

# CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

## BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

### Work Session – January 23, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, January 23, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Prince presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Prince, Peterson, Johnson, Rivera, Eaton, Thayer.

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, City Attorney Katie Nolting, City Engineer Sam Anderson, Assistant City Engineer Jenna Roberts, Deputy City Clerk Rachelle Barckholtz, City Clerk Michelle Miller.

Others: MNDOT: T.J. Melcher, Darren Leasch, Matt Upgren, Leslie Seitz  
KIMLEY HORN: Bill Klingbeil

Mayor Prince stated that the purpose of the work session was to hear an update from MNDot regarding Trunk Highway 197 Design.

#### **MNDOT UPDATE – TRUNK HIGHWAY 197 DESIGN**

On August 19, 2019 the city council was presented with the first implementation plan for proposed MnDOT improvements to Trunk Highway 197 (Paul Bunyan Drive) from Gillette Drive (L & M Fleet entrance) to Bemidji Avenue (CVS Pharmacy). After hearing numerous comments from affected business owners a motion to approve the implementation plan was made and failed on a 3-4 vote.

MnDOT with the help of Headwater Regional Development Commission (HRDC), formulated a new Community Review Panel (CRP) to revisit the Highway 197 Corridor Study and work to develop a new plan. The CRP group has been meeting since August 2020 on a monthly, and sometimes more frequent basis.

Out of those meetings came two new alternatives. Alternative #1 includes roundabouts at the Menards entrance, Middle School Drive, and Hannah Avenue. The remaining intersections in Alternative #1 that are currently traffic signals are proposed to remain traffic signals. Alternative #2 is similar to Alternative #1, but the proposed roundabouts at Hannah Avenue and Middle School Drive would be traffic signals instead of roundabouts. The roundabout at the Menards entrance is proposed in both alternatives. On December 20, 2021, Council passed a motion of support, aligning with the recommendation from the CRP, City staff, and MnDOT, for Alternative #1 (Roundabouts).

In April 2022 MnDOT and the City submitted a joint application for a USDOT RAISE Grant, which we were awarded funding in August 2022. The grant covered a significant portion of both the MnDOT TH 197 corridor (Alternative #1) from Gillett Drive NW to Hannah Avenue NW along with the city streets of Middle School Drive NW and Hannah Avenue NW from Paul Bunyan Drive (TH 197) to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NW.

#### **Upcoming Design of Hannah Avenue & Middle School Drive:**

MnDOT has hired Kimley-Horn to assist them with design and construction services for the TH 197 portion of the project. The City will be responsible to design our local streets of Hannah Ave. and Middle School Drive. Staff have requested a proposal from Kimley-Horn to provide those engineering services meeting the requirements of the RAISE grant. Staff feel there's added value in having one consultant design the entire project to ensure proper design and consistent communication with residents and businesses on these corridors. Construction of Hannah Avenue and Middle School Drive are currently planned for 2025.

Matt Upgren with MnDOT and his team provided council with an update on the TH 197 design schedule and other project timelines. Council addressed several questions and comments with MNDOT staff.

#### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, motion by Johnson seconded by Eaton, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller  
City Clerk