

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
COOK COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING
COOK CITY COUNCIL
OCTOBER 23, 2015 – COOK CITY HALL – 10 AM

TIME AND PLACE: A Special Meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 10 AM on Friday, October 23, 2015 at the Cook City Hall.

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Mayor Karen Hollanitsch called the Special Council Meeting to order at 10 AM.

ATTENDANCE: Present were Acting Mayor Karen Hollanitsch, City Councilors Jody Bixby, Kim Brunner, and Elizabeth Storm. Also present was Deputy-Clerk/Treasurer Stephanie Beaudry, Andy Hubley - ARDC, Rock and Josh Gillson – Redwater, Inc., Reed Erickson – Cook HRA, Planning & Zoning - Rich Holm, The Cook News Herald, and The Timberjay.

The ARDC Agenda:

Review the Cook Draft Comprehensive Plan. Andy Hubley stated it was over 100 pages and is now down to 16.

City of Cook Demographics

Hubley summarized the section. Councilor Storm asked what the difference was between “median household income” and “median family income”. Andy is going to find out.

Community Vision

Hubley summarized the section. Councilor Storm would like to add a mention that Cook is a “full-service community” and give the definition of that. It is one of the few remaining rural full-service communities.

Transportation

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations. Councilor Storm would like the addition of “all streets are paved” along with mentioning the availability of Big Woods Transit and Bois Forte Transportation. Hubley would like a description of the Airport Master Plan.

Additional comments:

Recommendation 1. Improve Safety on Highway 53. Hubley emphasized that the city start formal communications with MN-DOT in regard to Highway 53 safety.

Recommendation 2. Making the transportation network of Cook safe for all. Councilor Hollanitsch asked for clarification of what a “vest pocket park” is. There was some discussion about it and Councilor Storm stated that they were small green spaces which the city owns and maintains.

Recommendation 3. Support the Cook Airport. Hubley wanted to wait for Administrator Theresa Martinson on this one; he said that she was concerned about the wording of this section.

Recommendation 4. Continue to maintain and update a five year CIP. Hubley stated that the CIP should be done by a qualified engineer.

Recommendation 7. Support and participate in efforts to create bicycle facilities in the Cook/Lake Vermilion area. Hubley stated that a bike trail steering committee still exists; he is trying to revive it. A paved trail will need a lot of support. Councilor Hollanitsch asked if there is potential for funding. He stated that there is. He stated that it would not be through the woods, but would be along roadways. Rock Gillson stated that there could be possible collaboration between the Resort Association and the City when it comes to the development of biking trails.

Councilor Hollanitsch asked that there should be another sub-section in the transportation section of the plan to include some information about the railroad.

Councilor Storm brought up the new ATV trails and suggested that it be added to this section, as well. Rock Gillson stated that there may still be some confusion among citizens about where the ATVs can travel.

Public Utilities, Facilities/Services, Recreation.

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations.

Additional comments:

Hubley stated that he added the section about the school. He asked that someone let him know what might need to be added to this section, if anything.

Recommendation 9. Construct a new city hall. Hubley stated that if this moves forward, it needs to be a very public process.

Recommendation 10. Improvements to the Ambulance and Fire Hall. Councilor Hollanitsch stated that what is listed under this recommendation is intended to be done.

Recommendation 11. Maintain and improve the Public Library. Councilor Storm stated that Hubley should reference the library's strategic plan in the wording of this section.

Recommendation 12: Improvements to Doug Johnson Recreation Area. Councilor Storm stated that the building is almost finished. The flooding and shoveling jobs have been approved by the council. Councilor Hollanitsch stated there are no funds to pave the parking lot.

Recommendation 13. Consider the consolidation of public works facilities into one building. Councilor Hollanitsch stated that the council is looking at all options.

Recommendation 14. Making the Littlefork River a community recreation asset. Hubley stated that a control structure will take time, effort, and huge planning. Rich Holm stated that long ago there was something done by the Army Corps of Engineers but nothing ever came of it.

Councilor Storm wanted the topic of public toilets added to this section, as it is requested by many.

Agriculture, Natural & Cultural Resources.

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations.

Additional comments:

Councilor Storm recommended adding the Easter & Halloween events that are put on for children in the community, as well as Cook's Country Christmas. Councilor Hollanitsch suggested that the Redwater Complex be added to this section. Rock Gillson said that it probably shouldn't be added yet, as the complex is in flux; however, they are available for unheated events and have some areas rented out for events at this time. Councilor Storm asked that the North Woods Friends of the Arts be added to this section, as well.

Recommendation 17. Improve Cook's connection to Lake Vermilion. Hubley stated that the gateway needs to be strengthened and enhanced. Councilor Storm asked about the reference to Wakemup Hill and where it is located.

Economic Development:

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations.

Additional comments:

Councilor Hollanitsch asked Hubley if it could be mentioned in this section that we do have community members who are employed in the mining industry, even if "no active mines exist in or adjacent to Cook" as the section states. He thought that was a good idea.

Recommendation 22. Create a list of desired business in Cook. Councilor Storm stated that she really liked this recommendation.

Recommendation 23. Fiber Optic broadband to every home and business in Cook. Councilor Brunner stated that she believes all the lines are in the ground but not switched over. Hubley suggested that someone from the city should follow up on this to find out the status.

Land Use:

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations.

Additional comments:

Councilor Storm asked if we could add floodplain to this section and also encourage everyone to obtain flood insurance.

Housing.

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations.

Additional comments:

Recommendation 34. Conduct a housing assessment. Hubley asked Reed Erickson if housing assessments work in a small town. Reed stated that it wasn't a matter of the size of the town, but that it was important not to take on too much at one time. He stated that there are generally resources out there to help with such an undertaking.

Recommendation 38. Consider the creation of a rental registry. Councilor Storm stated that she liked this section. Reed Erickson asked if the city has a blight ordinance. Councilor Storm told him that the city does have one. Hubley asked if there was a description of the process somewhere. Councilor Storm stated that there is.

Intergovernmental Cooperation.

Hubley summarized the section and recommendations.

Additional Comments:

Recommendation 39. Identify existing boards and committees at which Cook officials and residents could serve. Hubley thought that this recommendation was important. The connections made could really help the community.

Next steps:

Hubley stated that edits should be made, and then a public comment period of two weeks should be announced. Copies of the plan would be available on the website, at City Hall and at the library. The comments should be directed to Hubley.

Councilor Storm asked when this could then be approved. Hubley said it could be done before the end of the year. The council was looking that the December 18th Meeting. Hubley stated he would provide the city with a sample resolution at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Council the meeting adjourned at 11 AM.

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

Karen Hollanitsch, Acting Mayor

Recorder: Stephanie Beaudry, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer