

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike Geisel, City Administrator
FROM: James Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer
SUBJECT: Planning & Public Works Committee Virtual Meeting
Summary Thursday, August 20, 2020



A meeting of the Planning and Public Works Committee of the Chesterfield City Council was held virtually via Zoom on Thursday, August 20, 2020.

In attendance were: **Chair Dan Hurt**, (Ward III), **Councilmember Mary Monachella** (Ward I), **Councilmember Mary Ann Mastorakos** (Ward II), and **Councilmember Michele Ohley** (Ward IV).

Also in attendance were: Mayor Bob Nation; Planning Commission Chair Merrell Hansen; Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer; Mike Knight, Assistant City Planner; Geoff Wegrzyn, City Arborist/Urban Forester; Tim Fister, Assistant Building Maintenance Supervisor; and Kathy Juergens, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

A. Approval of the July 23, 2020 Committee Meeting Summary

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to approve the Meeting Summary of July 23, 2020. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mastorakos.

Discussion after the Motion

Councilmember Monachella made a motion to amend the minutes to correct Motion 1 on Page 7 of the Meeting Summary. The minutes state that she both made and seconded the motion; Councilmember Mastorakos actually seconded the motion.

The motion to approve, as amended, **passed by a voice vote of 4-0.**

II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Status Report – Emerald Ash Borer Program & Street Tree Program

STAFF PRESENTATION

Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, presented a PowerPoint presentation depicting the following:

Emerald Ash Preparedness Plan (EAB Plan)

- City Council approved the Plan on November 16, 2015 with the reforestation component added on March 15, 2016.

- Plan was to remove 6,709 Ash trees over a 7-year period.
- Trees are being removed by in-house Street Maintenance personnel with one Street Maintenance Crew working exclusively on tree removals.
- To offset work not being done in-house, contractual sidewalk removal increased by \$300,000 per year.

Current Status

- To date, 4,327 Ash trees have been removed.
- The remaining 2,392 Ash trees are scheduled to be removed by December 31, 2022.
- It is anticipated that all Ash trees will soon die, with high concentrations in the next 2 to 3 years.
- Staff recommends continuing with the Plan to remove all Ash trees over the next 2 years.
- The EAB Plan is supported by industry experts.

Condition of Trees Remaining

- 75% of remaining Ash trees (1,795) are in poor to very poor condition.
- 20% of remaining Ash trees (570) are in fair condition.
- 5% of Ash trees remaining (122) are in good condition with 6 trees having been treated by a contractor.

Recommended EAB funding for 2021:

Contractual sidewalk	\$200,000
Stump grinding-1000/yr	75,000
Reforestation-500 trees	95,000
Supplemental Contractual Tree Removal	60,000
Temporary Personnel	<u>45,000</u>
TOTAL	\$475,000

Options for 2021 if Council wants to reduce costs:

- Eliminate or suspend the reforestation program.
This would save approximately \$155,000 in tree costs and a total cost reduction of \$200,000.
 - \$60,000 from General Fund for contractual tree removal
 - \$95,000 from EAB Plan for contractual tree planting
 - \$45,000 from EAB Plan for temporary employee

Future Tree Planting

- Tree planting has increased since inception of the EAB Plan.
- The original EAB Plan included a recommendation to plant trees on private property, near the street, whereby maintenance would be managed by the residents.
- After discussion, City Council determined residents wanted tree-lined streets managed by the City.
- Since the Plan is in its fifth year, it may not be effective to make a change now.

Mr. Eckrich recommends that the City continue with the EAB Plan as the dying Ash trees will become too much of a liability for the City if the Plan is discontinued now.

DISCUSSION

In response to questions, Mr. Eckrich stated that the EAB expenditure has not typically been included in the budget. It has been a supplemental allocation outside of the budget parameters. City Council can decide to discontinue the program at any time.

With regard to the reforestation component, Mr. Eckrich stated that if the program were to be suspended or eliminated, there would be a cost savings of approximately \$200,000 per year. If this occurred, the temporary employee previously hired as part of the EAB program would not be needed. The temporary position is only necessary for the duration of the EAB program to assist the City Arborist in managing the program, specifically the reforestation program. That employee helps with all aspects of the program, including marking trees for removal, updating the tree inventory, corresponding with residents, managing stump grinding, and managing the reforestation program. That said, if the reforestation program were suspended or eliminated, the other portions of the EAB program could be managed by the City Arborist.

In response to Councilmember Mastorakos' question, Mr. Eckrich stated that residents pay \$100 per tree and the City's portion is between \$225 to \$250 per tree. If trees were planted on private property and the roots caused the sidewalk to buckle, Councilmember Mastorakos asked who would be responsible for repairing the sidewalks. Mr. Eckrich stated that the City is responsible for sidewalks regardless of what causes the problem.

Mr. Eckrich explained why an increase in the allocation for contractual sidewalk replacements is necessary. He pointed out that before the EAB program, the City allocated \$200,000 per year for sidewalks. When the EAB program started, that amount was increased to \$500,000 because City crews were no longer able to repair sidewalks due to being re-assigned to tree removal only. Contractual sidewalk work was still budgeted for \$200,000, but was supplemented by an additional \$300,000 per year as part of the EAB program. Mr. Eckrich further stated that a \$200,000 baseline for contractual sidewalk replacement has proven to be inadequate. Therefore, he recommends \$300,000 as a baseline moving forward. After completion of the EAB program, isolated sidewalk repairs will then again be completed in-house. So for 2021 and 2022, the EAB program will supplement an additional \$200,000 worth of sidewalk replacements.

Councilmember Mastorakos made a motion to recommend a \$475,000 allocation in the 2021 budget to continue the Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan. The motion was seconded by Chair Hurt.

Councilmember Monachella made a motion to amend the above motion to continue the Emerald Ash Borer Plan without reforestation with a \$275,000 allocation in the 2021 budget. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ohley and resulted in a tie vote of 2-2 with Chair Hurt and Councilmember Mastorakos voting nay.

The original motion to recommend a \$475,000 allocation in the 2021 budget to continue the Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan passed by a voice vote of 3-1 with Councilmember Ohley voting nay.

[Please see the attached report prepared by Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, for additional information on the Emerald Ash Borer Program & Street Tree Program.]

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **18626 Olive Street Rd (P.Z. 05-2014 Time Extension Request):** A request for an eighteen (18) month extension of time to submit a Site Development Concept Plan or Site Development Plan for a 2.391 acre tract of land zoned "PI" Planned Industrial District located southeast of the intersection of Olive Street Road and Spirit Valley East Drive (17W510060) (Ward 4).

STAFF PRESENTATION

Mike Knight, Assistant City Planner, presented the request for an 18-month extension to the time period for submittal of a Site Development Concept Plan or Site Development Plan. Because the Applicant has not been able to secure a buyer for the property they are requesting a time extension to continue marketing efforts. This will be the fourth time extension.

DISCUSSION

Councilmember Ohley expressed her hesitancy to approve the extension based on the fact that this would be the fourth extension. Mr. Knight stated that the City Attorney recommends approving all time extensions otherwise the City would have to hold a public hearing to rezone the property. Councilmember Ohley stated that at some point in the future, the number of allowable time extensions should be addressed.

Mayor Nation recalled that time extensions had been discussed in the past and that the City did not have the authority to deny such a request so he questioned why time extensions are even included in Governing Ordinances. After some discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Knight would consult with the City Attorney on time extensions.

Councilmember Mastorakos made a motion to forward 18626 Olive Street Rd (P.Z. 05-2014 Time Extension Request) to City Council with a recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ohley and **passed by a voice vote of 4-0.**

[Please see the attached report prepared by Justin Wyse, Director of Planning, for additional information on 18626 Olive Street Rd (P.Z. 05-2014 Time Extension Request).]

B. **Bipolar Ionization Air Purification System**

STAFF PRESENTATION

Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, stated that since COVID-19, Staff has been searching for ways to operate City facilities such that they are safe for employees and the public.

Through its research, the Facility Maintenance Division has found a technology that can attack and kill bacteria, mold spores, and viruses, including COVID-19. This technology is known as Bipolar Ionization Air Purification (BIAP). This technology has been implemented by several regional leaders including Emerson Electric and RGA. It is implemented through attachments to the HVAC system. The BIAP system purifies the air by eliminating airborne particulates, odors and pathogens. Once installed, the BIAP system requires very little maintenance. The life expectancy of a BIAP system is 20 years. Mr. Eckrich then briefly explained how the system works.

Staff believes a BIAP system would be an effective tool in the City's fight against COVID-19 and future viruses. Staff, therefore, recommends an allocation of \$80,000 toward installation of a BIAP system at City Hall, the Public Works Facility, the Parks Maintenance Facility, Parks

Concessions Buildings, Amphitheater Concessions Building, and the Aquatic Center. This can be accomplished utilizing existing budgeted funds that were frozen due to COVID-19. If approved, the project would be publicly bid and managed by Staff.

Tim Fister, Assistant Building Maintenance Supervisor, stated that the Building Maintenance Division is responsible for the cleanliness of City facilities and they have tried to be proactive in their means and methods. He has done extensive research on this technology, which has been used since the 1970s. This technology provides a better, safer and cleaner environment and is effective against COVID-19 and other common pathogens.

DISCUSSION

Chair Hurt questioned the timeline of installation. Mr. Fister stated that upon approval, it would take approximately six weeks to receive the equipment and roughly another two weeks for installation. Chair Hurt stated that COVID-19 is an issue and health is a top priority, however, he questioned the rate of return on an \$80,000 investment when a COVID-19 vaccine is anticipated by the end of the year. He questioned whether this is the best time to spend the money. If RGA is currently utilizing the system, he questioned why their employees are working remotely instead of working in the building. He agreed this system might be a good future investment to promote good health but he questioned the timing.

Mr. Eckrich stated he understands Chair Hurt's concerns and stated that Mr. Fister has been in contact with the Director of the St. Louis County Department of Health to determine if this expenditure can be reimbursed through the CARES Act. The County currently has a team investigating this possibility. If the Committee prefers, this project can be tabled while Staff pursues the potential for reimbursement but there is no guarantee at this time.

Councilmember Mastorakos stated that she understands Chair Hurt's concerns, but everything about this virus is uncertain. Because it is not certain that a vaccine will be ready by the end of the year, and because this is an airborne virus, she has a concern with delaying the purchase even with the uncertainty that it will be reimbursed. Mr. Eckrich stated that if the Committee were to recommend the purchase, it would go forward to City Council for another recommendation. The project would still have to be bid, and the bid would also go before Council for approval. In the interim, Staff will try to determine if this expenditure will be reimbursable through the CARES Act.

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to forward to City Council a recommendation to purchase the Bipolar Ionization Air Purification System for all City facilities. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mastorakos.

Discussion after the Motion

Councilmember Mastorakos asked why it would be installed in the concession buildings. Mr. Eckrich replied that the system would be installed wherever there is an HVAC unit. The primary reason for moving this forward now is because of COVID-19. However, as Mr. Fister's research has shown, this is a good public health investment in all City facilities both now and post-COVID. Mr. Fister stated that this system not only protects occupants from COVID-19 but influenza, MRSA and numerous other airborne viruses. This would be a long term investment for the City.

The above motion passed by a voice vote of 4-0.

[Please see the attached report prepared by Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, for additional information on Bipolar Ionization Air Purification System.]

IV. **OTHER** – None.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.