

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Work Session – Monday, August 12, 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 Monday, August 12, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in the Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Pro Tem Erickson presiding.

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

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

Others Present: Darren Laesch, Joe Devore

Mayor Pro Tem Erickson stated the purpose of the work session was to receive an update on the 197 Project from MnDot.

MnDot Update (197 Project)

Darren Laesch stated that this meeting is a follow up from the meeting in May. The goal of the corridor study is to increase safety and reduce the crash rate, as well as increase pedestrian access and safety. The project is being proposed in two phases, with phase one beginning on the west side of the corridor. The next step, within the next year, would be the preliminary design and a geometric layout of the first phase which will need council approval. The next step would be to conduct an environmental assessment with final plans by 2022 which would require a cooperative agreement with the city in order to proceed with phase one. Before starting on phase two MnDot will need to conduct another corridor study for the east portion. The approximate cost of phase one is \$6-8 million. The City costs are approximately \$1-1.5 million. Additionally, the city would be responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks, trails, lighting and mowing.

Joe Devore addressed council concerns and comments from the May meeting. Devore provided an example of a successful project in Golden, Colorado which was comparable to the 197 corridor. Devore also provided information on phase two layout, costs and safety outcomes. Additional considerations and concerns will need to be addressed in the coming year. Council addressed several concerns and questions with Laesch, Devore and city staff.

Erickson stated that the City's public works committee met with affected business owners and many expressed concerns and opposition to the project.

Laesch stated that if the council does not approve the proposed plan, MnDot would most likely pursue a preservation project rather than a reconstruction project.

Meehlhause stated this is a great opportunity to improve pedestrian and bicycle access along this corridor.

Laesch stated that MnDot would like to receive a letter of support from the City in order for them to invest more time and money in the project. Erickson stated that the question could be included at an upcoming council meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Beard, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk