

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
AUGUST 1, 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, 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, Police Sergeant Joseph Backlund, Engineer Mike Nielson and City Clerk Shawna Jenkins. Absent was Council member Thom Walker and Liquor Store Manager Nancy

Council Update from Intern Christopher Bruhn

Bruhn stated he is resent graduate in Geology at U of MN. Most of his work is research in planning and zoning. He has been working on a map of the Frisbee golf course, a handout with a map outlining the fence requirements, a map of existing and future trails and side-walks, a vacant lots map and working on updating the zoning map as well. Fuhrman said he has been great an asset to the City and she has said he will provide him a great reference.

Civic Center Discussion with the American Legion

Karnowski reported that the Mayor and staff have recently been engaged in some informal conversations with the Princeton American Legion regarding their interest in a long term agreement between that organization and the city regarding the use of the city's Civic Center.

Basically, the American Legion may be interested in providing some significant up front funding for the Civic Center remodeling project that is currently underway.

The infusion of those funds would likely result in the city being able to finish up the remodeling such that the building could be used by the American Legion (and their auxiliary) for their monthly meetings. They would also like to work with the city to make additional modifications allowing the Legion to expand the services they offer to their current and future members.

Whitcomb said he agreed and could be a great opportunity. Karnowski stated he put out a question on the Clerk / Administrators list-serve and got a lot of valuable feedback. From examples of contracts used to pitfalls that cities wish they would have addressed. Whitcomb said if the council is in agreement, staff can move forward and work out an agreement. The Council was in favor and Staff will move forward in working with the American Legion to work out the details.

21st Avenue Update

Karnowski stated that currently the 21st Avenue extension discussion had been 'tabled' until October by a 4-1 vote of the City Council. Since that Council action, more information has come in and some are suggesting that the topic be taken off the table and put back on the agenda. For that to happen, someone who voted in favor of the motion to table (Walker, Dobson, Zimmer or Hallin) must make a motion to reconsider the motion to table. That motion would have to pass before further discussion can take place. If no motion is made (or passed) then the topic stays off the agenda until October.

HALLIN MOVED TO RECONSIDER THE MOTION TO TABLE UNTIL OCTOBER. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The proposal to extend 21st Avenue to the south and connect up with 19th Avenue has been discussed at least since 2003 when the city began exploring the development of what is now known as Aero Business Park. While the beginning of that discussion predates my time with the city, I understand that the original intent for considering that road extension was to achieve several objectives:

1. The first objective was to address the public safety factor. Currently there is only one way into or out of the industrial park (via 14th Ave. S.). For the safety of the industrial park employees, there needs to be a second access point for fire, police and ambulance should there ever be an incident that blocks the 14th Avenue entrance to the industrial park.
2. The second objective at that time was to find a way to reduce the traffic bottleneck at 14th and Rum River Drive
3. The third objective was to reduce the “rush hour” traffic on Rum River Drive through downtown Princeton on weekday afternoons.

The issues listed below are factors to be considered during the discussion regarding the proposed construction of a 21st Avenue extension to 19th Avenue.

- A. **Conflict with the proposed crosswind runway:** The initial objection to the construction of the proposed 21st Avenue extension was made by a group of pilots who use the Princeton Municipal Airport and want to retain the ability for the city to build the proposed crosswind runway. The local FAA has indicated that the two projects are not compatible because the proposed 21st extension falls within the crosswind runway's clear zone. The 21st/19th connection needs to go on airport property to avoid costly wetlands mitigation costs. **New Information:** *Staff has been advised via an email from MnDOT Aeronautics Dan Boerner that the local FAA representative (Gordon Nelson) advises that the FAA will require the city to remove the crosswind runway from the ALP for either the city's original option or the Anderson option. So, it appears, the Anderson option would not save the crosswind as suggested earlier.*
- B. **The intermingling of semi-trucks and passenger vehicles:** More recently, the assertion has been made that by connecting 21st Avenue and 19th Avenue the city will be encouraging passenger vehicles to travel from the intersection of 14th Avenue S. and Rum River Drive and to through the industrial park to get to the Wal-Mart shopping area because, as some claimed, it was a shorter, faster route.

New Information: *Staff checked the mileage and travel time from the intersection of Rum River Drive and Co Rd 45 for both the route through the Industrial Park and the route following TH169. Going through the industrial Park to Wal-Mart is 3.1 miles and takes seven minutes. Driving from the same intersection to Wal-Mart using TH169/TH95/21st is 2.9 miles and takes 5 minutes. So it appears the route through the industrial park is neither shorter nor faster.*

The assertion is that the mix of passenger vehicles and semi trucks on the same streets would create a public safety issue. While no documentation has been provided to support this particular assertion, City Engineer Mike Nielson advises that if the connection of 21st with 19th does generate more thru traffic, the city can make traffic adjustments within the industrial park to discourage that traffic. Those adjustments could include the addition of stop signs and the posting and enforcement of “**No Thru Traffic**” or “**Industrial Park Traffic Only**” signage at both entrances to the industrial park. Staff checked the mileage and travel

time from the intersection of Rum River Drive and Co Rd 45 for both the route through the Industrial Park and the route following TH169. Going through the industrial Park to Wal-Mart is 3.1 miles and takes seven minutes. Driving from the same intersection to Wal-Mart using TH169 is 2.9 miles and takes 5 minutes.

- C. **The new public safety building location.** In 2007 the city hired SEH Engineering to do a feasibility study for a new public safety building. Part of that study involved the evaluation of the various sites for the building. After evaluating the various sites, the decision to build the new public safety building on lot 8 in Aero Business Park was made. That decision was based, in part, on the assumption that 21st Avenue would be extended to the south to give the police and fire department vehicles easier access to 911 calls in the southern portion of the city and PFRD service area. The new public safety building is currently under construction. If the proposed 21st Avenue extension is not constructed, there will be a delay for both police and fire vehicles responding to 911 calls. On a temporary basis, the police and fire vehicles can maneuver through the airport to access the areas on the south side of the city. There are concerns raised by the possibility of airplanes parked outside their hangars blocking the taxiways that would be used by responding emergency vehicles. Emergency vehicle access through the airport cannot be considered a long term solution.
- D. **Aero Business Park Issues.** The city was recently advised that in order to erect an antenna on the new public safety building, the city will need to consider issuing a zoning variance from the height restriction of the proposed crosswind runway. Further, it appears there is a need to get a second variance for the public safety building currently under construction because of that building's height. The city's airport engineering firm advises that, so long as the crosswind runway remains on the city's Airport Layout Plan (ALP) there will be height restrictions on any building constructed within Aero Business Park.
- E. **Is the crosswind runway a viable project?** When the city's airport was originally designed back in the late 1970s, the design included a cross wind runway which would allow smaller and lighter aircraft to land when the wind direction is different from the prevailing northwest direction. The most recent total estimated cost of the crosswind runway (including environmental work, engineering, and construction) is approximately \$2.8 million. If the current FAA grant funding program is used to fund its construction, then the city share would be about \$280,000. But, recently, the city airport engineer's review of the maximum potential use of a crosswind runway (given the prevailing winds at the airport) indicates that the estimated usage will not meet the recent FAA criteria for FAA partial grant funding for a crosswind runway. Without FAA funding, it is doubtful that the city can afford to build the crosswind runway given all the other demands on city fiscal resources. A 2002 resolution (copy attached) that was adopted by the City Council after consultation with the Airport Board held that the airport board would find funding for the local portion of any FAA grant to build the crosswind runway. That resolution suggests that the zoning for the crosswind would be removed by 2006 if the funding was not secured.
- F. **Industrial Park Business Owner Input.** At your July 11 Council meeting a couple of Industrial Park Business Owners requested that the businesses that reside in the Industrial Park be allowed to comment on the proposed 21st Avenue extension. Does the Council wish to schedule a meeting and invite that group in to discuss their concerns? If so, the Council may want to consider a study session type format.

Officer Frederick said he also timed and marked the distance each direction.

- Walmart to County Road 45 (T Intersection) through Industrial Park – 2.1 miles at 5 minutes and 53 seconds.
- Walmart to County Road 45 via Hwy 95, Hwy 169, South Rum River Drive – 3.0 miles at 4 minutes and 24 seconds
- Walmart to County Road 45 via Hwy 95, Rum River Drive – 3.5 miles at 6 minutes and 4 seconds (variable was 2 red lights at Rum and Northland Blvd)

Dobson stated he feels the Industrial Park businesses should be invited to a work session meeting to discuss the plan.

Zimmer said this appears to be an issue that has been dragging on and a decision should be made. Even the resolution from 2002 says states significant progress will be made.

DOBSON MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF TO SEND OUT NOTICES TO THOSE IN THE INDUSTRIAL PARK INVITING THEM TO THE SEPTEMBER 5TH STUDY SESSION MEETING. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Preliminary Budget Discussion

Jackson stated that the legislature has changed the formula for determining how Local Government Aid (LGA) is calculated. In 2013, the city received \$612,231 in LGA. The formula change means that Princeton will receive \$813,065 for 2014 which is an increase of \$200,234.

