting versus non-LED and the savings are vast. A non-LED light will give out something like 310 watts and a LED light will give out 160 watts. The life of a LED light is about 70,000 hours compared to 7000 hours of a normal. Including the bulb cost, in five years the energy costs would pay for themselves. Neilson estimated the cost savings of over a 30 year period, there would be a \$30,000 savings.

Whitcomb added that the \$15,000 rebate would also reduce the cost.

ON THE VOTE: AYES – 3; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Cable Television Franchise Discussion

Karnowski informed the Council on the recent cable television franchise discussion. The City of Princeton has been working through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the East Central Cable Commission (ECCC) to contract with a cable TV provider for Princeton and the other cities in the ECCC. Those cities are: Princeton, Milaca, Mora, Pine City, Rush City, North Branch, Cambridge and Mora.

There is currently discussion going on by the member cities on whether the ECCC is the best way to continue to provide cable TV to the individual cities. The option under consideration is whether the JPA should be disbanded and each city deal with its cable TV system individually.

The reasons for maintaining the JPA is that there may be strength in numbers. That is, the negotiating power of an individual city with the cable TV provider may not be as strong as it might be as a group.

One of the advantages of leaving the JPA and going on our own is that Princeton could then have their own Local Cable Access channel. That component, in and of itself, is only useful if the city is able to use it effectively. Most cities work jointly with the local school district to provide the programming for the local cable access station.

It could allow the city and/or school district to broadcast it's Board and Council meetings either live or on a taped delay. Live broadcasts come with a price tag. I've been advised that the City of Cambridge recently looked at wiring their Council Chambers for a live cable TV feed and opted not to when they learned that the wiring and equipment would run in the \$30-40,000 range. In addition, they would have to have someone willing to operate the camera(s), mixer and microphones at each meeting.

It appears the City of Cambridge has already decided to drop out of the JPA. Whatever the member cities decide, the JPA requires notice, so a vote now to drop out would not be effective until 2011.

Karnowski stated that he wanted to update the council, but wait until a decision was made until the next council meeting. At that time, Councilor Vicki Hallin would be present for questions. Councilor Hallin is on the Cable Commission Board.

Steinbrecher asked how any decision would affect the people in the city. In other words, what is purpose of commission? Karnowski explained that way back when, all of the programming was shared via microwave tower. Now they use fiber optic, so from a technical standpoint, we don't have to be grouped with the others anymore. We could be on our own if we choose to. The Council seemed to want more information on the pros and the cons of dropping out of the JPA.

Whitcomb asked if either decision would prevent another cable provider from coming into the city. Jackson explained that the current franchise agreement does not allow any other cable providers.

WWTP Engineering Discussion

Karnowski let the council know that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is holding the comment period open until February 15th, 2010 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) permit.

Staff is still fairly optimistic that no objections will be filed and by mid-month we'll be able to proceed with the assurance that dollars we spend will not be wasted.

About a month ago, the Council appeared to support having the city go through the "Request for Proposals" (RFP) or "Request for Qualifications" (RFQ) process to make sure the city secures the best engineering firm to actually design and build the WWTP.

Based on that, staff began organizing pursuit of either the RFP or RFQ process. Karnowski reported that he and the Mayor had a meeting with Brett Repulske of USDA, the city's contact at the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD) – the folks who are providing the loan/grant funds to build the WWTP.

They expressed concern that going through that process could delay construction but they understood why the city was considering doing RFQ/RFPs and indicated that, if that's the route the City wants to pursue – that it can be done.

They advised that they have extensive experience dealing with engineering firms in the negotiation of a design/construction contract. They feel confident that our current engineer, SEH is fully capable of designing the plant and that USDA-RD could assist the city in negotiating a reasonable contract.

One of the options they suggested is to have Council representative(s), city staff and USDA-RD staff meet with SEH representatives and discuss possible contract terms with the understanding that, if the discussion doesn't result in a reasonable agreement, that the city could then pursue opening up the project to other firms.

SEH had also agreed to team up with WSB because WSB has intimate knowledge of our WWTP system.

Steinbrecher commented that he is still in favor of an RFP to make it competitive. He also commented that although it was nice of SEH to make a gesture toward WSB, although that

could be a way to weed out the other competitors. Whitcomb agreed and suggested staff and the City Council need to sit down and agree on what everyone wants.

Karnowski said the funding from USDA allows for tripling of the plant. The city would have to use the entire USDA funding before any monies from the grant were received.

Steinbrecher said he is not so concerned about using the grant. If doubling the plant size will be less than tripling it, grant or no grant, then he feels doubling the plant is a better option. As far as engineering, Steinbrecher would still like to see bids between at least SEH and WSB.

Whitcomb commented that ten years ago it may have sounded good to triple the plant size as opposed to today.

Karnowski said we would need to look into the effect on funding if the decision is to downsize. Riddle suggested the Council agree on a process for figuring that out.

Some items of discussion would be the life of sewage treatment plant, which could be gathered from WSB or SEH. Also, brainstorm what the city of Princeton is going to look like at the end of the period of time so we can get an idea of what the need of the sewage treatment plant is in twenty-five years. There is no sense designing beyond that. A list of questions for both WSB and SEH should be put together before meeting.

Karnowski suggested inviting Brett Repulske from USDA to the meeting and maybe someone from MPCA so we know where the lines are. The council concurred.

Another option that Tracy Ekola talked about was building three tanks but only putting into use two of the tanks. Once those are used at their maximum, then run the permit for tank number three.

Blake brought up a good point. If that option was considered, the city may not be able to include that in the financing, then.

Steinbrecher said we need input from Gerold's perspective, where are we at in the present plant, what it means in terms of households, how many households does it mean at doubling. Blake reminded the council that United States Distilled Products has fairly significant expansions on hold until these final decisions are made.

The consensus was to get the City Council, staff consisting of Jackson, Gerold, Karnowski and Blake, USDA, MPCA, USDP and both engineering firms together for a meeting to come to agreements. A list of questions will be gathered and ready for the March session.

Riverside Apartment Erosion Control proposal

Karnowski updated the council that there has been some significant erosion on the river frontage at Riverside Apartments (just south of the library).

The managers of the property, Thieis & Talle of Chanhassen, MN (T&T) have retained a firm to do that project for \$18,540.

The city's involvement in that project stems from the fact that we have an easement over the northern edge of the property which has a stormwater pipe leading from 4th to the river. They assert that the stormwater from our pipe is contributing to the erosion problem and have re-

quested that the city participate in the cost of the solution – which includes some rip-rapping in the pipe outfall area. They have advised that our share of the cost should be no more than \$4,030.

Meanwhile, T&T has applied for and was given a grant from the Mille Lacs County Soil and Water Conservation District. The grant amounts to \$8,820.

The conversation between T&T and the city has been that the city should be credited with a proportional share of those grant funds. Their calculation of the city's costs amount to about 22% of the total project. Therefore, the city's position is that we should be credited with 22% of the grant dollars (\$1940) which would bring the city's cost down to \$2,090.

In addition, they have requested that the city supply the necessary rip-rap for the stormwater pipe outfall (about 17.5 tons).

They've also asked for agreement to grant them access to the property across land the city owns north of the apartments. That area is currently adorned with prairie grasses. We also ask the Council to consider allowing access with some written agreement that the area will be restored and any damage repaired. We doubt that, since the work will be done shortly and while the ground is still frozen, that there will be much impact.

In summary, Thies & Talle agreed to complete the entire erosion control project at their expense (\$18,540) and the City of Princeton agrees to supply 17.5 ton (one quad axle dump truck load) of rip-rap and grant a no cost access easement to the contractor to complete the work. Upon completion of the work and any restoration of the easement area. Thies & Talle will send a bill to the city for \$2,090. Upon receipt of the bill and agreement that the restoration of the easement area has been accomplished, the city will forward said amount (\$2,090) to Thies & Talle.

Gerold reassured the council that he does understand the concern of the property owners because if they lose any more trees, it will take out fast.

RIDDLE MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH THIS & TALLE AS OUTLINED ABOVE. STEINBHRECHER SECONDED THE MOTION. ON THE VOTE: AYES – 3; NAYS – 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Miscellaneous

Karnowski updated the City Council about the bonding bill for the Public Safety Building. At this time, it looks like the City of Princeton is a line item in the Senate Bill.

There being no further business,

RIDDLE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 5:45 P.M. STEINBRECHER SECONDED THE MOTION. ON THE VOTE: AYES - 3; NAYS - 0. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Hunter; City Clerk

ATTEST:

Jeremy Riddle, Mayor