

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Work Session – Tuesday, May 28, 2019

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Tuesday, May 28, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in the Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Johnson, Rivera, Erickson, Thompson. Absent: Beard

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, City Attorney Alan Felix, City Engineer Craig Gray, City Clerk Michelle Miller

Others Present: Darren Laesch MnDOT, Joe DeVore KLJ, JT Anderson MnDOT

Mayor Albrecht stated the purpose of the work session was for a presentation by MnDOT regarding the Highway 197 road project and to gather input from council and the public.

MnDOT 197 ROW

Laesch stated that MnDOT is currently conducting a study regarding the reconstruction of Paul Bunyan Drive (HWY 197) from Gillet Drive to Bemidji Avenue North. Improvements would include ADA compliant improvements, provide access for better bike and pedestrian use, improve traffic flow and upgrade aging infrastructure.

Devore summarized the process of the study and presented the results of the data that was gathered from several different sources with an emphasis of reducing crash rates in the future. The corridor currently has 64 access points within 1.3 miles onto the corridor which is three times over the MnDOT recommendation for a one mile corridor. Devore spoke about the positive and negative impacts that roadway improvements might have on businesses.

Devore stated that many concepts were studied with the assistance of a Community Review Panel. Ultimately, two viable options came out of those discussions with option four (roundabout corridor) being the preferred option of the CRP and having the greatest improvement to safety and flow of traffic. However, a roundabout corridor has been met with opposition by businesses. Devore stated that a project that improves safety (not just a mill and overlay project) could be eligible for Federal Build Grants.

Council expressed the following concerns/comments:

- Pedestrian safety and assessability
- Maintenance responsibility of a multi-use trail
- Property loss to businesses
- Need for crash data
- Green space and lighting in medians
- Possible change to joint planning zoning
- City's cost for the project
- Improvements to 197 corridor could help reduce traffic in residential neighborhoods

Albrecht opened the meeting for public comment:

- Arch Simonson expressed opposition to a roundabout at the Hannah Avenue and 197 intersection stating that it will create a hardship to his business as well as limit access of transport trucks.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Thompson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk