

**CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

DATE: September 22, 2020

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council President Claire Kemp,
Councilors Pogachar, Mitchell,
Pruitt, West and Bielski

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

NOTE TAKER: Cynthia Fleming, Deputy Clerk

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Donny Ramer, Public Works Director, Matthew
Rohrbach, City Planner, Karl Bauer, City Planner I,
Dominic Farrenkopf, Mayor

Public Comment

A citizen called in to the meeting asking to be put on the Zoning Board of Adjustment agenda. She was given information on how to call Public Works to get the process started.

Approval of Minutes from September 8, 2020

Councilor Pogachar motioned to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Councilor Mitchell. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Review of Growth Policy

At last month's Committee of the Whole meeting, City Planner, Matthew Rohrbach began the process of reviewing the City's Growth Policy. Mr. Rohrbach provided the members with a memo outlining the criteria that staff used to evaluate 2015 Growth Policy. He told them that the City's Planning Board will be involved in the update with guidance from City staff. In reviewing the policy he feels that a lot of the same assumptions still hold true. The purpose of the policy is to align goals and objectives to guide growth and have a clear direction. There are preferred land use designations and we try to make zoning designations that align with those land uses. This helps both the City and developers. We recognize that we are growing, he said. There is a need for housing. We need to prioritize and look at implementing plans we have now, such as the Non-motorized Travel Plan. He said that he is looking to apply for a community block grant to pay for hiring consultants to work with City staff on the Growth Policy update. The grant is due Oct. 15. It is not likely that we will know if we are successful until late winter, early spring. Connect 93 also applied for a grant that is geared towards technical expertise around vision and value. He told the members that if we get the grant Community Builders will work with us towards value identification that would dovetail nicely with the Growth Policy update.

The members discussed the information in Mr. Rohrbach's memo under subheading #2 relating to a need for additional housing. Mr. Rohrbach stated that since the 2015 Growth Policy we have had a decrease in rental properties. The current vacancy rates are 2.5 to 3%. That is an extremely small percentage rate. He could only find 4 rentals currently available in the city. These figures support the anecdotal evidence. Growth pressure is primarily towards the City's northeast side. Some of this area is part of the North Hamilton Urban Renewal District. The NHURD may present some ways and opportunities to work with growth in that part of the city. In response to a question from Councilor Bielski, he clarified that the Targeted Economic Development District, (TEDD) is primarily along Old Corvallis Road and that area is more industrial and commercial. Councilor West commented that she was on the Council when the 2015 Growth Policy was done and she is excited to see what comes of the update. She feels that the City has had a lot of growth. Councilor Pruitt appreciates Mr. Rohrbach's proactive approach and believes with that the City has been changing quickly. Councilor Mitchell asked if they will we have a basic proposal to look at. Mr. Rohrbach responded if members would like he can provide one.

Recommendation

Informational only.

• Fire Hall Update

Mayor Farrenkopf told the Committee that Fire Chief Brad Mohn was unable to attend and he would lead the discussion. The Mayor went through the architectural drawings and building plans that were provided in the member's packet. The members discussed the drawings and agreed that they preferred Options B and C or a combination of the two. Mayor Farrenkopf said that the plan would be to present two choices to the public, explaining that fewer choices prevents "chore paralysis". The Mayor reiterated the need for an updated building. He said that the building concept includes fire trucks entering through the back of the building and exiting out through the front. Personnel would park on one side of the building. There would be a public entry and a conference room. There will be fireman's gear lockers as well as showers and restrooms, including a public restroom. In the future there will be 2 to 4 fulltime staff on duty. They are projecting that the new facility would serve their needs for a minimum of 50 years.

The Mayor continued saying we are currently looking at options to finance the new facility. As we know what the facility is going cost, we will be exploring several options including money that we have in savings, the possibility of a big name donor, traditional fund raising efforts, exploring grant opportunities, applying for an Intercap Loan, or a Bond Election.

Committee members discussed various features of the plan. Councilor Bielski wanted to know if the plans were comprehensive and included everything the Fire Department would need. Public Works Director, Donny Ramer responded that a preliminary architectural report was done a few years ago. Mayor Farrenkopf explained there could be two phases to construction with the ground floor level being completed first and as finances allowed the 2nd floor level being finished.

The members discussed the fire alarm/siren. An air raid siren is currently used. Councilor Pruitt offered that when she was canvassing during the election, residents were aware that the Fire Hall was being considered for the Skeels neighborhood and that they are worried about noise. She feels that we need to get out ahead of any concerns to have the full support of the community.

The Committee discussed the roll out of the Fire Hall campaign. The Mayor explained that they were looking at offering a video tour of the current facility as a way to gather community support. Councilor Bielski suggested that we look at the plan that was used to gather public support for the Bond to build the Justice Center and follow a similar roll out.

Recommendations:

Informational only.

• **Covid 19 Issues**

Mayor Farrenkopf keeps in touch with Mr. Tom Korst, Hamilton School District Superintendent, who said they are in the process of trying to figure out how many people can safely come to an event. Councilor Mitchell stated that our numbers are up and there is community spread. Currently in Ravalli County there are twelve active cases and two new cases today.

Recommendations:

None.

Non-Agenda Items

Councilor Mitchell asked what is the burning policy in the City. Mr. Mitchell was advised that there is no open burning in the City, only small recreational fires are allowed.

Councilor West reported that someone is living in the City's parking lot on 4th Street. Councilor Mitchell reported that there have been break-ins on the north side and to report it if they see anything suspicious so it can be investigated.

The members discussed the "Yellowstone" production being filmed in the downtown area. The Mayor reported that City police have been hired to man the intersection at Main and 2nd Street. The Yellowstone production team has canvassed the area talking with business owners and residents. Councilor Kemp reported that they are compensating business in those blocks that are directly impacted and are donating \$2000 to the Hamilton Business Relief Fund. All businesses are able to stay open. They want to keep filming here and are trying very hard. City staff have studied the permit for the street closures and feel that it should go well.

Adjourn

Councilor West moved to adjourn. Councilor Pogachar seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.