



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069

Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Study Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on the 30th day of April, 2024 at 5:30 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heikkila called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION FROM JOHNSON AND ASSOCIATES ON THE CENTER CITY URBAN DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Director of Public Works, began the discussion by introducing the team from Johnson & Associates, LLC (Johnson), a Structural Engineering company assisting with the Center City Urban Design Implementation Plan.

Mr. Tim Johnson, with Johnson gave a brief introduction of his team, Mr. Mark Zitzow (Urban Planner), and Mr. Nick Fairless, Design Associate with Howard Fairbairn Site Design (HFSD). He also summarized Project 180 the project the firm previously worked on for Norman emphasizing its similarity to the Center City Urban Design Implementation Plan.

Mr. Zitzow, provided an overview of ideas for the project, which included green infrastructure, stormwater management and examples of urban streetscapes for more pedestrian friendly designs. He shared a preview of the presentation Johnson will be sharing with the Center City Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Mr. Zitzow shared ideas for stormwater management, such as bioswales, rain gardens, infiltration basins, planters, and residential bioretention in the rights of way. He shared examples of urban community gardens for permaculture design. The downside of

Item 1, continued:

having these in residential areas, is the issue of maintenance. If the City becomes responsible for maintenance, those funds are unaccounted for.

He also shared Urban Streetscape designs such as pedestrian-friendly crosswalks and bike lanes. For pedestrians, this included, elevated and wider crosswalks, different pavement materials and colors, and bump outs or bulb-outs, which make crosswalks shorter. All of these designs are ADA compliant without negatively impacting parking. Some ways to make bike lanes safer, is by getting them up and out of the streets. Statistics show, sharrows marking bike lanes have proven more dangerous versus not having them at all. Protecting bike lanes using curbs, separating them with planters, or modified flex posts were some ideas. Examples of street furniture and bike racks were also shared.

Mr. Zitzow said in November of 2023, Johnson was given the notice to proceed, and now that the Center City Stakeholder Advisory Group has been formed, a kickoff meeting in May with visual preference boards in place of the PowerPoint presentation will be held. In August Johnson will have continued meetings with staff to ensure there are no surprises and the designs that are chosen are best. Johnson will then turn in their schematic design. On November 25, 2024, Johnson will have the urban design implementation guide.

Councilmember Schueler questioned if there were plans to factor in residential or commercial alleys. Mr. Zitzow said Johnson will look at a possible redesign with concrete strips and grass in between. Councilmember Schueler added that she would like to see more colorful streets and public art on bump outs. This is where Norman Arts Council could develop some designs.

Councilmember Holman, then asked if it would be better to burden residents and businesses with completion of the project all at once or take a street-by-street approach. Mr. Johnson said all at once was quicker, but they ran into the issue of unknown gas lines or water lines that were affected and had to be replaced. Mr. Zitzow said all infrastructure throughout the affected areas would need to be replaced.

Council reached consensus on the issue of bump outs, since they have been proven to statistically lower accidents and fatalities. Councilmember Holman shared his appreciation of the stormwater pieces since Center City is already developed and flat, the pieces would prevent flooding. He stated the importance of putting TIF funds to best use. Is the priority development in specific areas, where development is needed, or use the funds for issues that need fixing, he also suggested to Mr. Zitzow that collaboration with Norman Arts Council should be considered before making a decision on street furniture or bike racks. Council would like some guidance on where to best use TIF funds.

Mr. Zitzow assured that Council would have detailed plans of which pieces would be placed in which areas along with cost estimates. He said they would work with staff to know where work has already been done. Mr. Zitzow reiterated that nothing was off the table and if a new idea were to arise, they would analyze it and take it into consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Heikkila adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor