

Meridian City Council Work Session

April 13, 2021.

A Meeting of the Meridian City Council was called to order at 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 13, 2021, by Mayor Robert Simison.

Members Present: Robert Simison, Luke Cavener, Treg Bernt, Jessica Perreault, Brad Hoaglund and Liz Strader.

Members Absent: Joe Borton.

Also present: Adrienne Weatherly, Bill Nary, Dave Tiede, Cameron Arial, Berle Stokes, Joe Bongiorno and Dean Willis.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

☒ Liz Strader	☐ Joe Borton
☒ Brad Hoaglund	☒ Treg Bernt
☒ Jessica Perreault (4:33 p.m.)	☒ Luke Cavener
☒ Mayor Robert E. Simison	

Simison: Council, we will call this meeting to order. For the record it is April 13th, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. We will begin this afternoon's work session with roll call attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Simison: Next item is adoption of the agenda.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: It's my distinct pleasure to move that we adopt the agenda as published.

Hoaglund: Second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to adopt the agenda as published. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it and the motion is agreed to and the agenda is adopted.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

- 1. Final Plat for Teakwood Subdivision (FP-2021-0009) by JBI Elemental, LLC, Located at 1835 E. Victory Rd.**

- 2. Final Order for Pine 43 No. 4 (FP-2021-0006) by Kimley Horn, Located at 2255 E. Fairview Ave.**
- 3. Development Agreement Between the City of Meridian and H.O.T. 1, LLLP (Owner/Developer) for Scentsy Campus MDA-H-2021-0002, Located at 2499 E. Pine Ave.**
- 4. Client Agreement Between City of Meridian and American Staffing, Inc. for Parks and Recreation Temporary Staffing Agency Services**
- 5. Lease Agreement Between the City of Meridian and Joy's Boys, LLC for Concessions Operations at Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park**

Simison: Next up is the Consent Agenda.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I have never been so honored to make a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as published.

Hoaglun: Mr. Mayor, I will second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and second to approve a very honorable Consent Agenda. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Or, actually, is there any discussion on the motion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it and the motion is adopted and the Consent Agenda is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

ITEMS MOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

Simison: There were no items moved from the Consent Agenda.

DEPARTMENT / COMMISSION REPORTS [Action Item]

6. Information Technology Department: Annual Report

Simison: So, we will move right into our Department Reports and the first item up is the Information Technology Department annual report and turn this over to Director Tiede.

Tiede: Thank you, Mayor, Members of the Council. Can you guys hear me okay? Just waiting for my presentation. I could do a song and dance. I want to start out by saying I'm honored to be here, though.

Bernt: That a boy. I'm glad you're honored to be here this evening, director.

Tiede: Thank you, again, Mayor and Members of the Council, for having me here today. I am pleased to be with you and honored to give you our annual update for the IT Department. So, to get started we will start off with just a -- our mission and vision statement just for your viewing pleasure. One thing that I will note that's not in here -- is that the slide keeps moving without me -- is that we like to have a lot of fun in our IT Department. We try to infuse fun in that. So, hopefully, you will notice that in the next few slides. It's similar to the slide deck we had this last year, but with a few minor changes. Okay. Thank you. We will start by talking a little bit about some of our teams and the services that we provide, just as a -- kind of informational standpoint. First of all, we have our service desk team and you can see a few of our service desk team members here on the slide in front of you. This is the group that handles the asset management for the city, as well as technology purchasing. That is mainly Stephanie Olendorff, our asset management coordinator, and also does the renewals for various software solutions that we have throughout the city. We also handle various aspects of technical support. That's hardware support, that's software support, that's audio-visual support, everything in between. So, you can see a few instances up here of that and on the next slide you will see a couple more. That support also includes our field folks. So, fire, police, community development, water, wastewater -- everyone out on the field as they are using technology we support that as well. Onto the next. Our software engineering team handles software development for the city and that includes things like writing new software, that includes doing integrations with existing software or other software as we purchase software solutions and need them to communicate one with another. As part of our software development processes we also look at opportunities for process improvement as we are developing software and also automation where we can reduce manual steps or eliminate points of data entry to make people's jobs easier. So, we also handle report writing with our software engineering team, which, as you know, pretty much anything that goes into a database can be reported on, which is pretty handy, but it also requires some expertise to know how to do that and know how to transform that data to make it in a usable format, whether that's a report or a dashboard or some other format. We also have our web developer position that's part of our software engineering group, which you will actually hear us come back here in a couple weeks to talk about it a little bit more. They handle the website, including ADA compliance, making sure that search engine optimization is happening and all things from a content management standpoint for the website, helping support the various departments and what they have on the city website. So, moving on. Our next group is our GIS team. We handle all things mapping with this group, including supporting ezri software, which is the software that the city uses to do mapping and data analysis from a GIS standpoint. We also do data visualization. We handle AVL. So, that's the automated vehicle location system that we have running for a number of departments. We do data exchange with other entities throughout the valley, including COMPASS, Ada county, Boise and we tend to automate those as much as we can, so that there is not a huge manual effort anytime we need to do any type of integration with them, which is great. We also support the city by creating web maps that are available, not only to our public, but also to our internal customers as they are out and about doing their jobs in the field. So, next group that I will cover is our infrastructure team. This is

really -- the heart of this team is what's behind the scenes making things work on the back end. So, servers, storage, networking, firewalls, connectivity, that's all happening here within this team. We also do some technical support for the applications that we host. So, we are still very much on premise and have most of our data hosted here at City Hall, but we also have some Cloud applications and we are involved in how those are managed as well. So, a continuation of that team is our project manager and business analysts that handles doing both those functions for various large software projects throughout the city and also handles software support for Accella and some other systems and, then, myself that handles leading the department, coming up with our technology strategy for the city as a whole and, then, a couple of large areas, such as policy and information security. So, as you can see there is quite a wide variety of things -- services that we provide to the city and a wide variety of people that handle it and positions that handle it and they are very unique and different in how they are managed. So, we aren't all interchangeable as, you know, technical support, unfortunately, but we do have a very great team that does all these different services, handles them very well for the city. So, I'm pleased to be part of that and grateful for their support in running the city's IT Department. So, next up I wanted to cover some highlights that we had over the last year that I thought would be worth mentioning to you. The first one is our support that we provided related to COVID-related needs. The first one being the huge undertaking of helping nearly 200 employees move to remote workforce in just over a month's time period, which was pretty -- a pretty big undertaking, but we felt we were really successful in that area and that most of our customers were pleased. As time went on we also had the opportunity to help them look at things differently, look at how they do their jobs differently and look to see how technology could be leveraged to help them be successful, even while remotely when they might -- might have been used to do something on site. So, we also made many updates to the city website per the request of the Mayor's Office and others to make sure that information about COVID and the different challenges that were coming about were out there and available to the community. Those were near constant for many months and they were even after hours many times throughout the day and, then, of course, you know about our efforts in helping make sure that the Council and commission meetings could happen remotely via technology, which was an undertaking that we worked with a consultant on and also collaborated with the Clerk's Office on and couldn't have done it without them. They have been fantastic in supporting that. A couple other highlights we had in this area was we did seek and were approved for CARES funding to purchase technology to help our employees be remote more effectively, including technical -- VPN technology that we expanded significantly we have two different technologies that we are using in that area and they are both working pretty well. We have been using both of them for up to a year for many employees that are working remotely. We also purchased Microsoft Teams for nearly 200 employees and are using that for remote meetings, but we are also using it for the collaboration tools and things that it offers, because that was something that was, you know, also provided as part of that solution and it works really well, so -- we also were able to acquire many laptops to, again, help people to be able to be more remote more effectively and we also worked with our public safety entities to get new equipment in their vehicles and that's still an ongoing process. Both of those are still ongoing processes that we are working on. To continue on highlights. Here are a few software engineering projects that we had over

this last year. Our incident tracking, which is the field report writing tool that the Police Department uses that was developed internally, is now available on MDTs in the field. So, our officers are able to do those reports anywhere they need to, as opposed to coming in the office to do those all the time, which was great for our public safety officers. It increased their safety as well and, then, it, obviously, gave them a little more flexibility with this COVID situation not worrying about coming into the office to get those reports done. On another note, they also got some additional functionality that they didn't have in the field that's not available in the CAD system, so they are able to run partial plates and do some other things that they didn't have functionality for in the field before, which is pretty cool. We worked with our HR Department to develop an e-recruitment application this last year. That went live here a few months ago and it provides things such as an improved user experience, a lot more user friendly, a lot more intuitive for people to go in and apply for jobs for the city. It's also mobile friendly, so you can apply for a job on your phone if you want to and, then, we also provide tools for the hiring teams to streamline some of the processes that were happening in a very manual way before. So, that was a great project to work with HR on. We appreciated their help on that. It's been a good outcome, so -- we also did a survey and have seen very positive feedback from the different applicants that are applying for positions throughout the city, so been really good feedback. The next project I was going to highlight here is property and evidence. So, this was another project that we worked with the Police Department on. Their -- many of their processes for evidence were being handled manually with a lot of paper or sometimes duplicate or triplicate data entry. We went through and took that process entirely digital. Obviously, we couldn't take the property itself digitally, but the rest is digital. We removed the duplicate data entry and we ended up saving officers and evidence technicians a lot of time. Processes that would take them a day or two can now be done in a couple hours. So, pretty cool. There are a couple of screenshots up here of what the application looks like and, then, on the next slide I have a couple more screenshots. So, this is all mock data, so there is nothing sensitive there at all, it's just for demonstration purposes. A couple other highlights. I'm going to go in reverse order from what's on the slide here. We worked with planning to develop the service accessibility tool and did a lot of work on the back end where planning did some of the front end work. That is a tool that is used to be able to give planners more information about services and where they are available and, obviously, is used as a decision making tool for you all to be able to say, hey, you know, we know where services are and where they aren't and that will impact development and decisions, so -- and give me one minute, my surface locked and I lost some of my notes. I am not a GIS expert, so some of these things I have to -- I have to refer to. You will see one of these graphics is a -- that's our data sharing hub, which is a work in progress, but I felt like it was worth highlighting and you can see it's a -- it's a moving image that actually shows you the steps to go through to get to information, so I will talk about that next if I can get it, which I can't. Okay. Not going to get it. So, anyway, the next one -- the next project that I want to highlight is out data sharing hub that our GIS team is working on. This is really a tool that will make it easier for both citizens and other entities or organizations in the valley to be able to get GIS data that is technically freely available to the public, but not always easy to get to and sometimes requires a public records request. This is an effort that we felt was important, because it -- it helps with the government excellence strategic focus area, providing better

visibility, transparency into the GIS data that we have at the City of Meridian. So, we are pretty excited about that and that will be complete here in the next few months, so -- a couple other highlights that we had this year. We have been working with Public Works for some SCADA improvements. If you are all familiar with what SCADA is, that is the Supervisory Controls And Data Acquisition systems that are used to support Public Works functions, both on the water and wastewater side. So, integration with pumps and lift stations and everything else. We have been able to increase the resiliency of those back end systems that connect all the things together, providing redundant paths for network connectivity, providing redundancy for some of the computer infrastructure that's used there. We also in that effort were able to improve a lot of the security, which if you are not aware has been more and more a concern just due to more and more being connected to the internet. SCADA systems are definitely one of those targets that are being a little bit more frequently attacked and through this effort we are able to improve security and have more improvements to come as we continue to work with them on buttoning up this project. So, we are pretty excited about that and, then, our opportunity to be a little more secure and make sure that our facilities and infrastructure from a Public Works standpoint are protected, so -- and, then, we have continued to make other cybersecurity improvements over the last couple of years -- or over the last year. We have had a couple of big ones that I wanted to mention. First of all, our e-mail security system has been revamped and has been significantly improved and is helping protect us from ransomware, from attacks like CEO fraud or phishing. It's been a big improvement that we have had and we have also been able to cut out a lot of spam, which has been nice I think for our employees as well and, then, we also introduced a single sign-on solution, which we felt was important, because of the millions of passwords that everyone manages nowadays -- from a city standpoint we wanted to have a tool that would allow people to have one account to manage and, then, it would automatically let them into other systems that they have access to and so we have been able to implement that throughout -- I think eight different applications at this point and we will be able to continue to expand that as applications support it or come on board. So, we are pretty excited about that. That wraps up the highlights that I had for this last year. Next I wanted to talk about a few upcoming CFP items. Obviously, CFP is all tentative items, so this is not necessarily set in stone budget, but more of an FYI of what our CFP looks like for the next few years. So, for FY-22 we have a few things on the radar. One is continuing to expand our Enterprise Content Management Solution, which is Laserfiche, which the Clerk's Office uses. We are continuing to expand that to other departments to look for efficiencies in creating more of a digital strategy for our document storage. So, that continues. And with that we also have the opportunity to leverage electronic processes more, which will greatly improve some of the -- or more -- more efficiencies for departments as we continue to expand there. We continue to look at opportunities for communication infrastructure expansion -- extensions. This is really our dark fiber network that we are continuing to build out throughout the city. A couple areas that we are -- that are on the radar are the projected fire station/police precinct sites that we would need connectivity to were they to be built. So, those are a couple on -- that are on the radar for -- that could be considered for this money. But that may come back in another form or fashion to you. So, we also have our e-mail archive and discovery tool that we have had for about 15 years right now is at end of life and no longer supported, so we are planning on upgrading that this coming year.

That is important for public records requests, anything related to retention is a key central component of that. It manages the way we handle e-discovery on this platform versus if we had to manually handle it. It saves the city staff hundreds of hours anytime we get a public records request that involves e-mails. So, it is a critical component we need to maintain, so -- and, then, the next item for FY-22 that we had was wireless equipment for remote connectivity. So, as you know we have a lot of fleet vehicles throughout the city. Police. Fire. Comdev. Public Works. Most of these vehicles now have wireless connectivity type of equipment in them, which gives us the ability to get connectivity to devices, such as cell phones or laptops that they may have out in the field with them, but it also is what gives us the ability to do AVL tracking, so we can see vehicle location. So, those are pieces of equipment that are at the point where they need to be replaced and so we are coming back for -- to get those replaced this year, because, otherwise, they will stop working, so don't have too much of a choice there. For FY-23 -- I will go to the next slide. We have a few things -- again, big ticket items right here. Probably not big ticket items for wastewater, for example, but they are big ticket for us, so that's why they are on here. We have a sequel server upgrade that we need to do. Most of our data or applications are hosted on a back end sequel server, which is a type of database we have for the system and that solution will be end of life at that time, so we need to replace it. Our data center here at City Hall has a power system that is on the verge of being 13 years old now, so we will need to replace that at some point in the near future, which is why it's on the budget for FY-23. We do anticipate hiring an IT security analyst at some point in the future, which is why we have this IP security analysts position slated for FY-23. IT security or cyber security is more and more important in everything we do and at some point having a position that can be the steward of that function and no other function will be important for the city as a whole and, then, we are continuing to replace more of the wireless equipment that I mentioned before and, then, for FY-24 we have our main server/storage resource that we -- we have both at City Hall and the Police Department that will come up for replacing and will need replaced and that's a pretty big ticket item for us. There is a chance that we may look at alternative options, such as Cloud hosting and public cloud, that could change that cost and what it looks like, but at this point we are not sure if going that direction makes sense. The last time we looked at it we had a class of about 300,000 dollars over a five year period and if we looked at going to that it would have been I think 1.3 million. So, we definitely aren't set on that, but we are at least evaluating again. And, then, we have our Windows server operating system that will need also replaced as part of that, so -- a couple other future items that don't have -- I don't have a year on -- for this, our Microsoft 365, which is Office 365 that we will be transitioning to at some point in the future and for maybe 2025 or 2026 and, then, we also at some point will need another technical support position, which we anticipate when and if both fire stations get approved and police precincts that may be the tipping point for us. So, just wanted to give you a heads on that. The last thing I wanted to talk to you about was what I have mentioned a few times before as I have come before Council and this is really impacts to the city as technology or IT companies transition their model from a more traditional approach, which is we sell you something once and you keep it forever, to this as a service model; right? It's happening more and more and these are a couple examples that we have had in the last year. One is AutoCAD. We actually have used AutoCAD, the Public Works Department mainly, for probably a decade and at this point

we were forced to go to their new model, which our costs -- our Public Works costs went from 3,500 dollars a year to 17,000 dollars a year, which was a change, and, quite honestly, it's just the way of the industry and the options are to use AutoCAD or try to find something open source that doesn't work very well and isn't compatible with any of the contractors out there. So, as this happens more and more we are going to see these technology tests start cutting into our revenue in a different way than they have in the past. So, I felt it was important to mention it. Adobe Acrobat is another one that we took it upon ourselves to find ways around this and did reduce our cost significantly, but still it's a cost that went up from, you know, per license cost of 300 dollars to an annual cost of 200 dollars or every person that's licensed for it. So, again, it's a great business model for the businesses doing it. From a cost standpoint it's not so great to be on the receiving end. I mentioned Office 365 or Microsoft 365 coming up. That's on here as well. And, then, the Cradle Point replacements was something that I wanted to mention specifically, which I had covered in our CFP, but it's -- it's another factor in this equation, because software as a service is pretty easy to say we are transitioning this over to, okay, you have to pay for this subscription fee. When I sell you a piece of hardware it's a little bit different. You can use it as long as you want; right? I can't do anything to make you buy it again. Well, vendors have found that there is a way to make it happen and so this example -- we use these Cradle Points across our fleet of vehicles and they are the main source for this. There are not any other good options out there. It's Cradle Point or nobody and they know it and Sony, Ericsson, bought them up here last year and, anyways, as part of that transition they decided to do this forced obsolescence where if you stop -- you know, if you don't buy the new device your device will stop functioning and at that point you are dead in the water until you do something else. So, we are seeing that happening more and more in the technology sector and I think that, obviously, it's -- it's businesses trying to be more sustainable, but at the end of the day it's going to come back and impact the city as well. So, just wanted to mention that. That was one instance of that and we have seen a few others. With that I will stand for any questions. That is all I have for you today.

Simison: Thank you, Dave. For the record, Council Woman Perreault joined us at 4:33 for that presentation and I just want to touch on one thing before we get into other questions. As Director Tiede pointed out, the 100,000 dollars in the FY-2 for infrastructure components and just want to point out that that's more of a standing number. The cost to deliver fiber to a fire station or some fire station in the south is exponentially more than a hundred thousand dollars. So, that's something that we are working on now. I just don't want Council to be surprised when they see the numbers, see this and, then, maybe see a number three to seven hundred thousand dollars in the future, if -- depends on how we might need to go down that road.

Tiede: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. To -- to your point this is really more of our overall plan to continue to expand and provide this connectivity when opportunities arise working with ACHD, whereas building out is a completely different story, so --

Simison: With that, Council, any questions?

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: Not a question, but more of a comment. I have said it in the past with the clerk's office, with Chris and his team and Adrienne, about the successful implementation of our virtual platforms during COVID and you guys have all done a fantastic job. I had lunch today with a dear friend that's intimately involved with what we do as a city and even said, then, that, you know, Meridian never stopped and continued business as usual and that didn't happen overnight and it certainly didn't -- wasn't because of anything that Council did per se, it was everything to do with you and -- and Chris and your teams and I wanted to say thank you. Such a huge undertaking. So, great job.

Tiede: You're welcome.

Bernt: Excuse me. And also what you did with, you know, staff and employees, like you mentioned. It was wonderful. So, great job.

Simison: Council, any further questions? All right. Thank you, Dave. We all know infrastructure and technology is cheap and stagnant, so we -- we appreciate that very much and I look forward to working with you on how we as -- how we can financially plan for our needs anymore. Thank you.

Tiede: Thank you, Mayor and Council.

7. Update on Potential New Urban Renewal Districts and District Amendment

Simison: With that we will move on to our next item on the agenda, which is our Community Development Department, update on potential new urban renewal districts. Turn this over to Cameron.

Arial: Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council, it's a pleasure to be with you. Can you hear me and see the screen okay? I'm going to kind of go maybe where this may take us, but just wanted to kick this off. We do have a number of guests on with us as well. We have Ashley Squyres from MDC. Meghan Conrad is the proposed consultant for some of this work. We have other staff as well. Steve Siddoway, Garrett White and Victoria Cleary. So, we are all here to present to you all some next steps on some potential urban renewal districts. We have been talking about these as staff for a little over a year now, but wanted to bring them to your attention for your consideration and also to get some definitive courses going forward on them. So, the first -- I will kind of outline this. We have the -- the Northern Gateway District, as well as what we will call the Overland-Linder-Ten Mile District. We got to come up with a better name as we go forward with that for sure, but -- and, then, also some interplay potentially with the community center, if -- if that is going to be included in the upcoming RFP in -- kind of in -- in that order. Those are the three main items that we would like direction and discussion on this evening. So, with that we will kind of just touch the -- the Northern Gateway and I'm going to just share my screen, so you can get at least a visual of it. Can you all see that? Okay. So, the Northern

Gateway District it -- it's important to note right off the bat that the -- the existing Downtown Meridian Revitalization District -- the original district expires in 2026 and so with this it -- if we were to do and want to do additional work up in this area, a new -- a new district would -- would need to be formed, given the short lifespan of the -- of the existing district. It's also important to note that there is a lot of revitalization occurring in downtown, which has been very deliberate and I think very successful with the -- with the joint effort of many, especially those on the line with us. But with that said the northern area has not redeveloped for whatever reason and we feel like, you know, an additional time horizon, as well as additional focus could help this area truly reform in a -- in a meaningful fashion. I would add as well that -- just kind of stepping back just a bit -- that, you know, urban renewal and the use of urban renewal is mentioned twice in our strategic plan, as well as twice in our Comprehensive Plan. Truly is a tool to help revitalize areas, to stimulate growth, and to do those things that will bring value to our community and citizens. Back to the Northern Gateway. So, truly without much intervention -- in other words, the use of this tool -- as you can see there is -- there is a -- there is a lot of work here. Small parcels, big parcels, aging infrastructure, transportation, other utilities that -- that would -- that really are necessary to see this transform in a meaningful way. So, with that said as you can see -- and I will just kind of -- if you can follow the cursor a little bit. This line -- and I apologize, I'm colorblind, I think it's blue -- is the original district.

Bernt: You are colorblind. That's --

Arial: I am colorblind. It's probably purple, uh. Anyway. And this kind of hashmark line is kind of a preliminary, if you will. It's -- it's not the final, but what -- what would be a good baseline for the new district and so with that said you do have areas that are in the old district. These would need to be de-annexed similar to what we did with the Union District and, then, you also see that there are new parcels being added. So, these would be included in the new plan. So, there is kind of a -- a stepped process to -- to making this district come -- come to life. The Overland and Ten Mile District -- and I will -- again, we got to come up with a new name, because that's -- that's too long. But this is -- this is a very different scenario. Northern Gateway is -- is downtown. It's more redevelopment in nature, aging infrastructure, things of that -- of that kind. The Overland-Linder District is more -- as you can see there is -- there is less parcels. In fact, I think there is only 21 parcels total in this district and it's truly -- the focus is on the opportunity to accomplish the Linder overpass. The focus would be here that any investment in the -- the generating resulting tax increment financing funds would go to the creation of the -- of the -- of the overpass. So, a little bit different purpose and also just a different -- different approach. That being said, this one is one that the city would front the cost for the creation and would also kind of spearhead from a legal perspective, talking with -- with Bill and Ted on this one, that -- that we would -- we would handle most of that work. So, with that in mind we do have -- hope -- hoping -- hoping to have a robust discussion with you all. I would -- I would add just, again, we do have the -- the pending RFP that we would like to come back to you with regarding the civic block. That is something that we would like to bring next week, if possible. The decision point potentially tonight is whether or not to include the community center in that RFP. If -- if not, then, you know, we can discuss how that may impact these -- these districts. But, again, just guidance on -- on those three items

are truly what staff is looking for this evening. I would mention that if you do give us the go ahead to proceed we will go -- bring a -- an amendment to -- for you all to consider to engage the consultants to get this work going and, then, also get an MLA in place with MDC to pay for some of this. And I would note as well for Council, just -- just know that you will have many cracks at this. As you will recall with the Union District there is a very robust process required by statute. We will certainly be communicating with you often and seeking your input, so by no means is -- is any of this final, but it's certainly a jumping off point that we need your feedback on. So, with that, Mr. Mayor, I will open it up and stand for any questions that the Council may have.

Simison: Thank you, Cameron. Council, any questions?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Cameron, maybe before we start talking about the -- the kind of projects that are before us, would you be able to kind of briefly expand upon -- I guess your last comments about what that process would look like from now to assuming the Council were -- were in favor and would want to authorize this? I appreciate knowing that we have got a lot of bites at the apple, but help me understand what that process would look like.

Arial: Mr. Mayor, Councilman Cavener, we do have Meghan Conrad on the phone. So, she --

Cavener: Okay.

Arial: -- was the one that aided us last time and she's got a great understanding of -- of those statutory requirements. But, yeah, Meghan if you are available we will open it up for a response on that question.

Simison: Meghan, if you can just say your name and address we would appreciate it.

Conrad: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Council Members. Meghan Conrad. Elam and Burke. 251 East Front Street. Thank you so much for having me here today. I really appreciate the opportunity to partner with all of you on these efforts. Thank you so much for your question, Council Member Cavener. I think the process for de-annexation and a new plan are essentially the same, but the timelines are a little bit different. So, for de-annexation that scope of work would -- would -- really we are targeting that being completed by the fourth Monday in July and that is simply because of the value impacts that occur when you pull parcels out of a revenue allocation area and getting those values -- the increment and the -- and the base value merged back on the tax rolls and, then, the -- you know, corresponding impact on the new construction role. So, that's the deadline for the de-annexation. The deadline for new plan areas is 12/31 of -- I think what is being looked at as -- as this year. So, backing that up a little bit, in terms of specific touch points for each

of these processes, as indicated, a plan amendment does have the same path that it travels as a new project area and what would happen is if -- if authorized to proceed on a new plan, that would kick start the consultant to review the geographic area for eligibility and that would result in the issuance of an eligibility report. That report would first come back to the agency board and they would review it and if they deemed it acceptable would accept it and forward that on to the Council. The Council would, then, review that eligibility study and the findings made therein and, then, would elect whether or not to adopt the findings in the study by resolution. Then sort of the phase two, then, we would look at the planning process itself and the next -- a plan is prepared over the course of several months and a significant part of that is the plan narrative, which -- and, then, there is the attachments to the plan, which includes the map and the legal and significantly the economic feasibility study, which looks at the potential revenue generation of the project area and compares it to the specific identified projects and to the extent, you know, the revenues exceed the expenditures, then, the project is feasible. So, then, that plan is, then, reviewed by the agency board at an open public meeting and, then, if moved forward by that body would be transmitted to the city. At that point there would be a 30 day notice of public hearing published in the paper in the Meridian Press. There would also be a transmittal of the plan and the notice to all of the overlapping taxing districts and, then, it just moves through the city's process for ordinance consideration and adoption and, then, there is a round of -- and if ultimately adopted there is another round of post-ordinance transmittals. So, sorry that was a lengthy answer. I also want to -- sorry.

Cavener: That was very helpful.

Conrad: I also just wanted to quickly point out that is different from the Union District. These two project areas, both the Ten Mile to Overland and the Northern Gateway have county parcels identified, so parcels that still are within unincorporated Ada county. You know, to the extent those remain county parcels during this process there will also have to be touchpoints with Ada county. They would have to look at the eligibility study and ultimately would have to sign off on an intergovernmental agreement adopted by a county ordinance. That doesn't necessarily have to be the path forward on those county parcels, because I think annexation is a potential discussion point as I understand it, but that's just another opportunity.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thanks a lot, everybody. So, Cameron, I am curious what unique infrastructure investments or projects are needed to make private investment viable in the new part of northern downtown that we want to look at and the reason I'm asking that that way is I think that these should stand on their own. It makes me a little nervous when the boundaries are being moved around a lot. And I guess another part of my question and why I'm asking it this way is real estate works in cycles, we both know that. The cost of trades is high and the cost of land is high. So, how do we know that these -- tell me about the specific projects that are needed to spur private investment and why that is different

than where we are in the real estate cycle just making it not economically viable to develop right now.

Arial: Mr. Mayor and Council Woman Strader, this is -- this is a great question and I think there is -- there is -- there is a lot of nuance to it, so let me take it in bytes. So, there is the -- you know, the -- the infrastructure issue that -- that is certainly in play to the -- the redevelopment of this area. We know right off the bat that transportation is one of them and in partnership with MDC we will be working with a transportation consultant to understand how better to realign some of the transportation network, as well as some -- some of those improvements. So, for example, if you look at Third Street and as an example for a throughput through the downtown, giving more pedestrian, as well as vehicular circulation through the downtown, that is one that could very much impact some of these parcels downline from Third. There -- there is also some discussion about Fifth and the potential there with throughputs as well. So, that's transportation, for example. We also know that utility -- utility work in partnership with Public Works -- there is an effort already afoot to replace aging pipe, as well as expand that. So, if we have -- again do some of that work and have that available for these parcels, the likelihood of redevelopment is increased. The second part of your question, more of the market question, I think is a good one. It is important to this area that -- in my opinion that we see significant investments, that we take opportunity right out of the gate to attract investment and, therefore, start the TIF generation to help some of the other down the line investments to occur and so, again, that's -- that's kind of the theory behind some of these larger parcels -- potentially easier parcels to assemble, so that we can attract some -- some investment that -- that hasn't occurred in the past, but also to, then, help stimulate other property assemblage or utility or -- or traffic or other infrastructure to help make the rest of the area redevelop quicker. So, it's a little bit of the strategy, a little bit of the -- you know, certainly the -- the concerns that are prohibiting development or redevelopment at this time. Does that help answer your question?

Strader: It -- it kind of helps answer my question. So, it sounds like we think there is utility work that's needed that we are already starting to do on our own and, then, the transportation work -- I guess I'm a little unclear on what that need is. So, there are two examples. Third Street and Fifth, more vehicle and pedestrian circulation I guess. Is it that existing businesses don't feel that they have the traffic to expand? Is it that new businesses don't have large enough cars? I mean help me -- what -- what is the issue I guess that someone good at land assemblage couldn't solve.

Arial: Mr. Mayor, Council Woman Strader, so just thinking of the examples that we do know, the developments that are -- that are in process. So, for example, we -- you can't see it on the map, but we know, for example, Union 93, which is an additional 300 units, is going to be coming on. Right across adjacent that -- or are kitty corner to that is the Old Town Lofts. You have additional, you know, pedestrian, as well as vehicular impacts. That -- that puts additional burden on -- you know, Main Street, for example, is the main throughput and, therefore, how do we create additional circulation and additional commercial and business opportunity in other parts of the downtown other than Main and, therefore, dumping a lot of that onto Main. So, the -- that's just an example. But, really,

the -- that is the -- the hope -- and Ashley's on a line with us as well. The hope of engaging this consultant is to truly vet out and understand what those transportation needs are specifically and how best to orient a lot of that and -- and from that work we will know best, you know, how to implement some of these strategies. But that is just an example of one.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: So, I think just to put it simplistically, with this Northern Gateway project, this URD, you know, the purpose of an urban renewal district for sure is to create future economic development. I think that's the driving force, that's the catalyst behind forming any type of new URD, with the hopes that using TIF dollars that would incentivize bigger development to come in and to invest in these areas and with the help of TIF dollars, with infrastructure and facade improvements. It's really hard to know what that looks like exactly without any type of project on the table and -- and I don't believe that we do have any projects on the table and I don't know truly what that interest looks like. But, hopefully, with this new URD on the north end of our downtown area could stimulate that and really create something cool and vibrant. With that said I -- I have some questions in regard to maybe what the geographic area looks like, but that can be handled offline, nothing too serious or complicated to discuss right now. Those are my thoughts with this particular URD. I hope that helps you out, Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I'm skeptical about -- about the Northern Gateway. I think the Linder overpass is a discrete use and I can get my hands around that easier. I'm willing to see what the consultants work is, but the reason -- I'm skeptical for a couple of reasons. I'm skeptical about the timing, because I think we have catalyst projects already downtown that will change the demographic and economic drivers in downtown and I'm questioning if it's appropriate to continue expanding urban renewal until we see if that catalyst is sufficient. I'm skeptical because the legislature may mess with our city budget directly with their legislation and I believe we should be doing a return on investment calculation here. So, we are foregoing a series of future cash flows of taxes to invest them in an area, I would like to know what that return on investment should be. So, hopefully, the consultant could help with that. I guess I'm just a little bit skeptical. I -- I'm a big fan of improving downtown, but I don't -- I didn't see at least in this memo a lot of really well defined reasons that infrastructure improvements or other things are needed to spur development specific to this northern area of downtown. I'm concerned we are expanding urban renewal areas to justify continued investment overall and if it is I'm just not convinced that it's necessary yet. But I'm open minded.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: Yeah. I -- one of the things I see with this Northern Gateway URD is the fact that we do need some north-south connection for not only what Councilman Bernt pointed out, but also for expansion of economic development. There are really some underutilized properties along Fairview and coming up 2 1/2 Street around the Cole Valley facility, which, you know, has -- has some potential for the future, whether it's existing or new and it's just something I would like to take a look at closer and I think there can be some big improvements in these areas and really revitalize that area and -- and spur some development that really gives us a nice core for Meridian. We are going to have other areas surrounding downtown that are -- that are going to be good and strong and we also want to have a strong downtown. So, it's something I think we need to take a closer look at.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: In the interest of time I guess my next question would be to Council, do we have consensus or at least majority consensus at least pointing our partners in the direction of looking -- you know, expanding research and -- and coming to us with more specifics on what these URDs look like going forward?

Cavener: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. A really good question, Council Member Bernt. I appreciate you asking that one. From my standpoint, yeah, I think I'm supportive with at least beginning the studies, recognizing that the city's going to be on -- on the hook for those. I'm cautiously optimistic about what will come forth. Again, particularly with some of my Council Members about the Northern Gateway. But, then, as I -- as I think about it we don't -- we don't think about the Northern Gateway right now as downtown Meridian, but, man, in 20 years from now it might sure feel like downtown Meridian and so I think there is some economic opportunities to be gained from there. I'm less concerned about the other proposed project, but I'm happy to have the conversation. The part that I think that's important for me, Cameron, for you, just to where I'm coming from is this feels like it's -- it's a good idea. I appreciate you, your urban renewal district, bringing it to us. Let's make sure that we are doing -- we are going above and beyond, doing the Meridian way, being premier when it comes to engaging our stakeholders in this area. I want to hear from them. I want them to be excited about this, too. This really is a good project for Meridian, they are good projects for the URD, let's hear from the people that are going to be impacted directly.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: Thank you. Treg, I would -- first of all, Councilman Bernt, I would like to hear Ashley's thoughts on the statement that you just made before we get off this meeting and also I'm actually having the same challenge that Council Woman Strader is having, but in regard to the -- the Linder overpass URD and trying to understand the purpose of needing to go all the way over to Ten Mile and include some of those western parcels and how that really ties into a need for the Linder Road overpass. So, don't -- I don't want to take this meeting too long, however, that's definitely a question I would like answered before -- in general I'm on -- in general -- in general I'm on board with -- with agreeing to proceed to get the information to hear more. Really eager to hear more about, you know, some more detail on the thoughts and plans on these, but I -- I'm -- I'm trying to really wrap my head around the -- the Linder Road overpass -- overpass piece of this.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor, is that Ashley's question or is that -- who would you like --

Simison: Ashley or Cameron or myself on the Linder one, either one of us. But any takers, Cameron, Ashley?

Arial: I will go first. How about that, Mayor. Good question, Council Woman Perreault. So, this district it -- as was mentioned is very specific to the construction of the overpass and so, again, this is -- this is going to be work done down the road, but the eyeball test says in order to generate the TIF necessary to create that -- to pay for that overpass we -- we would need a certain level of investment and so that's -- that's why this area in particular was outlined. If we shortchange that and we don't generate the TIF, then, that becomes another discussion for Council. But turn it back to you, Mayor, for further comment.

Simison: And what I would add from that standpoint is we know about specific investment that is beginning in that area -- in some of the areas that are not annexed and that will likely spur additional annexation or additional potential, but the stuff that is already annexed there is -- that property owner is very interested in trying to find the right project to bring, so it's about potential opportunity and, really, who -- who would be benefited by that and as part of our argument for the Linder Road overpass is it reduces congestion on Ten Mile. Those businesses or those -- that -- were that part of the Overland-Ten Mile is potentially has investment or development opportunity, it will help serve their -- their needs long term as well.

Squyres: And I -- hi. Ashley Squyres for the record. Meridian Development Corporation. I'm the executive director. 239 -- or, excuse me, 104 East Fairview Avenue, Suite 239, here in Meridian. Thank you for having me this evening. If I understand Council Member Perreault's question it was in regards to the public involvement. So, I just want to clarify first that's exactly what she was inquiring about.

Perreault: Thank you. Specifically I'm inquiring about -- I guess I just -- I did read the memo. I want to get your overall take on with -- with Northern Gateway specifically, I want

to get your overall take on. How do I -- how do I specify my question? Basically just to address -- just -- just give us a -- if you would generally address the concerns that have been presented is essentially what I would like you to do. I want to hear directly from you about the -- the conversation that we are having.

Squyres: Well, thank you for that. I just wanted to make sure I understood the question fully. Northern Gateway is within two areas -- sub areas of our Destination Downtown Plan that you, as a City Council, adopted back in 2010. One of those districts is actually known as the Northern Gateway, the other is known as Washington and Main. There are very specific projects that are laid out within that plan that, quite simply, our agency just has not had the time or the resources to be able to put into. Our focus has been on the downtown core, otherwise known as Old Town, and, you know, I am reminded that some of the Council Members over the years -- you know, those key increment building years happened during the recession. In fact, when I started this position almost 11 years ago, the first couple of years we actually regressed and in increment really seemed to be able to be a project. It's only coming forth now in the last couple of years that we have been able to partner with developers, such as Old Town Lofts and coming with -- excuse me -- Galena for Union 93. We are just finally getting to that point and, unfortunately, our lifecycle is expiring in 2026. So, there is a lot of work that's left undone per Destination Downtown for that Northern Gateway. There is also a lot more opportunity now than there was ten years ago as well in terms of parcel assemblages, utility work as was mentioned, but also from a transportation network. You know, we had a conversation with this Council a couple of weeks ago in a work session and, you know, from that moment I have been engaging consultants and putting together schedules and working with those who can help us get to the finish line by the end of this year for this new URD that is being proposed. The boundary that you have seen tonight simply is going to change. It is going to be refined. But that was our best guess about a year -- a little over a year ago based on what we saw as some of the opportunities. We now know more -- of more opportunities, more potential projects. We have engaged Don Kostelec and Chris Stanley, who are transportation and pedestrian planners, and they know Meridian very well, as they have conducted a number of assessments for your community. We actually have a kickoff meeting with them on Friday, because MDC has contracted with them directly to help us define what the important projects are within this -- this area and to also help inform what this boundary actually should be. They are looking at those opportunities for the north -- or, excuse me, for East Third Street heading north and making that key connection from Franklin to Fairview that has been in your plans for a number of years. We have also had some very key conversations with Cole Valley Christian and their property holdings and some other folks who are very interested in investing in downtown, it just doesn't make financial sense for them at this time and so what we are hoping to be able to bring to you is a solid project. I think it's going to be rooted in Destination Downtown. I think we all feel that there is a lot of good work that is still very valuable now, but we are going to build on that and bring you a project or a project area with a list of projects that we think are feasible to obtain in the next 20 years or so and so at anytime during this process if any of the Council Members have a question or concerns or input, we are open to that. There will be a robust public involvement component. We wanted to get the thumbs up tonight to be able to start moving forward

on these efforts. If we get that this evening, then, we are going to start sketching out what that looks like and, again, we will keep you informed with regular updates. You have great staff with Cameron and Tori. I'm happy to be present at your meetings as often as possible and as often as you want to see me. So, I hope that answers your question and thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

Simison: Thank you, Ashley. And I know that there is the outstanding question that Council Woman Strader kind of put out there and I don't know there is a good answer, honestly, how many projects in downtown Meridian or downtown Boise would not have happened were it not for urban renewal. I don't know that we can really ever quantify that. You know, you can quantify how many of them happened with the -- with the urban renewal, but absent it what would not have -- what would or would not have happened. Those are tough questions and it is somewhat of a gut feel in terms of the view and approach, but maybe that's something that, Ashley, you may be able to sit down with Council Woman Strader and talk a little bit more about that from -- even your knowledge of CCDC and what has occurred over there through their years, you know, because it's still an evolving process. I don't know what that looks like. But I do want to be respectful of our next item, because we have the chief here to get into Executive Session. Council, is there anything else we need to specifically state on the item at this time or -- it looks like there is general agreement towards moving forward -- a step forward on these and -- and I will let Cameron address the other issue off -- offline.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: The only other issue I believe that they are looking for is in regard to whether or not the community center is involved with the RFP or not and I think that's somewhat of a -- an important aspect of -- of this discussion as well. I can give my thoughts, but I think we need to spend a couple of minutes discussing that. I think that Ashley and -- and Cameron and Tori are looking for that direction as well.

Simison: That's why I was hoping that Cameron could just work with each of the people offline from -- getting an answer, if he feels like he has done or has not.

Bernt: I'm not sure if he has or hasn't, to be honest with you. I know -- I mean I have my thoughts and opinions about it. That can be shared now or offline or -- flavor from Cameron.

Arial: Mr. Mayor, if -- if there -- if there is a will of the body that would be very helpful, because we do want to make that update to the RFP tomorrow as a group and, then, submit it to the clerk, so you guys can all review that RFP next week if we can make it happen. That would be our goal to get it back to you.

Simison: Would it be possible to amend this onto the agenda after our next element or is our police chief able to stay through the next meeting? I just -- I just want to be respectful,

because I think they will be, honestly, a more timely need, the other conversation, rather than this exact moment. He can stay. So, if you want to keep going, keep going.

Bernt: Well, I think that time is of the essence and I just want to make sure -- Mr. Mayor, sorry.

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I just think that time is of the essence to make this decision and so I think that -- I think it's important, unfortunately, and I understand the chief and -- and his time. I fully respect what he -- you know, why he's here and -- and I apologize to the chief, but I think it's important that we have discussion -- as far as the community center is involved. My thought processes is when I think -- when I think of downtown Meridian I think of entertainment and I think of livelihood, catalysts that brings people downtown. To make a long story short, I just don't know if that -- to make that happen I just personally don't know if that includes a community center. I believe that, you know, there are other options downtown that we could, you know, develop and build a community center on our own property and we have some other options that we can discuss at a later date. I think it's been noted that community center in a previous RFP really didn't make much sense and it would be my opinion to take -- I think you either need to leave it in or you need to leave it out and if those are my two -- if those are the two options, then, I -- my thought process would be to -- to -- to create an RFP that's going to really make a difference in downtown Meridian and I think that we can -- in doing that we take the community center out and try to find a way to make a community center a different catalyst than in the RFP. But that would be my two cents.

Simison: And for my --

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: -- for my two cents I will play the other side of this coin is that to me the in or out is that would mean you are welcome to submit it if you want to. Not a requirement. As an option. Or leave it out. I don't think that anyone is talking about leaving it in as a requirement or a submittal, but I believe that giving options is better than having no options, because, quite frankly, if someone wants to come forward with a project where the community center is the shining star of it and there is -- they can make that happen with our financial investment in the property, I don't want to eliminate that as an opportunity. That's really what it would -- I look at the community center being a if you want to do it it's a potential opportunity as compared to not. Council Woman Strader or Councilman Cavener, either one of you.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader,

Strader: Yeah. I am in agreement to leave the RFP open if someone wants to offer it and they can build it viably. I think that's a good idea. I guess I take the opposite side of the fact that I'm open minded about reviewing RFPs. I'm also open minded about the Gateway District, if our consultant and studies come back and it's a great opportunity, I'm open that. I guess I'm looking at it like if we are giving up our existing community center and we are giving up a park, we better get something really special back. I am holding a pretty high bar for what I would need to see in an RFP to make this worthwhile. So, that -- that's my two cents.

Simison: And I think we -- hopefully we all agree with that last statement. Very much so.

Bernt: Agreed.

Simison: Councilman Cavener.

Cavener: No, I think -- I think Council Member Strader hit the nail on the head. Nothing to say further. If they want to include it, great, but if it's not it better be a really -- a true catalyst project that -- that could be achieved.

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor, I think you stated well. Let's see what the options are, see what comes before us and, then, we can make that decision. So, leave it open and see what happens.

Simison: Council Woman Perreault?

Perreault: I mostly agree with you, but I want to state it a little bit different way and that is I would prefer not to have the requirement for a community center in the RFP. So, that means that we are leaving it open, then, that means we are leaving it open, but I don't want it to specifically be required in the RFP.

Simison: Council Woman Perreault, I think that's what we were saying. There is no requirement that they submit one. It's up to them whether or not they want to include it or not. Okay. All right. We have our direction from that standpoint.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 8. Per Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f) To communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated.**

Simison: So, Council, do I have a motion?

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Cavener: I move -- I move that we go into Executive Session per Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f).

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor, second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to go into Executive Session. Is there any discussion? If not, Clerk will call the roll.

Roll call: Bernt, yea; Borton, absent; Cavener, yea; Hoaglund, yea; Strader, yea; Perreault, yea.

Simison: All ayes. Motion carries and we are in Executive Session.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (5:43 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Simison: So, do I have a motion?

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I move that we come out of Executive Session.

Hoaglund: Second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to come out of Executive Session. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it. We are out of Executive Session.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I move that we adjourn the meeting.

Hoaglund: Second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it and we are adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:00 P.M.

(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS)

MAYOR ROBERT SIMISON

_____/_____/_____
DATE APPROVED

ATTEST:

CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK