



Watertown City Council

?Work Session

Mayor Steve Washburn
Deborah Everson
Lindsay Guetzkow
Adam Pawelk
Michael Walters

9/22/2020 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Mayor Steve Washburn called the City Council workshop to order at 5:32 p.m. on September 22, 2020.

Council Members present: Washburn, Michael Walters, Deborah Everson, Adam Pawelk, and Lindsay Guetzkow

City Staff present: City Administrator Shane Fineran, City Engineer Andrew Budde, City Planner Mark Kaltsas, and Clerk/Treasurer Lynn Tschudi.

2. New Business

2.1. Consultant Services For 2021

City Administrator Shane Fineran explained that as part of the operating budget for 2021 there is a total of \$30,000 in consulting services budgeted for two areas that are a struggle for the City. One area is related to growth and development and the other is property conditions and blight. Fineran said there is \$13,000 allocated to code and blight enforcement. Currently the City operates on a complaint basis. The proposed model would identify properties where there are concerns and educate residents on the codes related to the concern.

Fineran said for the development and site inspection, the City would engage with Bolton & Menk. They would provide a formal inspection process on current new construction sites and conditions.

City Planner Mark Kaltsas explained to council the proactive approach he would use to address zoning and ordinance compliance. Kaltsas stressed that education would be an important piece of the process. He said an overall evaluation of the homes in Watertown would be completed to determine which homes are out of compliance. Those property owners would then receive communication and education letting them know their non-compliant issue. Kaltsas said there would be follow-up and additional communication provided to the residents.

Council Member Guetzkow asked Kaltsas how long this project will take and when it would begin. Kaltsas said the timeline has not been determined, but it would begin in spring of 2021 and end in fall of 2021. Guetzkow asked if there are properties identified that may need County assistance if the City could recommend those services. Kaltsas said sometimes you need to be careful when approaching situations however utilizing local resources can be helpful. Guetzkow asked if City legal fees should be increased along with this process. Fineran said he is hoping the City does not get to the point where legal action is taken, but if so, there should be enough budget planned for 2021.

Everson asked if the City is currently receiving blight complaints. Fineran said there are easily over 30 zoning and ordinance letters that have been sent year to date. Everson asked if this would be one large effort and then maintenance there after or if this would be an annual effort. Fineran said the efforts past 2021 would be based on the results received in 2021.

Walters agrees with the proposed approach to an extent. He is worried about the policing being fair and it being intrusive. Walters addressed the encroachment onto City property and asked if those issued would be addressed.

Pawelk stated that some compliance issues that are easy to see and others that are not. He stated he is worried about the selectiveness of the violations. Pawelk is in favor of the community outreach and education.

Mayor Washburn asked if Mark Kaltsas would be responsible for the administrative tasks related to the code enforcement. Fineran said yes. Washburn is in favor of freeing up time from the City Administrator.

City Engineer Budde said there are many agencies who perform inspections at construction sites. Bolton & Menk is not trying to replicate any of that work. Guetzkow asked if this would shift the burden from staff to Bolton & Menk. Fineran said this would supplement it by providing a more technical view of erosion control. Guetzkow asked if the cost would be driven by construction volume. Fineran said yes.

Walters is in support of the proposed services by Bolton & Menk. Pawelk suggested additional training for City staff for future inspection at new construction sites.

3. Adjournment

Mayor Washburn adjourned the workshop at 6:27 pm.

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