



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Concurrent City Council, Planning Commission, and Community Services Commission Work Session

Virtual via WebEx

February 8, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The concurrent City Council, Planning Commission, and Community Services Commission work session was called to order by Mayor Regan Gonzalez at 5:45 p.m. virtually via WebEx

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Mary Supple; Simon Trautmann; Sean Hayford Oleary; and Ben Whalen

Council Members Absent: None

Planning Commission Members Present: Kathryn Quam, Chair; Brett Stursa; Gordon Hanson; Brendan Kennealy; Eddie Holmvig-Johnson; and Ben Surma.

Planning Commission Members Absent: James Rudolph

Community Services Commission Members Present: Ben Marx; Jessica Johnson-Kreps; Kevin Wendt; and Tessa Johnson

Community Services Commission Members Absent: David Benson; Stephanie Nwaudo; Meredith Bruzek; and Heather MacDonald

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Kristin Asher, Public Works Director; Ben Manibog, Transportation Engineer; Joe Powers, City Engineer; Nellie Jerome, Assistant City Planner; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; and Kari Sinning, City Clerk.

Others Present: MnDOT Team Members: Karl Weissenborn, Lisa Austin, and Amber Blanchard

ITEM #1	MEMBERS OF THE I-494 PROJECT TEAM WILL PRESENT AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS MADE TO DATE BY THE I-494: AIRPORT TO HIGHWAY 169 PROJECT 1 VISUAL QUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VQAC) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP THE PROJECT'S VISUAL QUALITY MANUAL (VQM) WHICH WILL GUIDE AESTHETIC QUALITIES OF THE PROJECT AND THE CORRIDOR'S VISUAL ELEMENTS
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Mayor Regan Gonzalez read aloud the item on the agenda and introduced City Manager Rodriguez. City Manager Rodriguez reminded council that this is an opportunity to provide feedback and to propose questions. City Manager Rodriguez introduced Public Works Director Asher who stated that this visual quality effort is throughout multiple cities and looks for community input as well. Public Works Director Asher introduced the members of the I-494 Project Team: Karl Weissenborn, SEH Architecture; Lisa Austin, MnDOT; and Amber Blanchard, MnDOT. Lisa Austin then presented an update from the Visual Quality Advisory Committee that described the phases of the project, the community outreach and feedback, the visual ideas for the retaining walls, and the future steps for the project.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked about the materials that were chosen for the retaining walls. Amber Blanchard stated that the Metro District is going to all concrete retaining walls and explained that the budget affected that decision as well. Council Member Hayford Oleary shared his frustration in the decision of the material being made for the community and also asked about tagging on the walls. Amber Blanchard stated that if the tagging is in the right of way for MnDOT, it would be their responsibility. Council Member Hayford Oleary also asked about landscaping. Lisa Austin stated that landscaping would be done at a later date but is a process of the visual aesthetics of the project. Council Member Hayford Oleary expressed the importance of keeping the community in mind that would have to live next to the concrete walls.

Council Member Trautmann echoed the concerns of Council Member Hayford Oleary in the aesthetics of the retaining walls and appreciated the notion of murals being added.

Planning Commission Chair Quam shared her concerns of deterioration of artwork on the retaining walls and suggested vines or plants that would be perennial.

Public Works Director Asher stated that landscaping and murals would be mostly the City's responsibility to maintain. Lisa Austin suggested mosaic murals that could be low maintenance for the city. Amber Blanchard stated that landscaping that is in MnDOT's right of way would be maintained by MnDOT and that some plantings may be a shared cost.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked what would be put in place if the concrete noise walls were rejected. Amber Blanchard stated that black coated chain link fence would be put in place.

Lisa Austin listed the current engagement for public input on the designs which included surveys, pop up events, and flyers.

Council Member Whalen shared his concern for the visual aspect of the retaining walls and asked if the formed designs could be alternated so that traffic and housing could both benefit. Karl Weissenborn explained the process of the designs on the concrete and that it is possible to alternate the designs for the traffic and the community even with certain designs that are a series. Public Works Director Asher asked that if this topic could be brought up to the next Advisory Committee meeting for input from other cities.

Council Member Supple asked if there were specific locations that art or landscaping would be. Lisa Austin shared that there is a homework assignment for the Visual Quality Advisory Committee that has the members pinpoint locations that there would be the needs for aesthetics and landscaping.

Community Services Commissioner Surma asked about the timeline of this proposed project. Amber Blanchard stated that this plan is part of phase one of the three year project between 2023 and 2026.

Public Works Director Asher stated that the next meeting would be Monday March 28 for an input session.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez echoed the comments of the other council members and commissioners and stressed the importance that this is a multigenerational project and to be mindful of those residents around the project area.

ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:39 p.m.

Date Approved: February 22, 2022



Kari Sinning
City Clerk



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager