

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Work Session – January 14, 2013

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 14, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Hellquist, Johnson, Erickson, Thompson, Meehlhause (arrived at 5:40 p.m.)

Staff Present: City Manager John Chattin, City Attorney Alan Felix, City Clerk Kay Murphy
Others Present: Greater Bemidji – Dave Hengel; HRDC - Aaron Chirpich, Tiffany Fettig
Wayzata LLC – Lee Fundanet

Candidate Questions – Ward 4

Mayor Albrecht reviewed the five questions as proposed by staff for the meeting to select a Ward 4 councilmember.

Johnson commented that he liked the questions and envisioned that they be similar to what one would ask themselves.

Thompson stated that he did not like the proposed question regarding the council's role in the community.

After discussion, the Council agreed upon the following questions:

1. Why do you want to serve on the city council?
2. What strengths would you bring to the council?
3. If appointed, what would you like to accomplish in your term in office?
4. What civic involvement have you had in our community?
5. How do you see yourself interacting with city staff?

The Council then discussed the procedure for the meeting on January 28.

- The open meeting and will start at 6 p.m. on January 28.
- Depending on the number of potential candidates, approximately 15 minutes will be allowed for each one.
- Clerk will develop a matrix for scoring which will aid the councilors in making a decision.
- Candidate selection will be by "motion to nominate" and if the majority votes in favor that person will be chosen. In the event of a tie, a coin will be flipped.
- Questions will be provided to applicants prior to meeting.

Topics for Bemidji Day at the Capitol

Chattin provided two topics for lobbying at Bemidji Day at the Capitol. They are a hospitality tax and a fire protection fee. He recommended that the topics be limited to two or three.

Mayor Albrecht stated that Rep. Persell will be requesting \$250,000 on behalf of Beltrami County for planning of the Veteran's Home in Bemidji. She stated it is a County project but the City is a partner.

Johnson asked about the potential for a bonding request for the Carnegie renovation project.

Albrecht responded that bonding requests are sent to the Governor's office the end of July. She noted that Lew Crenshaw will be going to Bemidji Day at the Capitol which would allow an opportunity to "plant a seed" regarding the Carnegie project.

Discussion continued regarding the fire protection fee. Erickson stated she has reservations about the fire district.

Rail Corridor

Dave Hengel, Greater Bemidji, stated that he along with City staff, Mayor Albrecht and HRDC staff developed a work program for the rail corridor redevelopment.

Aaron Chirpich then reviewed the proposed work program with the City Council. He stated that if the Council agrees they will apply for planning funds from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, EDA and potentially others.

Motion by Thompson, seconded by Meehlhause, approving the Bemidji Rail Corridor Redevelopment Work Program as presented as well as authorizing Greater Bemidji and HRDC to apply for funding for planning. Motion carried unanimously.

Hotel Development

Lee Fundanet, chief operating officer for Wayzata-based Bay Ridge Properties International, provided an update on the status of the proposed Country Inn & Suites to be built next to the Sanford Center. He stated that much of the delay has been getting the financing lined up with the banks. Fundanet stated that he felt confident that construction would begin within a 90-day window. Fundanet commented that the restaurant partner is now Cowboy Jacks.

Hengel comment that a project of this size, approximately \$16.5 million, takes time. He further stated that the banker involved said it may be the largest private project in Bemidji in recent history.

Chattin stated that there is always a concern when things drag out and the City wonders if we have “hitched our horse to the wrong wagon”. He stated that the Council as well as staff are looking for reassurances that the project will be moving forward. He further asked for better and more frequent communication between the developers and Council. Fundanet responded that he will make that happen.

Hengel requested that the developer keep in contact with Venuworks and VisitBemidji as they plan for future conferences and events.

The consensus of the Council was they were satisfied with Mr. Fundanet’s report.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Hellquist, seconded by Thompson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk