AGENDA 6b
DATE 2.04.20

CITY OF NORTON SHORES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
January 28, 2020

A regular work session of the Norton Shores City Council was held on Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at Norton Shores City Hall, 4814 Henry Street.

Present: Mayor Nelund, Council Members Beecham, Flanders, Hylland, Jurkas, Morgenstern, Moulatsiotis, Olson and Sladick; also, Mark Meyers, Shelly Stibitz, Doug Hughes, Bob Gagnon, Jon Gale, Mike Huston, Jerry Bartoszek, and Anthony Chandler

1. MATS Route Study and Operational Analysis

Muskegon County Administrator Mark Eisenbarth, Muskegon Area Transit (MATS) Director Bob Lukens, and MATS Supervisor Jim Koens presented a proposed new bus route system devised as a result of the 2019 study and analysis. The current system uses a circular route and the new routes would follow a bi-directional system that is more destination-focused. In response to the public's desire for weekend, early morning, late night and beyond the bussing transportation zone, a micro transit (MATS contracted drivers similar to Uber) program was proposed. Micro transit fees would be $2 or $4 per ride and could include up to a 30-minute pickup time. Each bus route would operate on a one-hour pulse converging at the Herman Ivory Terminal in Muskegon Heights where riders could make transfers as needed. The projected financial impact for the City of Norton Shores would include a $10,000 savings to incorporate the new bi-directional routes only; and, adding $21,000 to our current contribution of $33,000 to enhance transportation with the micro transit program. The estimated cost in this fiscal year to maintain the current circular route system is $147,212. Council Member Flanders suggested piloting the micro transit system before making a commitment and MATS representatives said their research suggests that the initial expense is too much and reputable vendors won't submit bids for a short-term contract. The projected costs are based on five core communities supporting the Muskegon Area Transit System and its restructure.

2. Atwater Springs Development Update

Public Works Director Jerry Bartoszek reminded Council of the development agreement approved in June with Livingstone Development for the Atwater Springs project. The agreement included the City funding $452,646 of an estimated $779,020, including engineering fees, to provide sanitary sewer service to the development. Actual bids obtained in November 2019 resulted in the City's 87.5% share of the cost, excluding engineering fees, to be $1,225,075. Staff has been working with the developer to modify the project and reduce costs by sub-contracting off-site work and decreasing the depth of the gravity sewer and lift station. Council Member Olson asked Developer David Bos if they would consider raising their cost share and Mr. Bos stated that their expenses are too tight already and they cannot afford to pay more of those costs. Mayor Nelund asked

Council to consider whether the fees were worth having development on the south side of Pontaluna and the consensus was to reconsider the City's cost share after the project is rebid.

3. Senior Millage Funding for Municipalities

City Administrator Mark Meyers described the initial grant process for county-wide senior millage funds as complicated and restrictive. This year grant fund amounts determined by individual municipality senior population were allocated for award through a basic proposal process. Norton Shores is eligible to receive approximately $78,000 in funding to offer services and support to residents who are 60 and older. Police Chief Jon Gale shared that the Senior Millage Grant Committee may be awarding $92,850 (in addition to the $78,000) annually to our Police Department to fund one detective's wages and benefits for up to three years. The detective will be based at Tanglewood Senior Center and provide individual support to senior citizen victims of fraud, abuse, financial loss and other crimes as part of a Muskegon County Vulnerable Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team (VA-MDT).

Staff recommendations for use of the $78,000 allocation include the Yellow Dot Program, Senior Wellness Program and Senior Transportation Services. Chief Gale proposed that a Yellow Dot Program be introduced in Norton Shores that provides immediate medical information to first responders following a traffic crash. The program is intended to alert first responders with a sticker on a vehicle's windshield that a photo along with medical and emergency information can be found in a yellow envelope in the glovebox. Stickers, emergency forms, camera equipment, envelopes and marketing costs to roll out the program would be an estimated $7,500. Kris Collee, Tanglewood Park Executive Director, would like the City to form a partnership with their program that engages our senior population in social and health wellness programs at Tanglewood Park by offering free memberships and discounted activity fees to residents. A portion, $5,000, of the $25,000 proposed to be used for this program will be used in advertising for the City and marketing the memberships and discounts to our senior population. Council members questioned Norton Shores' senior citizen statistics, how Tanglewood receives the grant money and whether funds not used are returned. Council Member Hylland requested a specific budget for the $25,000 in grant money before approval. Ms. Collee informed Council that the allocated funds are malleable and could change dependent on senior needs. Mr. Meyers said that, although MATS is still vetting changes to their service, he hopes Council would approve allocating $40,000 of the senior millage grant funds to support MATS. Council Members Morgenstern and Jurkas asked if there is a way to find out how many of our seniors are using the bus for transportation. Council Member Beecham feels that education of all senior services is important and, especially, for the bus system. Council Member Hylland asked if a detailed budget from Tanglewood would be shared with Council before moving forward and Mr. Meyers responded that a formal resolution adopting the proposal is not required by the Senior Millage Committee.

4. Community Room Rental Fees

Parks and Recreation Director Mike Huston shared community space rental fee comparisons conducted with surrounding communities. The Community Room at the Norton Branch Library is the least expensive and one of the only communities that doesn't require a deposit upon booking. The room is booked every weekend for months in advance and by non-residents 60-70% of the time on weekend dates. Mr. Huston is recommending that the City keep the current hourly weekday rate for residents and set a higher rate for non-residents, increase weekend rates for both and establish a security deposit and 30-day cancellation policy. Council agreed with all recommendations.

5. Cemetery Expansion/Land Acquisition

Mr. Bartoszek provided a summary of staff's attempts to locate property to expand the Norton Cemetery. After finding federally owned property near the airport and close to the current cemetery cost prohibitive, staff approached the owners of an 11-acre wooded parcel at the end of Ellis Road that would be suitable for a second cemetery. Mr. Bartoszek is recommending that the City make a $5,000 good faith deposit and enter into a formal agreement for the purchase of this property. The sale would close by the end of June 2020 and be contingent on a Phase I and II Environmental Study. The negotiated price is $190,000 with contingencies and City Council would like to move forward with the purchase.

6. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments

Mr. Bartoszek discussed Zoning Ordinance amendments to Section 120(b)(1) to change or add 'zoning administrator or their designee' in several places. This was a recommendation from the Michigan Economic Development Committee related to the City becoming Redevelopment Ready Community certified. Amendments to Section 1048(3) are recommended after multiple variances were received for construction of accessory buildings beyond the current dimensions. The Zoning Administrator found that other communities use a sliding scale to determine allowable structure size. The Ordinance would be amended to increase the allowable size of a detached accessory structure based on the size of the parcel with the largest at 2,000 square feet for a 7-acre or larger parcel as opposed to the current cap of 1,500 square feet. Council members were in favor of the amendments.

General Comments

Mr. Meyers updated Council regarding contact with the Muskegon Heights City Manager about repair to Hoyt Street after residents' comments received at the January 21, 2020 Council meeting. The City of Muskegon Heights plans to repair the road but does not have it on an upcoming calendar. Further updates regarding the high water level included reports from Muskegon County that a Hazard Mitigation Plan is in the works and that it was learned at a meeting with both Maranatha and the Mona Lake Improvement

Association that permits for channel and property restoration are beginning to come through and the work will follow.

Mr. Meyers and Council members agreed to meet with the Communications and Marketing Plan Consultants on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Shelly Stibitz

Shelly Stibitz, City Clerk