

**Study Meeting #12**  
**Monday, April 24, 2006, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Bloomington Civic Plaza**  
**1800 West Old Shakopee Road**  
**Bloomington, Minnesota 55431-3027**

- Call to Order** Mayor Gene Winstead called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
- Roll Call** *Present:* Mayor Winstead, Councilmembers R. Axtell, S. Elkins, A. Grady, and S. Peterson.  
*Absent:* Councilmembers K. Nordstrom and V. Wilcox.
- Postponed to May 1 Contract with WSB & Associates ITEM 3.1** Motion was made by Peterson, seconded by Elkins, and all voting aye, to postpone to May 1, 2006, staff's request for approval of the Professional Services Contract with WSB & Associates dated April 17, 2006, for the hiring of a full time contract civil engineer.
- Approved Agreement with Minnesota 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court ITEM 3.2** Motion was made by Grady, seconded by Peterson, and all voting aye, to approve an agreement between the City and the Minnesota District Court – 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District authorizing certain Bloomington petty misdemeanor parking and non-criminal traffic citations to be initially routed to court-appointed hearing officers for possible resolution along strict limits of authority. The responsibility and ultimate authority for prosecuting these offenses will remain with the Bloomington City Attorney's Office, which required as a pre-condition to this agreement, on-line access to the violations bureau's record system so as to enable staff to monitor on-going compliance with the limits of authority.
- STUDY ITEM #1 – Zoning Ordinance Update – Discuss Infill Housing Compatibility Standards & Tree Preservation** Greg Ingraham, Hoisington-Koegler Group, Inc. presented an overview of the Infill Lot/Housing Compatibility Standards and Tree Preservation and Replacement Standards and requested Council direction on these two issues going forward. He presented the following:
- An introduction to the study of in-fill housing and tree preservation standards, which resulted from neighborhood concerns relating to residential in-fill subdivisions, teardowns, additions and tree loss and a review of those neighborhood concerns. He explained that this is a common issue among communities and that there is no magic bullet to solve the problem.
  - The goals/challenges of how to balance further regulations with the desire for community reinvestment while avoiding the creation of non-conforming situations for existing properties and defining "fit" and appropriate character of a neighborhood while being sensitive to private property owners' rights.
  - On-line survey findings related to In-fill Housing: Most don't believe it is a problem and that in-fill development is important and should be encouraged. Consensus that it would be good to have houses fit within the existing neighborhood with similar house height and width within reason.
  - Recommendations: Protect the community reinvestment opportunity by ensuring houses fit the lot and the neighborhood focusing on similar house height and house width in order to achieve a proportional relationship of the lot to the house size.
  - Priority recommendations: Limit the site/environmental disturbance (tree removal, excessive grading, use of large imposing retaining walls) and address the scale/fit of new houses within existing neighborhoods.
  - Policy recommendations: Subdivision process improvements to allow more case-by-case attention, manage expectations for developers, property owners and neighbors, and enhance standards as appropriate.

**STUDY ITEM #1  
continued**

Peterson suggested it would be helpful if there were more technical standards that could be applied subjectively when reviewing subdivisions.

City Manager Mark Bernhardson described three situations that can exist with regard to in-fill housing: Adding onto an existing house (generally not larger than the original footprint of the house), a tear down and rebuild on an existing platted lot, and new houses built on newly subdivided lots. For houses built on newly subdivided lots, he stated perhaps the standards for subdivisions after a certain date should be enhanced or find a way to tie the standards together.

Ingraham requested Council's feedback on the following items that merit further study:

- **Height Standards:** Bloomington's height limitations are more liberal than in other communities. It is more liberally defined and allows a greater height (35 feet) resulting in taller houses. (Bloomington's current height measurement is taken from the lowest basement elevation to the ceiling height on the interior finished walls and ignores the roof, which affects the massing effect.) He stated 30 feet is more of a standard height elevation measured from the lowest ground elevation to the peak or mid-point of a roof. (*Council suggested determining a prevailing height.*)
- **Side Yard Setbacks:** Increase the side yard setback as houses or accessory structures get taller to create more separation between neighboring properties.

Bernhardson suggested in a rambler neighborhood allowing only one 10-foot story to be added onto an existing home setting a stepped back setback requirement for larger homes.

Community Development Director Larry Lee clarified that the City measures height from the lowest ground level along the foundation to the height of the interior ceiling.

Ingraham inquired if Council wanted to make a change in the subdivision regulations to require a larger lot width, which is more important than the lot size when dealing with larger homes.

Peterson suggested a basic template be devised dealing with lot width and height that could be tested for a year or so that Council could change in the future if necessary.

Ingraham continued with the issue of tree preservation/replacement stating that the focus should be on one or more of the following: Significant trees (i.e. over a certain size and by type), stands or groups of trees (i.e. woodland remnants), trees in buffer areas, trees in "sensitive areas" (i.e. historic areas, environmental zones, etc.) He inquired if Council wanted to apply tree preservation/replacement standards only in residential development or throughout the entire city regardless of the zoning, in the river bluff and areas beyond the bluff, and/or commercial/industrial development areas.

Council consensus was to move forward with the tree preservation/replacement standards focusing on single-family residential subdivisions allowing a modest level of tree removal but see what applicability the standards would have on tear downs while keeping in mind the property rights issue.

Ingraham stated they would continue to research this issue with staff based on Council feedback and would begin preparation of the standards for consideration by the Planning Commission in June followed by a hearing at the Council level anticipated in July.

**STUDY ITEM #2  
Request for Proposals  
(Employee Group  
Benefits)**

Kent Michaelson, Human Resources Director provided the staff report explaining that a Consent Agenda item would be coming to Council on May 15 for the selection of the employee group benefit providers (Health, Life, Dental & Long-Term Disability Insurance). His presentation focused on medical insurance to bring Council up to date on the meetings that have been held with the various bargaining units and City staff. His presentation highlighted the following:

**STUDY ITEM #2  
continued**

- Number of Active/Full-time Employees by Group (534 total)
- Total Premium to HealthPartners
- 2006 HealthPartners Enrollment
- 2006 Premium Costs
- Medical Insurance Rate Increases HealthPartners Only  
*(As required to do so, the City sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for insurance providers but those rates will not be available until sometime in August.)*
- Monthly Cost Projection (Group Health/HP Classic)
- Maximum City Contribution *(90% of the premium is paid by the employer)*
- Monthly Benefit Contribution (Single/Family/Average)
- Cost Projection for Cafeteria Plan
- Total Premium to HealthPartners
- The RFP Schedule

Michaelson added that the City is also going to bid a hybrid option that would only include the Empower Plan and one other plan and that if it comes back favorable and all of the committee members and bargaining units support it, it's possible that there would only be two plans available in 2007 instead of the current four plans. He stated the carrier is going to be interested in the premium, the dollars coming in versus the claims going out whether there are two, four or five plans, etc.

Axtell inquired if the City would be considering a self-insured option with a reinsurance to cover the City's risk.

Michaelson replied the question has been asked of the City's insurance consultant but the City has always advised against it in favor of a fully insured plan.

Peterson requested the City seek from its insurance consultant some comparable data regarding medical benefits similar to what it gets relating to salary data for comparison purposes.

Bernhardson added that at the rate medical insurance costs are rising, in 2030, it is projected employees will be working for the health benefit and the salary will be incidental. He restated that a consent agenda item will be on the May 15 agenda to approve the RFP.

**Bloomington  
Convention & Visitors  
Bureau Report  
STUDY ITEM #3**

Bonnie Carlson, President & CEO of the Bloomington Convention & Visitors Bureau (BCVB) introduced Jan Kroells, Vice President of Marketing and Shawn Corwin, Vice President of Sales and presented the BCVB's 2005 Annual Report and 2006 Marketing Plan. Her presentation highlighted the following areas:

- BCVB Mission Statement
- BCVB Values Statement
- Performance Measurements
- Total Lodging Tax Allocation (13.5%)
- 2005 BCVB Expenditures Allocation
- Sales Accomplishments
- Sales Accomplishments *(Awards)*
- Mall of America Partnership
- Partnerships Maximize Dollars & Branding
- BCVB Foundation
- Destination Bloomington Foundation 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golf Tournament
- Advertising Strategies-Leisure
- Advertising Strategies-Trade
- Marketing Accomplishments (Advertising)
- Marketing Accomplishments (BCVB/MOA Coop Inquiries)
- Marketing Accomplishments (Media & Public Relations, Print & Collateral)
- Leisure Research Study

**STUDY ITEM #3  
continued**

- BCVB Website (*On-line Hotel Accommodations & Marketing Program June 2005 Launch*)
- Marquee Events
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Iron Girl Event
- Introducing The Big Ticket
- The Big Ticket – What is it?
- The Big Ticket – Objectives
- The Big Ticket – Media
- The Big Ticket – Pricing
- The Big Ticket – How Do I Buy It?
- 2005 BCVB Board of Directors

Carlson requested that the City Council adopt a resolution to support the bids for both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions in 2008 for which Minneapolis is preparing. She stated both the city councils of Minneapolis and St. Paul have adopted resolutions and they would like Bloomington to do the same and that hosting either convention would involve 80% of Bloomington's hotel rooms.

Motion was made by Elkins, seconded by Peterson, and all voting aye, to accept the Bloomington Convention & Visitors Bureau Report.

**Open Air Markets  
STUDY ITEM #4**

Jim Urie, Art Center Manager presented the staff report relating to the study of an open air market study, which included information and photos highlighting the following:

- Introduction & Background on the Concept
- Benefit of Market to Community (Customer's View)
- Minneapolis Farmers Market
- Richfield Farmers Market
- Community Building Activity: Latin Music Festival
- Sponsorship & Management Options to Consider
- Market Implementation Issues
- Mission
- Product Mix
- Produce
- Concessions
- Baked Goods
- Jewelry Vendor
- Market Schedule/Frequency (*Traditional open air market meets once a week or more on a regular basis in season.*)
- Site Selection & Design (*Options to consider: Bloomington Civic Plaza parking lot, Bloomington Central Station, Armory, Bloomington Ice Garden, Creekside, Smith or Pond Dakota Park, closed off streets, and parking lots of shopping malls and churches.*)
- Saturday Market (City Hall, Alexandria, VA)
- Open Air Street Market
- Environmental Health Issues
- Staff Recommendation (*Consider an open air market in light of other community building activities currently being explored by the City in conjunction with the strategic planning process and form a market task force to gather more information.*)

Council requested staff obtain more details relating to the costs for operating a city-sponsored farmers market from Richfield, as theirs is the most participatory model and obtain feedback from some of the vendor participating in those types of markets.

**STUDY ITEM #4  
continued**

Bernhardson stated staff would contact Cal's Market and Festival Foods to see if they have any interest in promoting or operating a farmers market and would explore how the arts could be tied into other community-building events City staff is exploring so that Council can determine if a farmers market is something in which they want to invest.

Winstead commented that the most likely involvement by an arts group would be by local crafters and artists who will want to show their work in an attempt to generate revenue and also believes it will take some subsidy on the part of the City to get a market going.

Council requested more information regarding the markets currently being held in Richfield, Maple Grove, and Burnsville to see how those cities have been affected by having markets. In addition, Council suggested staff also explore having a third party organization operate the market with the City providing the site to see how that would work.

**Alternative  
Transportation Issues  
STUDY ITEM #5**

Randy Quale, Parks & Recreation Manager provided the staff report explaining that a study group has been reviewing alternative transportation issues facing the City for the last couple of months with representation from Park & Rec, Planning, Public Works, Maintenance, and Public Health and that they have identified the following four main areas of concern:

- Bloomington Alternative Transportation Plan
- Bloomington Alternative Transportation Corridors
- Inter-City Alternative Transportation
- Other Alternative Transportation Issues

Quale defined alternative transportation as any non-motorized vehicle traffic either by a personal or commercial vehicle with a main focus on biking and pedestrian routes. He stated the study group is exploring a Blue Cross Blue Shield grant program to help fund the Alternative Transportation Plan for which the application must be postmarked by April 28. He described the alternative transportation corridors within the City as follows:

- Xcel Energy corridor (runs from American Boulevard down through Parker's Picnic Grounds with a connection at the Minnesota River) following along under the transmission lines, which could permit a trail along that area but could necessitate some bridges or grade-separated crossings at some of the major thoroughfares.
- American Boulevard corridor (good east/west opportunity from the Mall of America to 84<sup>th</sup> Street), which could tie into some of the new trail work currently under construction.
- Along the Minnesota River bottoms, for which the City is currently working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), as they have future plans for trails connecting all the way from Ft. Snelling to LeSeur but are currently looking for funding. They are currently working on where to site the trail from Ft. Snelling to the Lyndale Avenue trailhead.
- Other trail corridors in west Bloomington -- through Hyland Park, others that would connect to Bloomington Ferry Road, others up and around Bush Lake, and the existing trail along the Forest Glen Road right-of-way with a connection into Edina at West Bush Lake Road.
- Old Cedar Avenue Bridge to relink Bloomington to Dakota County.

Elkins stated that the City will need to show a better network of biking paths that is conducive to commuting if it's trying to compete for some of the major funding grants from Blue Cross Blue Shield and Congressman Oberstar.

With regard to the Oberstar grant, Quale stated the City has had conversations with Richfield, Edina and Minneapolis but it is a grant for Minneapolis and adjoining communities. Bloomington's plan would have to integrate well with the ones from those other communities.

**STUDY ITEM #4  
Continued**

Grady inquired about the possibility of linking with Eden Prairie.

Bernhardson explained that there are four link points to Eden Prairie via the River Road, Pioneer Trail, Anderson Lakes, and Highwood.

Quale stated the challenge is getting across I-494 and the river.

Council commented that for an east/west bike route, converting 84<sup>th</sup> or 86<sup>th</sup> Street from four lanes to three would probably be more achievable than creating a biking route along American Boulevard.

Bernhardson stated that this Alternative Transportation Plan will look at all manor of transportation corridors for biking and walking.

Quale referenced the material that was included with the agenda materials regarding the Two Wheels To Town Initiative stating they have requested the City Council adopt a resolution supporting their organization. Staff was directed to prepare a resolution that could be included with the City's grant application to Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Elkins suggested a review of the City's street plan needs to get aligned with what is happening on the zoning in preparation of the 2008 Comp Plan Update. He commented that the new guide that has just been published for context sensitive highway road designs will be helpful to the City in designing roadways for urban settings. He stated it would be good for the City to tie land use into transportation planning to make more active communities.

Bernhardson stated that the grant money would be used to hire a consultant to work on the Alternative Transportation Plan that will roll into a comprehensive street plan and the Comp Plan. It was stated the bulk of the transportation plan would be geared towards recreational transportation but will evolve eventually into healthy lifestyles with time. He stated staff would be emphasizing the City's holistic approach to alternative transportation within its grant application.

**ADDITIONAL  
COMMENTS**

Mayor Winstead announced that he will be meeting with Alan and Debbie Schneider regarding the art for the fly wall, as they have indicated a desire to contribute funding towards it. He will report back to Council following that discussion.

**Adjourn Meeting**

Mayor Winstead adjourned the meeting at 10:32 p.m.

Barbara Clawson  
*Council Secretary*