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**City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes
Downtown Street Trees Policy Discussion**

**Monday, April 11, 2022
Zoom Community Auditorium**

***Minutes are unofficial until approved by City Council.
Council approved minutes as presented May 9, 2022.***

1. **ROLL CALL: COUNCIL PRESENT:** Donna Gustafson; Kristy Kottkey; Timothy Rippe; Elena Uhing (via Zoom); Mariana Valenzuela; Malynda Wenzl, Council President; and Peter Truax, Mayor.
2. **STAFF PRESENT:** Jesse VanderZanden, City Manager; Paul Downey, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director; Anne Lane, Parks and Recreation Director; Bryan Pohl, Community Development Director; Dan Riordan, Senior Planner; and Anna Ruggles, City Recorder.

A. 5:45 PM – COUNCIL WORK SESSION (DOWNTOWN STREET TREES POLICY DISCUSSION):

Mayor Truax called the work session meeting to order at 6:16 p.m. via in-person and Zoom Webinar Video Conference.

Staff Report:

Riordan, Pohl and VanderZanden facilitated the work session, noting the purpose of the work session was to discuss street tree maintenance in downtown areas with enhanced streetscape and to discuss budget implications and potential equity issues. Riordan presented a PowerPoint presentation (PPT) overview of the enhanced streetscape in the downtown areas, noting the project was the result of a city-initiated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in 1999. The enhanced streetscape exists only in the Town Center Area and includes

- Street trees;
- New sidewalks;
- Brick strip;
- Tree grates; and
- Decorative trash bins.

Riordan gave an overview of the current City Code §90.41, which requires the abutting property owners to keep the parkway in good condition; to trim and care for any trees and shrubs; to care for the flowers or grass; and to maintain the parkway. The Public Works and Parks Departments have been maintaining the enhanced streetscape areas because it was a city-initiated project and posed extra maintenance burden. The maintenance burden in the enhanced streetscape areas is increasing and raising issues about who maintains what areas. The maintenance issues include:

- Increasing liability from trip and fall accidents, i.e., trees causing sidewalk and tree grate to uplift.
- Increasing costs of staff time to maintain the enhanced streetscape areas.
- Contravention of streetscape objectives.
- Need for funding and policy direction.

Unlike other sidewalks in the City, the City has had to power wash the sidewalk in the enhanced areas due to extensive foot traffic: there is more debris on sidewalks and around trash bins and brick strip issues, such as moss and cracking. The City does not have a certified arborist on staff and has limited availability and equipment. In conclusion of the above-noted staff report, Riordan and Pohl posed some potential options for Council consideration as noted below.

Council Discussion:

Mayor Truax opened the floor and roundtable discussion ensued as the Council had an opportunity to discuss and review the maintenance issues in the enhanced areas and potential options below:

- Status Quo – City maintains trees, bricks, tree grates, and trash bins. Abutting property owners maintain the sidewalks.

If Status Quo, the City Code would need to be amended to reflect the City's role and responsibility in the enhanced areas.

- The City would look at a landscaping contract to accomplish the task.
- Abutting property owners maintain entire streetscape, including sidewalks, bricks, trees, tree grates, and trash bins.

In conclusion of the above-noted Council discussion, VanderZanden advised staff will bring back a proposed resolution for Council consideration amending the City Code and a budget proposal to hire a landscape contract, to which Council collectively concurred. It was noted that Gustafson owes a business within the enhanced area.

Council took no formal action nor made any formal decisions during the work session.

B. Adjournment:

Mayor Truax adjourned the work session at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna D. Ruggles, CMC, City Recorder