



City Commission Work Session Minutes

April 14, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Virtual

Present

Mayor Phil Anderson
Commissioner Marty Sullivan
Commissioner Sheila DeCiccio
Commissioner Carolyn Cooper
Commissioner Todd Weaver

City Manager Randy Knight
City Clerk Rene Cranis

1) Call to Order

Mayor Anderson called the work session to order at 10:00 a.m.

2) Discussion Item(s)

a. Continuation of Commission priorities discussion

Mayor Anderson asked staff to provide a brief summary on the American Rescue Plan and eligible uses for the funds, an update on the earmarked projects submitted to Congresswoman Murphy, and then review his notes from the previous work session discussion on priorities, followed by a review of staff's project summary list.

Commissioner DeCiccio spoke about the pending federal bill that would provide funding for infrastructure projects and suggested that the city contact its state representatives to identify eligible projects, including broadband.

Mr. Knight advised that projects submitted by Congresswoman Murphy included Mead Garden improvements, Housing Authority maintenance projects and solar array at the public works compound. Staff continues to gather information the American Rescue Plan (ARP) with the most flexible money being the replacement of lost revenue from COVID which staff estimates at \$3 million. Specific allowed expenditures include water, sewer and broadband but with vague allowances for tourism, small business and non-profit support and others. He explained that the ARP is a reimbursement program for a qualified project or expenditure so staff will be diligent in ensuring projects qualify for reimbursement.

Mayor Anderson reviewed the summary of priorities from the March 30th work session from which staff generated a project list with funding and timeline and discussion followed on funding for traffic improvements and transportation/intersection studies.

Mayor Anderson presented his revised Project Summary and stated the goal of this meeting is to identify projects with single-year funding.

Commissioner Cooper said she feels it is important to understand which projects cannot be funded with CRA funds and existing funding and to identify funding gaps. She said that some projects could be funded from the proposed transportation impact fee.

The following projects were presented and discussed: Post Office, WiFi/acceleration of Frog project, parking garage on Progress Point, funding to non-profits, Progress Point (garage, connectivity, park), Library (computers, programs), redirecting funding from CRA to other funds, traffic improvement opportunities, IT enhancements/cybersecurity, bike and ped improvements, and parks.

Mayor Anderson suggested taking Commissioner Cooper's point of view to look at projects not in CRA and determine which would go into the infrastructure project list. He reviewed list of projects eligible/ineligible CRA projects.

Mr. Knight stated that funding can be used to fill budget gaps to replenish the reserve fund balance back to 30% and enhance street paving/sidewalks/curbs. It could also be used to replace the loss of private funding of the amphitheater at the Library and Event Center and also to fund public arts and purchase higher quality furnishings and equipment for the Library. He said he will provide information regarding operational support. Additionally, he gave an update on fundraising efforts and discussion followed.

Mayor Anderson listed potential funding sources: CARES Act, pending federal infrastructure bill, CRA Fund, and Parks Acquisition Fund. Mr. Knight identified potential transportation impact fee or penny sales tax increase in 2022 as future funding sources.

The projects were grouped as follows and discussed:

- Traffic - flow/calming, bike/pedestrian, micromobility
- Land and Parking Garages - Fairbanks, Post Office, MLK Park improvements and parking, Progress Point, other parks
- Operations and programming: non-profits, general fund gap and reserves, business recovery
- Library: capital and operating deficits, furnishings and computer upgrades, public art.
- Excess funding: old Library
- City Hall: roof, IT

Mr. Knight commented on the fiberoptic project suggesting that there may be an opportunity for shared funding with Frog to install underground electric conduit in areas not yet undergrounded simultaneous with installation of fiberoptic. Consensus was to have staff research this opportunity in an effort to complete the fiberoptic project faster.

Discussion followed on funding with general agreement to use federal funds instead of CRA funds where possible. i.e. MLK Park improvements.

Mayor Anderson suggested separating the earmarked requests (solar, Mead Garden, Housing Authority) and then filtering the list and meet again to prioritize the list.

After additional discussion, the following were identified as priorities:

- Roof on City Hall
- Central Park
- Progress Point park area and surface parking
- Humanitarian needs (food, shelter, transportation vouchers, education, resources)
- Structured activities in the downtown area
- Infrastructure projects– Post Office
- Accelerated fiberoptic installation
- Parking garage
- Support for non-profit groups
- Stormwater and sewer infrastructure
- Parking in Central Business District
- MLK Park parking

A work session was to have staff refine the list and redistribute and then schedule a work session for April 28th at 10:00 a.m. to reach consensus on a prioritized list for use of American Rescue Plan funds.

3) Adjournment

The work session adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Mayor Phillip M. Anderson

ATTEST:

City Clerk Rene Cranis