

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- ASSESSMENT HEARING
OCTOBER 5, 2020**

The following are the minutes for the special meeting of the City Council for the Assessment Levy Hearing held at 6:00 pm on Monday, October 5, 2020 in the Community Room, Columbia Heights Public Library, Columbia Heights, Minnesota.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Schmitt called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Schmitt; Councilmember Buesgens; Councilmember Murzyn, Jr.; Councilmember Novitsky; Councilmember Williams

Also Present: Kevin Hansen, Public Work Director/City Engineer; Kathy Young, Assistant City Engineer; Barb Thomas, Assessing Clerk; Nicole Tingley, City Clerk

3. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT LEVY HEARING: 2019 STATE AID STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM – MILL AND OVERLAY AND TRAIL CONSTRUCTION, 37TH AVENUE NE, 5TH STREET TO CENTRAL AVENUE

A. Street Rehabilitation Project

- 1) Presentation of Information on State Aid Street Rehabilitation Project by Staff
Public Works Director Hansen gave an overview of the project. The project is substantially complete and included a new trail on the north side of 37th and mill and overlay of 37th Avenue. The contractor still has punchlist items to complete. The assessment amounts are unchanged from the improvement hearing and the term is 10 years. Hansen indicated if the City Council would like to change the interest rate from the proposed 5.5%, he would recommend 3%.
- 2) Questions and Comments on Street Rehabilitation Project
Councilmember Buesgens commented the trail looks nice. Councilmember Williams stated that he would like the interest rate to be lowered to 3%.

Motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to lower the interest rate to 3%. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Mark Miernicki – 3710 Quincy St shared his opposition to the addition of the trail. He stated that it is cosmetic, the timing is bad in 2020, and it is not being used. Miernicki shared his hardship in paying the assessment and added that his property is 140 feet from the trail.

Councilmember Williams commented that when the City started planning this project, there was not a pandemic. He added that if the pandemic continues on, the City should consider not completing construction projects.

Colleen O’Neill – 3725 VanBuren St asked how the assessments are done. She

stated she lives a block off of 37th and was surprised to see she was being assessed.

Hansen explained the City's policy for street and avenue rates. Street rates are for when your property abuts a street having work completed. Avenue rates are a third of the street rate and go halfway down the abutting blocks. Everyone pays two assessments one for the street in front and one for the avenue.

Miernicki asked about city owned property and apartment buildings. Hansen answered that the city also pays assessments and that apartments pay a higher rate.

Miernicki asked about discounting the rate for those farther down the block. Mayor Schmitt responded that this is a project from 2019 and the policy has been place for several years. Hansen added that the assessment is for both the trail and mill and overlay.

Miernicki stated he did not believe he should be assessed for the trail, he understands being assessed for the mill and overlay.

Hansen noted that the trail is included in the comprehensive plan. Hansen explained the subsidies for residential properties for assessments and that all of the project costs are not assessed.

O'Neill inquired about Minneapolis residents paying assessments. Hansen explained that Minneapolis has their own assessment policy and that they are included.

Mayor Schmitt asked when the project was approved. Hansen responded that the project was approved for construction in February 2019.

Miernicki asked about the possibility of a delay. Hansen noted that the project was already delayed.

Councilmember Williams asked for clarification regarding not having to pay right now. Hansen explained that there is a window of time to make a payment without interest (generally 30 days from the hearing) and then the remaining balance is spread out of the term with interest. It can be paid off at any time.

Councilmember Novitsky asked the notices for the public improvement hearing in 2019. Hansen confirmed that all property owners were sent notice of that hearing. Novitsky commented that all input about the trail at that hearing were positive.

Miernacki commented that he thought there were going to be on-street markings for a bike path not a separate trail. Mayor Schmitt answered that it was considered, but safety was a concern. Hansen added that when asked people did

not want to give up having parking on both sides of the street.

B. Close the Public Hearing

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Buesgens, to close the public hearing of the 2019 State Aid Street Rehabilitation, Project Number 1907. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

C. Consideration of Resolution

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., to waive the reading of Resolution 2020-80, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., to adopt Resolution 2020-80 being a resolution levying and adopting the assessment for 2019 State Aid Street Rehabilitation – Mill and Overlay and Trail Construction, City Project 1907. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to adjourn the meeting. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Tingley, City Clerk/Council Secretary