City Commission/Broadband-Smart City Ad-Hoc Committee Work Session Minutes

January 13, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Virtual

Present

Mayor Phil Anderson; Commissioners Marty Sullivan; Sheila DeCiccio; and Todd Weaver; City Manager Randy Knight; City Clerk Rene Cranis. Absent: Carolyn Cooper.

Also Present

Broadband/Smart City Ad-Hoc Committee members: Michael Poole, Janelle Zurek, Chris Johnson, Wes Naylor, Paul Conway, James Everett and Richard James. Director of Information Technology Parsram Rajaram.

1) Call to Order

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2) Discussion Item(s)

a. Discussion of Broadband/Smart City Ad-hoc Committee purpose & direction.

Mr. Rajaram, Director of IT, gave a brief history of the formation of this committee and the objectives for this meeting. He noted that the committee has met with contractors, city staff, and City of Orlando - Director of Future Ready Michael Hess and explained that the City of Orlando's "smart city plan" is in alignment with the action plan the ad-hoc committee is developing for Winter Park. He reviewed a list of objectives created by the committee based on the ordinance: confirm committee vision and mission statement, review the definition of broadband versus fiber, gain alignment on action plan and funding for a consultant, and timing implications. He presented the committee's proposed vision and mission which was taken directly from the ordinance that created this committee and explained that the committee is looking for direction from the commission. He explained that the FCC's definition of broadband is based on speed, not delivery/media type, and discussed similarities of broadband and fiber and impacts on the city.

Mr. Conway asked for the commission's perspective on whether fiber should be run to residential homes or city offices. Mayor Anderson stated that he is looking at who the customers are (residential for movie streaming, homework; home office, and business) and the resiliency of the system. He explained the benefits of fiber in various scenarios and discussed his frustration with the providers that service the area.

Commissioners DeCiccio, Sullivan and Weave spoke about their experiences with inconsistent service and unreliability. They expressed agreement that in order to move forward, the city needs the best connectivity that can be obtained at this time. Commissioner Sullivan stated that the city should view this as a city franchise service and while the city is not at the stage to consider how to develop the franchise, it should be the city's missions and goals as part of the broadband infrastructure.

Commissioner Weaver discussed the phases outlined in the Frog contract and stated that the committee should help with fiberoptic staging and assist with getting the final product delivered to multiple ISP companies, which would allow residents and businesses to have choices other than Spectrum.

Mayor Anderson remarked that one of the committee's tasks could be helping define what customers need in terms of speed and resilience to be progressive over the next five to six years and ensure that 99% of residents have the option to get fiber. He discussed the potential need to incentivize providers, challenges with the city becoming a provider, and franchise options.

Mr. Conway explained that the committee has been discussing whether the focus is on how to leverage current investment or leverage future technology. He spoke about the process and timing that it would take for the city to become a provider and stated that with technology changing, he is unsure if that path is right or wrong. He stated that the dilemma the committee is facing is how to come up with the right answer.

Mayor Anderson spoke about being competitive in the marketplace and would like to see a performance standard goal for a certain level of service for business and residential customers.

Commissioner Sullivan stated another aspect is expanding smart city applications such as linking city traffic lights in real-time to adjust traffic flow. He stated that moving forward with smart city applications would be a significant increase of quality of life for residents and businesses in Winter Park. He asked the committee and staff to discuss some of the future opportunities coming from new smart city applications.

Mr. Rajaram explained smart city technology related to traffic flow, smart lighting, parking availability data, storm water sensors, and public safety camera technologies.

Mr. Conway noted that the committee has interviewed the Electric Utility Department with intent to interview other departments regarding smart city applications. He stated that the committee identified things already in motion and a number of things that are future possibilities. He explained that outside resources are needed to help determine appropriate network architecture for connectivity and compatibility.

Commissioner Sullivan remarked that the commission could look at smart city applications and work with the committee to prioritize a list to determine which applications would best serve the city. Michael Poole added that one of the steps the City of Orlando took was to interview their different departments and reiterated that the committee plans to interview all city departs to determine what types of smart city applications could be applied, then create an action plan based on the prioritization.

Janelle Zurek reviewed the committee's action plan and explained the need for a consultant to complete the action items that include understanding the marketplace and offerings, conducting department interviews and community research and then preparing financial analysis and a strategic plan.

Mayor Anderson stated that community research is wise and agreed a consultant is beneficial to identify future needs and technology.

Chris Johnson discussed lack of willingness from providers to share conduit for fiber optic and suggested the city look at options to incentivize shared use of conduit which may draw competitors.

Commissioner Sullivan suggested looking at areas than can be funded through infrastructure bill. Mr. Poole stated that looking at those areas would be part of the financial analysis.

Mayor Anderson spoke about funding and use of ARPA funds. He summarized that committee's needs guidance and support for a consultant. Discussion followed on the funding approval process, cost to retain a consultant and funding sources. Consensus was to allocate $100,000 under ARPA funds. The commission authorized Mr. Knight to start the funding with $75,000 with future budget adjustment for the remaining balance.

Brief discussion was held on work session meeting days. Consensus is to move the work sessions to Tuesdays if there are not conflicts with regularly scheduled board meetings.

2) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

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Mayor Phillip M. Anderson

ATTEST:

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City Clerk Rene Cranis