The legislature also reinstated the city's sale tax exempt status which should mean the city will have an estimated additional \$30,000 to use for budgetary purposes that we used to spend on sales tax.

A third issue is that the legislature also put levy limits in place for the 2014 budget year.

Staff is in the process of working with the department heads in putting together a preliminary budget for 2014. We would like some direction from the Council on how you'd like staff to proceed.

Last year, the Council took about \$300,000 from our cash flow and used it to fund Capital Improvements which reduced the amount that the city had to levy and – thusly – reduced the property tax burden on our citizens. The Council may or may not be aware that, of the three main taxing entities that rely on property taxes, for 2013, Princeton was the only one whose levy went down from the 2012 levels. So one approach might be to use the additional LGA money and couple it with some more budget reserve and, again, reduce the property taxes for 2014.

Another option would be to use the additional LGA funds to pay for projects that the city had budgeted for several years ago but had to cut out of the budget because of LGA cuts. For instance, the city had budgeted \$250,000 to renovate the Civic Center in 2006 but had to use those funds to off-set the LGA cuts imposed in December of that year. The new LGA money could be used to restore that funding.

Still, staff believes the legislature's intent was to supply monies to local units of government so the property tax levy could be reduced. While that's something most cities would like to do, the Council needs to remember that the LGA increase is financed for a 2-year period only and there is a danger in reducing the levy by the LGA amount. The fear is that, if the leg-

islature doesn't continue funding LGA at the current rate, then the city would be forced into restoring the funding for the budget cuts in 2016 which would likely be perceived as a levy increase in 2016.

Staff asked for the Council's ideas and for some direction on how they would like the draft 2014 budget to be set up.

On September 15, the preliminary levy needs to be certified to the counties, so this is just a place to start.

Karnowski asked the Council how they would feel about removing the mandatory furloughs that have been required for a few years now. Dobson said he is favor of not having mandatory furloughs, but if they wanted it to remain an option for the employee.

Zimmer said it is nice to see taxes come down even a small amount.

Gambling Permit for Christ Our Light Church for Raffle and Pull tables – Sept 15, 2013

Karnowski reported that Christ Our Light Church is requesting a gambling permit for their fall fest.

DOBSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE GAMBLING PERMIT FOR CHRIST OUR LIGHT CHURCH RAFFLE AND PULL TABS FOR SEPTEMBER 15, 2013. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Distinctive Door Design Update

Karnowski reported Tim Patten, from Distinctive Door Design (DDD), has contacted the city to advise that a representative from Traut Wells met with him and discussed the possibility of restoring their fire pump well back to working condition.

Previously a representative from Traut told Patten that the chances of DDD's well being restored to the required operating capacity were not very good, but Traut's new representative appeared very confident that they can get the well back up and running.

While Traut cannot absolutely guarantee success, from DDD's point of view, the cost for having Traut attempt a repair is a less expensive alternative compared to the costs of the annexation option.

Mr. Patten requested that the city delay further action on DDD's annexation request until Traut has had a chance to rework their well. They have requested that Traut make the attempt as soon as possible so we don't delay connecting to the city water supply should that still be necessary.

Patten advises that, as soon as he gets a date from Traut, he will update the city and once the repair attempt is complete he will let us know how it went.

Patten noted that "everyone at the city of Princeton and the PUC has been so helpful and great to work with thru this process. If our pump can be repaired it will save us tens of thousands of dollars so we need to try this. If there is anything more you need from us at this time just let us know. Thank you for your understanding and patience."

Given the past practice of the city to not annex property unless the property owner requests it, staff suggests that the City Council adopt a motion to table further action on the annexation request until Distinctive Door Design requests completion of the process.

Whitcomb asked how long the public hearing is good for. Karnowski said he believes it is 6 months, but he will check with the city attorney to confirm.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dobson said a lot of people put in requests for a canine unit demonstration and feels we should have a policy in place for those. He suggested the Council discuss and come up with a policy at a future meeting.

BILL LIST – \$529,038.44

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE BILL LIST WHICH INCLUDES THE MANUAL CHECKS AS LISTED ON THE MANUAL BILL LIST FOR A TOTAL OF \$0 AND THE ITEMS LISTED ON THE LIQUOR BILL LIST AND GENERAL CITY BILL LIST WHICH WILL BE CHECKS 68423 TO 68432 FOR A TOTAL OF \$529,038.44. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURN

DOBSON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:15 PM. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins

ATTEST:

Paul Whitcomb, Mayor