

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
FEBRUARY 7, 2013, 4:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Mayor Paul Whitcomb called the meeting to order. Council members present were, Dick Dobson, Thom Walker, Jules Zimmer and Victoria Hallin. Staff present was Administrator Mark Karnowski, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Community Development Director Carie Fuhrman, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Brian Payne, Fire Chief Jim Roxbury, Liquor Store Manager Nancy Campbell, Attorney Dick Schieffer and City Clerk Shawna Jenkins.

Flight Expo Presentation by Sharon Sandberg

Sandberg spoke about the Flight Expo that they used to hold downtown at Convention Center. They have had speakers from all over the US. However, the cost was very prohibitive to continue holding it at the Convention Center, so it was put on hold for a few years.

They have a replica of the Wright Flyer that they have housed with American Wings Museum, but they are looking for a different location.

Recently the Federal Government notified all 5013C programs that if they don't use it, they will lose it, so they have again started up the Flight Expo.

Sandberg said they need their own facility, so over the next year they are doing some fundraising and holding various events. Some of the events they have planned are a Raffle, Seminars on building, restoring and maintaining your aircraft, aviation sheet metal workshop, a pilot refresher, safety seminar, a 5k fun run and several smaller seminars throughout the year.

Dobson said he had asked Sandberg to do a short Presentation, so the Council sees that the Airport is really working on bringing people to the area.

Sandberg said their main goal is to buy or build hanger at the Airport where they can house the Wright Flyer replica and a few others as well.

Coalition of Greater MN Cities Presentation – Elizabeth Werfel

Werfel is a lobbyist with Flaherty and Hood. She normally meets with the cities in the summer, but is instead meeting during the lobbying session. The Coalition of Greater MN Cities includes 86 cities from all over the state. Currently they are working on coming up with a new LGA formula.

LGA is very important, as the impact would be great if it was taken away. For example, Princeton's taxes would go up approximately 21%. LGA makes sure everyone in MN can have similar services without raising taxes thru the roof. She said they are thrilled governor is willing to put 80 million in the program, but they are hoping for 100 million. The proposed LGA would compare similar sized cities and average the their need in public safety and street maintenance

Werfel said they are concerned with the draft LGA formula as the factors are very narrow and it does not include any inflation. Also, there is too much variation in the cities.

The Governor's proposed formula will increase tax rate disparities amongst communities rather than decrease them. The CGMC is committed to working with the legislature to create a fair, defensible and sustainable LGA program.

Werfel said the CGMC's Economic Development Priorities is a Greater MN Internship program, expansion of the Angel Investment Credit for Greater MN and a new Employee Training Program.

They are also working on trying to reformulate the Street Aid formula. Water Conservation, Parks and trails, Annexation and Municipal lab legislation are also being looked at.

Nielson asked if the proposed LGA formula is directionally related to how much is spent on streets. Werfel responded that her understanding is that similar sized cities would be compared and then averaged out. Nielson said that it would be nice to look at Street Aid as well, because currently Princeton is just barely under the population that receives about \$250,000 per year in street aid.

Hallin said it's tough to just compare cities by their population, as geographic location can really vary a city's needs.

Dobson stated from a law enforcement standpoint, a city 5 miles off major highway would need a fewer police funds verses a city like Princeton that has Highway 169 and 95, and those things should be factored in.

Werfel said that is why they are trying to get the formula worked out, as 2 similar sized cities such as International Falls and the City of Minnetrista have very different needs.

Sidewalks

A. Discussion of Sidewalk Responsibilities

Fuhrman stated with the upcoming Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Grant applications, Comprehensive Park and Trail Planning process, and potential revisions to the Subdivision Ordinance- all of which include sidewalk components- staff has been discussing the responsibilities for sidewalk construction/installation, repair, and maintenance.

There are numerous components to sidewalk discussions: maintenance of existing sidewalks; installation of sidewalks in new developments; and retrofitting new sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.

Three portions of the City Code address sidewalks:

- 1) Section 600.01, paragraph (B), (1) "Duty of Owners and Occupants". The ordinance states:

The owner and the occupant of any property adjacent to a public sidewalk shall use diligence to keep the walk safe for pedestrians. No owner or occupant shall allow snow, ice, dirt or rubbish to remain on the walk longer than 36 hours after its deposit thereon. Failure to comply with this section shall constitute a violation.

The ordinance goes on to advise that if the occupant fails to meet that standard that the city can do the work and charge for that service.

2) Chapter VI, Section Q of the city's Zoning Ordinance reads as follows:

Sidewalk maintenance, replacement, and/or snow and ice removal shall be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.

3) The Subdivision Ordinance (Engineering Design Standards) address sidewalks in the following:

a) Sidewalks shall be required in all new subdivisions on at least one side of every street. Sidewalks in all existing subdivisions (prior to 01-01-95) shall be replaced when maintenance warrants it and shall be installed when the requirements of MN Statutes 429 for public improvements have been met.

d) Maintenance

Sidewalk maintenance replacement and/or snow and ice removal shall be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.

Fuhrman stated that the city's interpretation of "maintenance" in that ordinance holds that the adjacent property owner would also be responsible for replacing damaged sections to meet ADA, making sure the sidewalk had reasonable vertical clearance, as well as keeping shrubbery from encroaching on the usability of the sidewalk.

In regards to sidewalk installation in new developments, various opinions exist: many communities require sidewalks on both sides of the streets; our Ordinance only requires sidewalks on at least one side of every street. For example, Rivertown Crossing was only required to put sidewalks on the one side of the street; however, there have been observations/complaints that people do not utilize the sidewalk, and instead walk down the street when accessing the municipal liquor store on foot. In response, city staff has discussed the potential addition of sidewalks on the other side of the street to access Walmart and the liquor store. (Discussions have occurred with Walmart in this regard).

Fuhrman said the Sidewalk Inventory Map shows the locations of existing sidewalks in town and their condition based on a review by Public Works. The north portion of town is severely lacking in sidewalks. The Comprehensive Park and Trail Plan includes a Future Sidewalk/Trail Map that was created in collaboration between staff and the Park Board to provide a few sidewalk corridors and connections where they were felt to be needed as a starting point.

The next item on the agenda includes a review of two Safe Routes to School applications – one of which includes adding sidewalks on the north end of town along two of the identified corridors (5th Avenue North and 12th Street North). This is a great opportunity as the grant would cover the removal of trees and construction of the sidewalks.

Fuhrman added that staff felt it would be an appropriate time to ask the City Council to discuss its ordinances and policies in regards to sidewalks.

Hallin said when she spoke with the Scout group, they did ask about a sidewalk on the north side. Fuhrman replied that a team was formed for the Safe Routes to School and the school did a survey and found that many kids do not walk to school because the lack of sidewalks.

Dobson said it would be nice if there were a safe place to walk.

Whitcomb asked if there is a way that the City could require homeowners to repair a sidewalk before the property was sold. Schieffer replied that while it would be a good idea, he does not believe that it would be possible to require that. There is a statutory requirement to for a homeowner to clear sidewalks, but has he not seen anything where it requires homeowners to repair them.

Walker questioned how many of the sidewalks were built by the City, as the one to the south of his property was built by the church.

Nielson said it is not likely sidewalks would be repaired properly or in a timely manner if it was the individual property owners responsibility. He suggested doing an annual sidewalk repair and possibly assess it to both sides of the street, or the City would need to take on that responsibility.

Hallin stated she feels it should be the city's responsibility as they are used by everyone, so she can't see making the homeowners responsible or assessing them for the cost. Some homeowners are responsible and would likely make those repairs, but if they did it themselves it may not be up to the quality that the city would require.

Dobson said when he lived in Minneapolis homeowners would sometime take care of the repairs by hiring a repair person. In many cases they would save money that way instead of being assessed.

Walker said he understands that the City has not tackled the sidewalk repair issue in a long time, so there may be some complaints from residents regarding the cost.

Fuhrman said she has received one complaint about a sidewalk in bad condition. When she went to look at it, she said it definitely needed to be repaired. She has it on her calendar to check again in the spring to see if any repairs have been made.

Fuhrman asked how the Council would like to see staff handle the sidewalk issue. Zimmer said he feels the sidewalks should be the cities responsibility just as parks are. At the same time, if we are doing a new development or new project he would like to developer to be required to install them on both sides of the street

Dobson agrees he would like to see them on both side of the street. Zimmer asked if that would take up more right of way. Nielson responded that the right of way is 66 feet, so there should be plenty of room for a sidewalk and boulevard on each side.

Walker asked if we could get homeowners to sign up for repairs, if the City stated they would help with the cost. Possibly do a whole block at a time, and then you could maybe some homeowners would more willing to pay for a portion of it. Zimmer stated it would increase their property values, but understands there are also some people that won't want to

Karnowski expanded on Walker's suggested. He said the city could set aside X number of dollars every year. If there was a limited amount of money available, homeowners may want to jump at the chance for assistance with the cost. Whitcomb stated he thought it would be best to tackle the ones that need to be repaired before adding new ones.

Fuhrman said she will do some research to see what other cities do.

B. Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant – Resolution 13-05

Fuhrman reported that the Princeton School District received a Planning Assistance Grant through the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program last summer to increase walking and bicycling to school for K-8 grades. A SRTS Team was assembled, which includes School District staff, the County Engineer, City staff, and interested citizens, and they have been working hard together over the past few months. Student/parent surveys and walking/biking audits have been completed, and it has been determined to apply for two grants:

- 1) **Infrastructure Grant** to add sidewalks on the north end of town along 5th Avenue North and 12th Street North, along with possible intersection improvements at 7th Avenue North (CR 4)/12th Street North and Rum River Drive North (CSAH 29)/12th Street North.

Fuhrman added that the north end of Princeton is lacking in sidewalks. There are two main corridors that are utilized by children walking and biking to school. The current situation requires that students from North Elementary and the Middle School share the road with vehicles.

The maximum grant amount is \$300,000 with no match required. The City Engineer will serve as the local project manager on this application.

- 2) **Non-Infrastructure Grant** to hire a coordinator through the School District Community Ed Office for education and encouragement programs for walking and biking to school. Programs such as walking school buses, walking contests, walk to school day, etc. would be incorporated at the K-8 schools and throughout the community.

Fuhrman stated that the School District is taking on the majority of the responsibilities for this grant application as it deals with programs, education, encouragement, etc. City staff will support their application efforts in any way needed including creating maps.

The SRTS grant program is a great opportunity for the Princeton community and complements the work that has already been underway to encourage walking and bicycling in the community, including: a Bicycle Rodeo; a Comprehensive Park and Trail planning process that includes a sidewalk analysis; trail grant applications; and area non-profit organizations planning for a regional trail system. Nine (9) letters of support have already been received from local organizations and businesses; many more are expected. It has also been a great collaborative effort between the School District, City, and County.

Fuhrman said that because Princeton is not a state aid city, MnDOT requires that the County act as the project sponsor and a resolution of support be submitted by the sponsoring County Board. The Mille Lacs County Board reviewed and approved a resolution of support for the SRTS applications at their meeting on Tuesday, February 5th. In order to show the

City Council's support of the two grant applications, the SRTS team is requesting approval of the attached resolution of support for the project as well.

DOBSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 13-05, IN SUPPORT FOR THE MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND NON-INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C. SHIP Grant Application for Wayfinding Signage

Fuhrman reported that in an effort to promote bicycling in the Princeton community, the Park Board would like to apply for a SHIP grant to add wayfinding signs (like those below) and bike racks throughout the community. It is a relatively small grant (\$1,800), but no match is required.

City staff does not have locations identified yet for the sign placements, but would likely include First Street, downtown, and near the schools. The bike racks would be placed downtown, parks, and other areas. (The Park Board is also working with a class from the High School in constructing additional bike racks as well).

If the City Council is supportive of staff applying for the SHIP grant, a motion would be in order.

Dobson said the Park Board has been working with the school to get some bike racks. If the City does get this grant and we need to replace the racks, we can use this to pay for them

HALLIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE STAFF TO APPLY FOR THE SHIP GRANT APPLICATION. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2013 Council Priorities

Karnowski stated that the following is the composite prioritization tally of the issues as rated by the Council for 2013 rated as follows:

Highest Priority: A=5 Low Priority: D=2
High Priority: B=4 Very Low Priority: E=1
Medium Priority: C=3

The maximum any project or topic could get is 25 points; the lowest would be 5 points. The 2 near the bottom that do not have numbers from all 5 Council Members are issues that were added by one member. The question before the Council at this point is whether the priorities as ranked below accurately reflect the consensus of the Council's priorities or do you want to move any of them up or down on the list? Specifically, how does the Council want to rate the last two on the list that were suggested by individual Council Members?

<u>You're Rating</u>	<u>Project</u>
5+4+5+5+5= 24	Public Safety Building
4+5+5+5+5= 24	Extend 21 st Ave. south to Industrial Park

- 5+4+5+5+5= **24** Remodel Civic Center
- 4+4+5+4+5= **22** Market & sale of Aero Business Park
- 5+4+4+5+4= **22** West Branch Street water looping (use TIF funds?)
- 4+4+3+5+5= **21** Strategic Community Marketing Plan (Tourists, business, Commercial & residential)
- 3+4+5+3+5= **20** Clear up "Through The Fence" (Kruse's bldg) problem at Airport
- 5+4+3+4+4= **20** Study expansion of Industrial Park land
- 3+3+4+5+4= **19** Downtown Redevelopment
- 3+4+4+4+2= **17** Update Emergency Warning System – Add new siren to west end of city.
- 3+3+3+4+4= **17** Trail System development
- 4+3+2+2+5= **16** Extend sidewalk from downtown to Coborns'
- 3+3+3+3+4= **16** Merge PUC & Public Works field staffs
- 2+3+3+2+5= **15** Orderly Annexation Agreement w/Baldwin Twsp
- 3+2+2+4+4= **15** Riverside Park Amphitheater
- 3+3+2+3+4= **15** Housing Study
- 3+2+3+3+3= **14** Clear Rum River for canoeing
- 3+3+2+3+3= **14** 13th Ave/TH95 intersection
- 3+3+2+3+3= **14** Extend Rum River Dr. west past airport
- 4+2+2+2+3= **13** Build bike path from Northland Dr. south along Rum River Dr. to water plant.
- 3+3+3+1+3= **13** Inflow and Infiltration Study
- 2+2+3+3+3= **13** Co-locate City Hall w/PUC
- 3+3+2+1+2= **11** 2nd Bridge across Rum River.
- 2+2+1+1+3= **9** Extension of Main Airport Runway
- 2+1+1+1+1= **6** Cross Wind Runway
- _+_+_+_+5= **5** Safe Routes to School w/School District

4+_+_+_=_ 4 Overall Infrastructure improvement/replacement plan

Dobson said in regard to the one vote for the Safe Routes to School vote, the other council members may have not been aware that the school has received the Safe Routes grant.

Walker said he is in favor of both of the lowest 2 that were added as they are obviously something we want to do. He will also advocate for overall infrastructure improvement, such as 3rd street that needs work. However, he is not sure where the funds to pay for it would come from.

Walker asked Zimmer if he needed clarification on any of these. Zimmer said he came in and met with Karnowski and went through everything. He added he did feel the warning system should be rated a little higher, as it is a safety issue and not all that expensive.

Walker questioned if the sirens were going to need to be reconfigured as was stated last fall. Karnowski replied that they were not sure yet. He added that when a new subdivision is done, the city should have a fee established to cover the emergency siren costs. Zimmer stated he would hate to see something happen and the city did not have that siren in place.

Walker stated that in looking at this list, he thinks everything was included. Zimmer said he agrees and this a nice tool to have, as he can see all the projects and how the city is moving forward.

Karnowski said the Engineers looked at the Safe Routes to School numbers, and \$300,000 won't cover what is needed. One suggestion was instead of advertising for bids for x number of feet of sidewalk, a reverse bid may work well. For example, you could advertise that the City has \$300,000, how many feet of sidewalk could be done with these specifications.

Dobson added that is basically what was done for the public safety building and it worked well. Karnowski said he felt the city may get more sidewalks done putting it out that way verses the traditional way.

Walker said it was interesting to hear Werfel from CGMC mention grants for industrial parks, as he did not aware there were any. Karnowski stated that in looking at the Governor's LGA Formula proposal, it seems to be geared a little more towards the metro area.

ECRDC Board Member Application Consideration

Karnowski checked with the East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC) as requested and found that, indeed, the nominations period for Board Membership is currently open (it closes February 13th).

Karnowski said he has been advised by the ECRDC's Executive Director that it works best if a City Council actually makes the nomination.

So, if Council Member Walker is interested in serving on the ECRDC Board, a motion to recommend his appointment would be in order and staff would then forward the application form onto the ECRDC.

DOBSON MOTIONED TO RECOMMEND THOM WALKER TO THE ECRDC BOARD. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Hallin reported that she has talked to a lot of people at the new Walmart and the good word is that even the sales associates are sending people to other stores in the area such as Book and Bible, Ossels, etc. She stopped and talked to one woman in a downtown store that said she is usually there alone and there were 10 people in the store. It would be nice to get the signs up pointing people to the downtown area to hopefully continue bringing people in.

Walker asked what if Campbell has seen a difference in liquor store sales with Walmart's opening weekend. Campbell responded that she was not sure if it was the Superbowl or Walmart, but did see an increase. She added that she saw a lot of people in the store that she has never seen before, so it really seems to be bringing people to the community just in the past week since it has been open.

Walker added that the rumor was a Fleet Farm was coming to the Lowe's building in Cambridge, but nothing has happened as of yet.

Campbell asked if there is a way to fix the online GPS maps and Google, as they seem to be sending people to the Cemetery instead of the Liquor store. Fuhrman said they have tried in the past, but will attempt again to get things corrected.

ADJOURN

DOBSON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:00. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. (THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins

ATTEST:

Paul Whitcomb, Mayor