

**Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes**  
**May 7, 2015**  
**Conference Room 1-B - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Commission Members Present: Burns, Loe, Reichlin, Russell, Stanton, Strodtman

Commission Members Absent: Lee, Puri, Tillotson

Staff: MacIntyre, Moehlman, Smith, Teddy, Zenner, Nichols, Bitterman, Huffington, Griggs

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** None

**TOPICS DISCUSSED – New Business:**

- **Building Permit Report**

The report was presented for informational purposes only. Mr. Zenner noted that the permitting levels and revenues were down for the year as a result of fewer student housing projects having been permitted. He stated that the 3 year calendar year to date comparison spreadsheet showed this very clearly. Mr. Zenner noted that if the Commission desired more information he would arrange to have a member of the BSD staff attend a work session.

- **2016 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) review**

Mr. Zenner introduced the guests from the Public Works and Park and Recreation Departments and gave a brief summary of how the previous CIP review meetings have occurred and what the expected outcome of the evenings meeting was. Mr. Zenner indicated that upon the conclusion of the meeting he would summarize the Commission's comments and forward a review memo to the Finance Department for inclusion in the Council mini retreat package which was to be held next week.

Scott Bitterman and Dave Nichols gave a presentation regarding the ¼ cent roadway bond renewal. Mr. Bitterman indicated that while the focus of his presentation would be on roadway projects some of the money generated from the ¼ cent tax would be used for public safety improvements/replacements and other related building activities. He noted that over the 10 year bond a total of approximately \$63 million would be generated; however, total CIP projects were roughly \$120 million.

Mr. Bitterman indicated that the projects presented tonight are those the staff believes are the most important for the community. He noted that the community members will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed projects through the new public engagement tool "Speak Up". The final decision on what projects make the ballot list will be determined by the public engagement and Council action. The ballot would include a combination of specifically identified projects plus a monetary allocation for annual projects that would cover the costs of improvements that come up for routine projects such as sidewalks, matching funds, and other transportation related expenses.

Mr. Bitterman and Mr. Nichols explained that in addition to the ¼ cent renewable sales tax there is a permanent ¼ cent sales tax that off-sets annual maintenance costs for City projects that are performed by city staff. "Major" maintenance projects are contracted out due to their scale. Several Commissioners expressed concern that there appeared to be too many "major" maintenance projects within the CIP and that their presence was impacting the ability to build roadways to get ahead of growth's impacts. It was suggested that potentially there may need to be an adjustment to the permanent sales tax to address this issue.

In addition to the concern expressed about the number of "major" maintenance projects Commissioners asked about why roundabouts were favored over signals along certain corridors and if the projects presented included land acquisition. Mr. Bitterman addressed the question about roundabout by explaining that under certain circumstances a

roundabout was a more efficient way of moving traffic through an intersection. The choice of using a roundabout verses a signal was based on traffic volume. As for why signals were being used, he responded by saying that some of the corridors were already signalized and that placement of new signals would occur at intervals of roughly ½ mile which allows traffic to flow efficiently between the signals. He also noted that signals generally allow for greater volumes of traffic to move through an intersection without delay. As to the issue of acquisition costs, Mr. Bitterman indicated that the proposed project costs did include that expense where necessary.

Mr. Zenner introduced Mr. Griggs and Mr. Huffington to provide the CIP presentation on Park and Recreation projects. Mr. Griggs began his presentation by providing an overview of the existing projects that are being wrapped up from the prior Park Sales Tax ballot. He noted that prior to the establishment of the sales tax parks projects used to be a portion of the CIP and competed against all other projects for funding.

Mr. Griggs noted that there has been no growth in the City's sales tax for the prior 5 years. The permanent ¼ cent sales tax has grown, but its maximum capacity to help meet operational/maintenance demands is reaching its limit. The ¼ cent renewal will generate roughly \$15.5 million over the next 5 years; however, proposed projects are capped at \$15 million.

Mr. Griggs indicated that projects proposed for construction are generated from user groups, public input (surveying), and the Parks Master Plan. The most current surveying identified the desire to provide more money to maintaining existing parks than land acquisition and preservation. Mr. Griggs noted that the number of private land donations have helped to reduce acquisition costs for new park land. He also noted that the process of involving parks in the development review process has improved significantly from the past which allows for earlier negotiation for additional parkland acquisition and possible improvements.

Mr. Griggs identified several key projects that the sales tax would be proposing to address. He noted that the list was not finalized and that there is still work to be done on refining the list of possible projects. The ballot measure would be presented in November for public consideration and would be applied in FY 2017. Many of the projects dealt with reconstruction of park facilities and completion of park improvements at several existing facilities (Atkins Park, A. Perry Philips Park, and Cosmo Park). He highlighted several new trail projects that would promote greater connectivity to the entire existing trail system. He also pointed out that in the planning of parks projects there is always effort made to have the improvements distributed within all the Council Wards.

Having heard the presentations the Commission had general discussion regarding the CIP. Regarding roadway projects, there was general consensus that the Forum and Vawter School upgrades were of greatest importance and should be fully funded and placed at the top of the list. The Commission also believed that there was a need to fully fund the roadway maintenance so "major" maintenance projects did not have to absorb new/expansion project funding. Several Commissioners stated that they believed there was not sufficient property tax generated to cover the full costs of the necessary routine maintenance projects and that methods of increasing the revenue allocated should be investigated.

Regarding proposed parks projects, the Commission noted that the proposed projects were all reasonable and well distributed throughout the City. Commissioners noted that the ¼ cent permanent tax for maintenance/operations was a positive; however, acknowledged its capacity to meet the needs was going to be at its limit soon and ways of increasing it would be necessary.

Given time constraints, the Commission adjourned the scheduled work session to enter into the public meeting. They agreed to complete discussion of the CIP following the regular meeting. Discussion on the CIP was suspended at 6:55 pm. At 8 pm the Commission reconvened its work session to complete discussion of the CIP projects and provide direction to staff in preparing the Commission memo for Council consideration.

The Commission engaged in additional discussion regarding the presentations made earlier during the work session. There was discussion regarding the inclusion of “major” maintenance projects in the CIP instead of within the general roadway maintenance budget. Comments were made that if viewed from a strictly accounting standpoint the identification of such projects within the CIP was likely legitimate since by definition a “major” project was one involving full replacement/reconstruction not just routine maintenance.

There was discussion among the Commissioners on this point. It was further discussed that the real issue was that the revenue allocated to routine maintenance derived from the permanent ¼ cent sales tax was insufficient. Discussion among the Commission on how this could be addressed ensued. There was no consensus reached regarding possible methods for increasing funding; however, concern was expressed that increasing sales taxes may not be the best solution. It was noted that an equitable solution involving existing residents and new development is possibly a more appropriate method. Mr. Zenner noted that this was what the staff was working on as part of its efforts with the development scorecard and possible cost-allocation policies.

Mr. Zenner indicated that based on the Commission’s discussion he identified three primary points that the memo to Council should include. First, the Commission supports all the roadway and parks projects presented - they were well organized and identified gaps needing to be filled based on growth. Second, the Forum and Vawter improvements are the most important roadway projects and should be fully funded. And third, a method for increasing routine maintenance funding should be sought to eliminate “major” maintenance projects from the CIP freeing up money for new/expansion projects to get ahead of growth.

Commissioners indicated this summary of the discussion was correct. They indicated that staff should proceed with preparing the memo for Council. Mr. Zenner noted he would do so and provide it to the Finance Department in time for the Council mini retreat.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- Work Program Status – status update

No reports given

**ACTION(S) TAKEN:** April 9, 2015, minutes were approved. No other votes or motions were made.

Meeting adjourned approximately 6:55 p.m and reconvened at 8 p.m for final discussion of FY 16 CIP projects. Adjourned reconvened work session at 8:35 p.m.