



MINUTES

City Council Work Session

4:00 PM - Monday, November 2, 2020
City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in informal work session, Monday, November 2, 2020, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Grant Harper, Colette Atkins, Steve Jensen, Nicolas AbouAssaly, Will Brandt, Rene Gadelha, and Randy Strnad

ABSENT: None

Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

Council discussed Thursday night's agenda with no action taken.

Community Development Director Tom Treharne provided a presentation regarding the timeline for updating the zoning map. He stated the zoning map will be adopted by ward. The first ward adopted will be Ward 2 with the public hearing set in December and then there would be three readings of an ordinance before it is adopted. The next ward will be Ward 4. Council Member Harper asked if all zoning changes would be effective at one time. Tom stated they would be effective as the ordinances are approved.

Mayor AbouAssaly relinquished gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Jensen at 4:08 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Jensen presided over the meeting.

Council continued discussion on Thursday night's agenda with no action taken.

Mayor Pro Tem Jensen relinquished gavel to Mayor AbouAssaly at 4:12 p.m. Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

Council continued discussion on Thursday night's agenda with no action taken.

Building Official Gary Hansen provided an updated regarding the Insurance Service Organization (ISO) review and Permits. He stated that ISO is an organization that performs an audit on building departments every three years. They assign a classification between 1 and 10 for every jurisdiction. Marion's audit was completed on May 8. Marion received classification of 4 for 1-2 family dwellings and received a classification of 3 for all other construction types including commercial, industrial and multi-family. Gary then reviewed the status of permits entered in 2020 compared to the last four years. This year,

Marion has entered over 6000 permits when typically 2000 are entered annually. The majority of permits stem from the hail storm and derecho damage. Council Member Jensen asked about the ISO ratings and if those are based on training and certifications versus quality of work. Gary stated the organization looks at everything including training, certifications and how many inspections are done by inspectors daily. Council Member Jensen asked if the ratings are sufficient or if there are plans for improvement. Gary stated he believes 3 is an acceptable rating but does plan to work on the rating for residential dwellings. Assistant to the City Manager Amal Eltahir stated the ratings are more about standards and expectations and not quality of work. Council Member Gadelha asked if other staff members will obtain certifications so that it is not all one inspector with multiple certifications. Gary stated now that there is a fourth inspector on staff, it should be easier to get inspectors to take the necessary training and become certified.

City Manager Lon Pluckhahn provided a COVID-19 update and stated that trends are not looking good and that staff are looking at making some operational changes to help minimize contact. Staff have also started employee contact notifications internally instead of waiting on the County which delayed some of the notifications. An updated COVID policy will also be released to staff soon.

Community Development Director Tom Treharne discussed proposed self-storage project located on the southeast corner of Business Highway 151 and Highway 13 (Seth Green request). He stated this request came forward at the last Council meeting. He explained the options would be to either ask that the property be rezoned to manufacturing which would allow for self-storage or ask for the business district be amended to include self-storage. Council Member Atkins stated in the staff report it mentioned that staff could research how other communities have regulated self-storage. Tom stated in the past staff have had conversations regarding self-storage facilities. It is currently allowed in commercial district and several years ago there was a moratorium placed on self-storage facilities in Marion. When revising the zoning code, staff discussed if self-storage facilities should be kept to industrial areas only. However, this project is a lot different than what staff have previously seen. Staff is not in favor of rezoning the property to a manufacturing district. Council Member Jensen stated his initial reaction was to leave everything as is as that is a main entry into Marion and we need to make sure that intersection is well suited and encourages development. Council Member Harper would like more research to be done and brought forward at the next Council meeting. Council Member Gadelha asked about another recent storage facility and if that was in an area zoned differently. Tom stated that was zoned differently and that project has already been approved. Council Member Gadelha stated this proposed project looks great but she is not in favor of making changes with the zoning map and it should move forward as originally designed. Council Member Atkins agrees that more research should be done and presented at the next Council meeting. Seth Green then spoke regarding the project including change of the zoning district and removal of storage facilities from zoning classes in the new map.

Budget Manager Zach Wolfe provided an overview of FY22 budget guidelines including property tax rollbacks and taxable valuations. Council Member Atkins asked when staff is

informed about property tax rollback rates and how often homes are assessed. Zach stated rates are distributed end of October each year and that properties are assessed every odd year. Zach stated the expectation is to have medium growth in Marion which could lead to around \$900,000 in additional revenue. Zach then reviewed expenditures which included retirement, health insurance and reserves. He stated the scheduled work session for budget is Friday, January 22 and Monday, January 25. He asked Council if those dates still worked or which date would be preferred if it can be cut down to one day. Council Member Atkins stated Friday works better. Council Member Brandt stated he would prefer Friday and then go into Saturday if needed. Council Member Gadelha stated she would also prefer a Friday and Saturday. Council Member Gadelha asked about the status of the compensation study. City Manager Lon Pluckhahn stated it is one of the HR Director's priority projects and he'll work with her to get something scheduled.

Mayor AbouAssaly adjourned the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Nicolas AbouAssaly, Mayor

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk

The undersigned City Clerk of Marion, Iowa certifies that the minutes shown immediately above were published in the Marion Times on the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk