

BAXTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Work Session
July 5, 2016

Mayor Darrel Olson called the Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Darrel Olson, Council Members Quinn Nystrom, Steve Barrows, Todd Holman, and Mark Cross.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant City Administrator Kelly Steele, Community Development Director Josh Doty, Finance Director Jeremy Vacinek, Police Chief Jim Exsted, IT/GIS Director Todd DeBoer, Assistant Finance Director Susannah Jensen, and Public Works Director Trevor Walter.

2017 BUDGET GOALS AND PRIORITIES WORK SESSION

Finance Director Vacinek summarized the budget goals and priorities. Mr. Vacinek outlined the factors that might impact the 2017 budget. Currently, there are no significant changes in state aids or taxes at this time and levy limits are not in place for 2017. The omnibus tax bill was vetoed at the end of the session. Property valuations from last year are currently being obtained and will be analyzed and provided to the council when available.

Health insurance rates for 2017 are expected in late August and staff is anticipating at least a modest increase due to continued ACA implementation; last year's health insurance numbers were unusually high. Staff will need to consider changes to the plan in the future because of the legislation and potential taxes and penalties.

There are no PERA rate changes scheduled for 2017; however, labor contracts will expire at the end of 2016. Fire service contract is expected to have slight reduction due to personnel restructuring. The City has not received any funding requests from outside organizations at this time.

Mr. Vacinek reviewed the adopted Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) map. Bolton & Menk has almost completed the plans and consideration of publishing the CIP should be considered so residents can start to plan for upcoming projects. Residents want to know 1-2 years in advance of any special assessment and the maps are a very useful tool. A newsletter article for September should be prepared.

Mr. Vacinek stated there will be more information and discussions prior to the August 30th meeting with the preliminary levy to be adopted on September 20th.

2016 MILL & OVERLAY PROJECT – DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR 90 DEGREE CURVE ON MAPLEWOOD DRIVE

WSN Consulting Engineer Welch reviewed the potential options for the corner on Maplewood Drive. The existing pavement located at the corner is broken up as a result of poor drainage and vehicle traffic cutting the corner and damaging the bituminous edge.

The project plans called for full depth bituminous repair and ditch excavation (swale) but did not include any provisions to keep traffic from cutting the corner. Mr. Welch reviewed the options and estimated costs that are listed below:

Option A – Curb & Gutter with Storm Sewer and Pond \$27,110

This option includes construction of curb and gutter along the east and south sides of the road. The curb would begin approximately 25’ before the curve and end approximately 25’ past the curve. A shallow storm sewer structure would be placed in the radius to collect stormwater from the curb & gutter. 12” RC pipe would extend north across Maplewood Drive to a stormwater infiltration basin located on the existing 66’ right-of-way between the roadway and White Sand Lake. The infiltration basin would be approximately 3’ deep and occupy an area 24’ x 60’. The basin would be located along the east side of the existing right-of-way to leave room for lake access along the west side of the right-of-way. Construction would require the removal of existing trees between the roadway and lake. WSN may be able to negotiate a better price for the 12” storm sewer pipe to help lower the cost.

Option B – Curb & Gutter with Spillway and Swale \$7,670

This option includes construction of curb and gutter along the east and south sides of the road. The curb would begin approximately 25’ before the curve and end approximately 25’ past the curve. A shallow swale/ditch would be constructed behind the curb and water would be directed to the swale through a spillway in the curb & gutter. This option would likely require some property acquisition and tree removal to complete the required ditching behind the curb. Costs for property acquisition have been estimated and are included in the cost estimate.

Option C – Swale with Delineators \$2,460

This option includes the construction of swale /ditch and installation of delineators to keep traffic on the roadway surface.

The consensus of the council was to complete Option B and approach property owner to discuss options.

DONATION OF LAND ACROSS FROM CITY HALL

Community Development Director Doty informed the council the City of Baxter had received a request for a land donation on the west side of Memorywood Drive. The parcel is just shy of one acre and the property owner would provide the property without a deed restriction. The property owner thought it could be a simple passive park with a picnic table.

The Park & Trails Commission, at the June 27, 2016 meeting, discussed and recommended the city accept the property. The commission felt the land could support a number of different park uses and there is no public access to Baxter Lake.

Mr. Doty stated it is a unique opportunity to receive land with no up-front land expense; however, there are costs to removing the land from the tax base and maintenance costs of the property at the time of dedication. Memorywood Drive is on the CIP map for full depth reclamation in 2018.

If the City Council provides consensus support for the land donation, then staff would bring this item back at a later City Council meeting on the regular agenda for acceptance.

CONTINUATION OF COUNCIL RETREAT – TRANSPORTATION

Community Development Director Doty continued the transportation discussion from the June 29th Special Meeting. A discussion of parallel corridors to T.H. 371 was held since improvements to these roadways increase traffic efficiency by offering alternative routes for local traffic.

There are a few areas that are not in the CIP which includes the frontage road near Excelsior Road, Cypress Drive towards Woida Road, and section of Forthun Road from Foley Road to Isle Drive.

Mr. Doty reviewed the trail connections throughout the city in relation to the Comprehensive Plan. The majority of the trails are located in roadway right-of-way or parallel to the street. For future planning, advocating for off-road trails or paths parallel to the streets will enhance the community. These types of trails are used extensively and can be less expensive to build and maintain, as they require less material than on a road bike lane.

Council Member Holman said the bike lanes and what was accomplished with Isle Drive extension project was amazing and it seems as though that should be carried all the way to Highway 210 and connecting to Foley Road. Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter said those priorities are the things they need to hear in planning for projects but now Foley Road is not slated to be widened to include bike lanes. Council Member Holman felt they should have paved shoulders all the way.

Mr. Walter noted paved shoulders are not planned throughout and widening the road comes with additional costs, including right of way acquisitions. Council Member Cross noted the trails are cheaper options.

Council Member Holman said he understood they may not be able to commit to estimated numbers until costs are known, but emphasized the public interest in knowing what projects are on the five-year plan. Staff also noted there can be switches when one project is moved ahead of another for a variety of reasons.

Council Member Nystrom suggested inserting upcoming projects for 2017 into the upcoming city newsletter.

Among future projects, Memorywood Drive is slated for 2018 full-depth reclamation in 2018 with 12-foot driving lanes and 5-foot paved shoulders and is expected to look like the Fairview Road project currently underway.

Council Member Holman noted Brainerd's walkable-bikeable commission and felt the City of Baxter would be well-served if something like that was created. The commission could tie all those pieces together in fine detail unless the council thought it should be doing that work. He stated that

commissioning a study hires expertise but civic engagement is an afterthought. Mr. Walter said a focus group was another option.

Council Member Cross noted that right-of-way acquisition and street width have huge ramifications for costs and costs for assessments and the city's taxpayers overall. On a high-level look having complete streets with bike lanes and trails on collector roads was wanted where possible, but the question is if the city can afford it.

Council Member Barrows said they could start at the higher level and dream and then take things out and reduce along with way. Council Member Cross stated it comes down to every single project having fiscal and physical restraints.

Mr. Doty stated it is hard to get to the fine detail without a feasibility study and the city's commissions do not go into all the cost considerations as that has been the council's determination if projects are fiscally viable.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Council Member Barrows, seconded by Council Member Cross to adjourn at 6:55 p.m. Motion carries unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

Darrel Olson
Mayor

Mary Haugen
Administrative Assistant