



MINUTES

City Council Work Session

4:00 PM - Tuesday, February 15, 2022
City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in informal work session, Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

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

ABSENT: None

Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation Regarding the Central Plaza Plan Final Design Process

Patrick Dunn with RDG Planning and Design presented information about the design and technical teams, conceptual designs of the Central Plaza, scope of the project and project milestones. Councilmember Harper asked about the life cycle cost for operations and maintenance for the proposed ice rink. Dunn stated that staff asked those same questions during their meeting today and will provide that information as soon as possible. Councilmember Mentzer stated she'd like to make sure everything is sized appropriately to keep the attraction popular as the city continues to grow. Dunn stated there are members of the committee who have worked on similar projects throughout the country and are making sure everything is sized appropriately. Councilmember Jensen asked about the landscaping shown on the concept drawing and concerns about reducing the green space for events in the park. Treharne stated that will be discussed and determined as the project progresses. Councilmember Harper stated he would like to see some diagrams that how events would be laid out in the space. Mayor AbouAssaly asked for everyone to keep an open mind throughout this process. Chamber of Commerce President Jill Ackerman spoke about the space as it relates to event use.

Presentation Regarding the Fiscal Year 2021 Audit Report

Jennifer Decker with Hogan-Hansen provided a review of the fiscal year 2021 audit report. Councilmember Harper asked about the segregation of duties finding and asked how to prevent that from recurring. City Manager Ryan Waller stated that is a common finding in municipalities and there is no short term remedy to remove that finding. Waller stated after the budget is approved, the City will be reviewing staffing levels of all departments. Decker stated that segregation finding is very common and will most likely remain regardless of how many employees are hired.

AGENDA

Council discussed the agenda items for Thursday night's meeting with no action taken.

OTHER DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION

Mayor AbouAssaly left the meeting and relinquished the gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Brandt at 4:53 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Brandt presided over the meeting.

Discussion and Direction Regarding Marion Airport Layout Plan (ALP)

City Manager Ryan Waller stated Council requested this topic be added to the agenda for discussion. Councilmember Harper stated he would like to see another resolution that affirms the plans to remove the east/west runway as well as includes information about the future focus of the ALP. Councilmember Jensen stated he will echo what was discussed in 2019 and does not support an east/west runway. Councilmember Strnad stated he is also not in support of an east/west runway. Mayor Pro Tem Brandt had questions on if the east/west runway could be kept if it was moved more to the east. Councilmember Harper stated the approach for an east/west runway would cause restrictions to several properties and structures and is in support of focusing on improvements to the north/south runway.

Mayor AbouAssaly returned at 5:05 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Brandt relinquished the gavel to Mayor AbouAssaly at 5:05 p.m. Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

Discussion and Direction Regarding a Draft Ordinance Related to Design Standards and Site Plan Review

Community Development Director Tom Treharne provided information regarding the proposed ordinance. Treharne stated the ordinance would go to the Planning and Zoning Commission and then move to City Council for three readings. Councilmember Harper asked if this is design standards for the entire city. Treharne stated it is for multi-family structures with five or more units and all commercial properties. Mayor AbouAssaly stated he hasn't had a chance to review the document but is in favor of having design standards. Councilmember Mentzer stated she is also in favor. Councilmember Brandt shared concerns with having too high of standards that would push some commercial properties out of Marion. Councilmember Atkins asked why multi-family structures start at five units or above. Treharne stated multi-family structures are newer to Marion and are defined as five units or more in the Marion code. Treharne requested any feedback on the proposed ordinance be forwarded to the Planning division during the next couple of weeks.

Discussion and Direction Regarding Contract with Marion Township for Fire and Emergency Service

Fire Chief Deb Krebill stated Marion has had a continuous partnership with the township throughout the past several years. Staff is currently working with the Marion Township to renegotiate a contract and will have more information next month. Councilmember Atkins asked about the difference between cities, townships and counties. Krebill stated each county is made up of townships that are responsible for cemeteries and emergency services per State Code. Their funding comes through property taxes and is disbursed by the Linn County Board of Supervisors. Marion Township does not have a fire service so they have always partnered with the City to provide that service.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion to adjourn to closed session regarding litigation as permitted under Section 21.5(1)(c) of the Code of Iowa and personnel matters (City Manager performance evaluation) as permitted under Section 21.5(1)(i) of the Code of Iowa. (two separate measures)

Moved by Brandt, seconded by Harper, to adjourn to closed session as stated above. City Attorney Kara Bullerman stated that she has reviewed the subject matter to be discussed and found it to be an appropriate topic for closed session. City Manager Ryan Waller requested the closed session. A roll call vote was taken.

Approved unanimously

Moved by Strnad, seconded by Jensen, to reconvene to regular session.

Approved unanimously

ADJOURN

Mayor AbouAssaly adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Nicolas AbouAssay, Mayor

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk

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

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk