

MONONA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
April 5, 2021

The regular meeting of the Monona City Council, via Zoom, was called to order by Mayor O'Connor at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Mary K. O'Connor, Alderpersons Molly Grupe, Nancy Moore, Kristie Goforth, Doug Wood, Jennifer Kuhr, and Kathy Thomas

Also Present: City Administrator Bryan Gadow, Harry Hawkins of the Nehemiah Center, Parks and Recreation Director Jake Anderson, Aquatic Director/Recreation Supervisor Missy Miller, Public Works Director Dan Stephany, Interim Police Chief Sara Deuman, Fire Chief Jeremy McMullen, and Director of Administrative Services Leah Kimmell

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Alder Grupe clarified that the transit RFP did not include a requirement that People of Color be trained and hired, but rather that submissions include documentation on how employees receive training regarding unconscious bias, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Alder Goforth clarified that Amy Rosebrough from the State Historical Society suggested the City do a Phase 1 archaeological identification of all parks and open spaces, as opposed to an architectural identification.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Moore, to approve the Minutes of the March 15, 2021 City Council meeting was carried.

APPEARANCES

Mayor O'Connor read a proclamation recognizing April 30, 2021 as Arbor Day in the City of Monona.

Mayor O'Connor read a proclamation recognizing May 8, 2021 as International Migratory Bird Day in the City of Monona.

Katherine Carew, 4905 Rothman Place, spoke for informational purposes regarding several issues related to spending on park projects.

Becky Alexander, 4807 Wallace Aveune, spoke for informational purposes regarding the appointment of citizens to the City's boards, committees, and commissions. She encouraged term limits for citizen members, the advertising of committee openings, transparency in the selection criteria for committee members, the posting of the names of appointees, and the promotion of diversity in committee membership.

Jayson Chung, 5404 McKenna Road, spoke for informational purposes regarding race and equity actions the City is undertaking. He encouraged that the project with the Nehemiah Center should be the foundation for everything that goes forward.

PUBLIC HEARING and CONSENT AGENDA

There was no Public Hearing or Consent Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Parks and Recreation Director Jake Anderson reported that the contractor will start work on the improvements to Woodland Park in April. The project will take 2–3 months to complete. Alder Kuhr asked if the water tower painting project will be impacted by this project. Director Stephany responded that it will not; the paint crews will utilize the driveway off of Monona Drive and keep their operations isolated to the top of the hill.

A motion by Alder Grupe, seconded by Alder Wood, to approve Resolution 21-3-2473 Award of Contract for Woodland Park Parking Lot and Trail Improvements. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion.

Aquatic Director/Recreation Supervisor Missy Miller had no additional updates regarding the proposed mountain bike trail in Maywood Park since the last meeting.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Thomas, to approve Resolution 21-3-2475 Approval to Construct a Mountain Bike Trail in Maywood Park was carried.

Director Stephany reported that, per Alder Wood's request, he included in the packet relevant State Statutes which confirm that bicycles must follow rules of the road, including stop signs. Also in the packet, traffic data shows that a daily average of 611 vehicles travel Nichols Road from Healy Lane to Winnequah Road, and average speed on this section of road is 30 mph. Alder Moore asked if the Public Works Committee discussed speed humps as an alternative to stop signs. Director Stephany responded that the committee did not discuss speed humps, but both Alders Kuhr and Thomas expressed interest in discussing the criteria for using stop signs versus speed humps at a future Public Works Committee meeting. Alder Kuhr added that speed humps were not discussed because this particular issue is in regard to pedestrians and sight lines, not speed. Alder Thomas said stop signs are not meant to slow traffic, and the Public Safety Committee may need to take a look at enforcement in the city.

Alder Goforth asked if other safety considerations were considered such as a painted crosswalk. Director Stephany replied that they weren't. Alder Goforth explained that she talked to the all the residents at the intersection, and two of the homes were strongly opposed, saying that it didn't seem necessary because there haven't been accidents at the intersection. Alder Goforth asked if the committee considered other intersections, such as the Baskerville/Winnequah Trail/Winnequah Road intersection instead. Alder Kuhr responded that other intersections can be brought to the Public Works Committee for consideration and reiterated that the issue here is sight lines, not speed. While residents can offer input on stop signs, Director Stephany clarified that regulatory signs aren't usually left up to the public to decide because State Statue gives that authority and responsibility to the Public Works Committee, and residents are not typically notified about the installation of stop signs. Alder Thomas added that criteria exist which determine when stop signs should be used, and if they don't work, we can reconsider. Alder Goforth asked if action could be delayed to talk with more residents.

A motion by Alder Goforth to table until the next City Council meeting Ordinance 3-21-738 Requiring a Three-Way-Stop-Controlled Intersection at Nichols Road and Winnequah Road was not seconded; motion failed.

Alder Thomas said while it's good to talk to the residents, street safety issues are the concern of all residents, not just the people who live there. Alder Moore echoed Alder Thomas' comments. Alder Grupe said that she supports this Ordinance, but she also thinks that notifying residents of a new stop sign could be a useful thing in the future, and she believes it's important to keep all options on the table when exploring solutions to safety issues.

A motion by Alder Grupe seconded by Alder Kuhr to approve Ordinance 3-21-738 Requiring a Three-Way-Stop-Controlled Intersection at Nichols Road and Winnequah Road was carried. Alder Goforth voted present.

A motion by Alder Moore, seconded by Alder Wood, to remove from the table Resolution 21-3-2470 Establishing an Ad-Hoc Workgroup on Diversity and Equity Issues was carried.

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Thomas, to adopt Substitute Resolution 21-3-2470 Establishing an Ad-Hoc Workgroup on Diversity and Equity Issues. Discussion followed. (No action taken – JA)

Alder Wood inquired of Harry Hawkins from the Nehemiah Center whether this is the right time to move forward with the formation of this committee and what Nehemiah's role should be. Mr. Hawkins replied that Nehemiah should act as a guide to get this group set up and get the processes in place so Monona residents can carry out this work. Regarding timing, he suggested that it's better to get started with a smaller scope than to wait to do something bigger, because people may misinterpret your caution as dismissal. To accomplish scope is a worthy enough cause to get a group started, and the scope can always be changed as the process evolves.

Alder Moore summarized where this resolution came from, saying it started on June 16 with an email from Josh Peterson with the idea of forming a permanent truth and reconciliation commission which would meet regularly and provide quarterly reports to the Council with personal accounts of what they were hearing as well as proposals for structural change. The commission would look internally and address the social inequities that are present in everything we do, and it was requested that the commission be chaired by the Mayor and co-chaired by the Council President to demonstrate that the City is serious. She explained that we then backed up, in a sense, to this workgroup because we wanted to bring more people in to shape this and we wanted to make sure we weren't conflicting with the work of Nehemiah. This has been a long process; a break was taken for the budget and we got back to this work in January.

Alder Grupe said she appreciates what Mr. Hawkins said and agrees it's important to get started, but we need to be thoughtful as white leaders in a city that is asking for a change. We need to get real to mute our own voices and work harder on amplifying the voices of other people in our community. She is supportive of the committee and Alder Wood's amendments but wants to be sure that we don't lose focus on this opportunity and its intent, and that we acknowledge all voices.

Alder Moore responded that the reason we stopped what we were doing in the small group and expanded to the ad hoc committee was so more voices, critical voices, could be brought into the conversation.

Alder Goforth stated she is excited about the Community Action Council with the Nehemiah contract and believes that is the foundation we need to start with. It makes sense to have the professionals lead the way before we take the next step. She added that due to the highly politically charged environment right now, this is not a good night to be deciding anything. We want the optics to be as genuine as they can possibly be. She asked that we table the resolution until after the election and after the first organizational meeting, when the newly elected officials, even if they are all the same, are seated.

A motion by Alder Goforth, seconded by Alder Grupe, to table Resolution 21-3-2470 Establishing an Ad-Hoc Workgroup on Diversity and Equity Issues until after the April 20, 2021 Organizational Meeting. Alders Goforth, Grupe, and Thomas voted in favor of the motion; Alders Moore, Wood, and Kuhr voted against. Mayor O'Connor broke the tie with a vote in favor. The motion carries.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Works Director Dan Stephany provided information on Resolution 21-4-2476 Award of Contract for 2021 Street Chip Seal Project. The City received two bids for the project. The low bid was provided by Scott Construction in the amount of \$134,308.74. Ten streets, just over three miles of roadway, will receive a granite chip seal application. The contract requires that all inlets be protected and the streets be swept multiple times to remove loose chips. Crack sealing and patch spraying will also be performed as needed.

Interim Police Chief Sara Deuman provided information on Resolution 21-4-2478 Purchase Approval of Two Police Vehicles. Funds for the purchase of two hybrid patrol vehicles were approved in the 2021 Capital Budget, and she is requesting to add additional rear lighting to help with visibility on the Beltline. Since adopting the capital budget, she has learned that some of our current equipment will no longer fit due to Ford's redesign between the 2019 and 2020 models. New equipment estimated at \$4,300 will need to be purchased. She quoted four options: a gas option with no additional lights; a gas option with additional lights; a hybrid option with no additional lights; and a hybrid option with additional lights. All options except for the gas option with no additional lights will be over budget. Per Alder Thomas' request, Interim Chief Deuman estimated the gas savings with the hybrid option to be approximately \$2,110 per vehicle per year based on current fuel prices. Patrol vehicles are generally replaced in a 5-year rotation. Alder Thomas added that the lights can presumably be reused when we buy new squads because we strip squads of all equipment when they're sold. She informed the Council that the Finance and Personnel Committee tonight approved the hybrid option with additional lights. Chief Deuman said that while Madison has experienced some issues with the hybrid models, we have not experienced these specific issues at all. But our 2020 model has only been in service for a little over a month. Alder Moore added that hybrids tend to cost less in maintenance and have a longer life because you're not running the engine constantly. Fire Chief McMullen said the flex lane application currently being constructed on the Beltline will make the Beltline lanes narrower, and Monona's patrol vehicles are less visible than Madison's and Dane County's vehicles. Alder Thomas added that if we don't buy hybrid vehicles, we might have to amend the budget to add more money for gas, so we'll likely need to modify the budget for one reason or another.

Interim Chief Deuman summarized Resolution 21-4-2479 Amending the Capital Budget for the Purchase of Police Vehicles. An extra \$10,500 over the original budget will be needed to move forward with the purchase of hybrid vehicles with additional lights.

REPORTS

Alder Goforth said she hopes to see record voter turnout tomorrow.

Alder Wood reported that the MPO meets on Wednesday.

Alder Grupe reported that the City is holding an e-cycling event on April 24 at Ahuska Park. Alder Moore added that details about the event can be viewed on the Sustainable Monona Facebook page, the City's website and the e-newsletter. There will be a charge for some items, and some items will be free to

dispose of. This will be a hands-free, COVID-safe event. Mayor O'Connor added there is a free medicine drop that day also at The Medicine Shoppe.

Fire Chief McMullen reported that remaining City staff will receive their second dose of the COVID vaccine tomorrow. He is working with SSM Health to organize a mobile vaccination clinic in the City for people who aren't comfortable going out for their shot. He also publicly thanked all his volunteers for responding on a busy weekend with 19 calls for service. And he thanked the Council and Mayor for approving the funds to install cameras on Engine 2.

Interim Chief Deuman reported that calls for police service are increasing with the warmer weather. The department is also in the process of hiring an officer to fill one of several vacancies.

Administrative Services Director Kimmell reported that for tomorrow's election, we go back to our usual configuration of two polling places. Wards 1-5 vote at St. Stephen's Church and wards 6-10 vote at the Community Center. Voters who are unsure where they vote can find the information on our website, or they can call City Hall. Polls are open 7:00 a.m. 8:00 p.m.

Mayor O'Connor wished everyone luck in tomorrow's election.

APPOINTMENTS

A motion by Alder Wood, seconded by Alder Grupe to approve the following, was carried:

1. Ann Betthausen – Election Inspector, effective immediately–December 31, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Alder Kuhr, seconded by Alder Grupe, to adjourn was carried. (8:25 p.m.)

Leah Kimmell
Director of Administrative Services