

City of Farmington
City Council Work Session Minutes
March 6, 2023

1. Call to Order

Mayor Hoyt called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Hoyt, Bernatz, Lien, Porter, Wilson

Also Present: Lynn Gorski, City Administrator; Julie Flaten, Assistant City Administrator/HR Director; Deanna Kuennen, Community Development Director; John Powell, Public Works Director; Kellee Omlid, Parks and Recreation Director; Gary Rutherford, Police Chief; Justin Elvestad, Fire Chief, Ed Rutledge, Natural Resources Coordinator, Peter Gilbertson, IT Director

2. Approve Agenda

MOTION by Wilson, second by Porter to approve the agenda. **APIF, MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Discussion Items

a. ARPA – Farmington Parks Wi-Fi and Cameras

Gilbertson explained the request to use ARPA funds to expand fiber to parks and well houses. The fiber will be run to city facilities by Hiawatha Broadband as they build out service to neighborhoods. The largest part of the city expense will be the necessary electrical work. This work involves installation of the poles, circuits for lighting, security cameras, and future EV chargers, if desired.

Council discussion on 100 vs 200 amp service, cost for Dakota and Excel services, ability to remain within quote, process and schedule for build out of parks, how parks that are not built yet will be handled, priority of parks will align with when Hiawatha is doing the area, pole locations, why some parks were removed, cameras facing city facilities vs homes/private property. Strength of 8 megapixel camera and ability to use video from cameras for Police enforcement.

Gilbertson explained the quotes and types of cameras to be used, video server upgrades needed, server redundancy created in PD and City Hall, video processing analytics server, and storage upgrades including the addition of storage drives to create an offsite backup.

Council discussion on ability to review video on current servers by PD, cost estimates for upgrading servers shown in quote, length of life of servers and support provided, existing cameras in city parking lots, potential cameras by Second Street and Depot Way park were cost prohibitive.

Council asked if item can be moved off of consent agenda during regular council meeting to call out topic and provide clear explanation to the public. Gilbertson will address in conjunction with other items on the regular agenda.

b. Emerald Ash Borer Update 2023

Powell introduced Natural Resources Coordinator Ed Rutledge who provided a presentation on Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Rutledge provided a history of EAB in the US and how the insect kills an Ash tree. He explained the spread of EAB to 39 Minnesota counties. EAB was confirmed in Farmington in 2019, but the insect was likely in Farmington prior to 2019. Impacts to Ash trees include the trees becoming brittle and hazardous when they die. If Ash trees are not treated they will succumb to EAB. Once infected the amount of debris that is created can be overwhelming for city staff. Total timeline for total Ash tree loss with no intervention is 15 years for all trees. Rutledge explained removal vs treatment options. Trunk injections have been proven to be an effective management tool. This slows the mortality of trees.

Rutledge showed where Farmington is on an infestation level and how canopy decline happens. In 2016 a survey of all boulevard Ash trees was completed accounting for approximately 3600 trees. The City has removed 74 trees since 2016. In 2017 an EAB management plan was put in place to begin to treat 28% of trees. Since 2017 approximately 800 trees have been treated and the disease has spread. City is currently prioritizing removing dead or declining ash trees, dead or hazardous trees and clearance issues. Upwards of 100 stumps will be removed in the summer of 2023. Staff recommends a seven-year cycle where every neighborhood gets trimmed.

Council discussion on how presentation only shows city owned trees, underscoring the magnitude of the problem, how EAB spreads to other trees, how diameter of trees to be treated is determined, effects and safety of chemical used in treatment on animals, bees, and people, what other communities are doing, and removal of debris costs and options.

Rutledge discussed options and cost estimates for city owned boulevard trees:

- Continue on same path - \$2.6M
- Increase treatments and remove untreatable trees - \$1.2M
- Remove all ash trees - \$3.8M

Staff recommends budget an additional \$240,000/year to treat and remove more untreatable Ash trees as well as add \$70,000 to do an updated tree inventory. Staff would also do an annual council update on EAB, continuing education, enforcement of nuisance tree ordinance, and hosting an annual tree sale beginning in 2024.

Council discussion on citizens ability to plant trees in boulevard, conflicts with utility systems, limited space for residents to plant replacement trees, planting strategy to diversity tree species, boulevard easement size, how trees are selected to be treated, how does City absorb this work while contractors become busier, inventory coordinated with fiber locates in upcoming years, long-term effects and costs of only treating trees vs removing all boulevard trees, what cities have had good EAB plans

and what have they done, costs and maintenance of planting trees, ability to find labor/staff to do removal work, other treatments options being studied that show positive results, resident reactions to full removal of trees, ideal time of year to inspect trees, time of year trees are treated, current EAB budget and using for removal vs treatment, using 2023 budget to conduct inventory of park paths and trails in addition to boulevard Ash trees to obtain full picture of problem to identify public safety risks, process to notify residents on problem trees, possibility of providing incentive to residents to remove damaged trees, risk to city of not doing any treatments of trail trees, treatment of original 800 treated trees vs treating new trees.

Motion by Wilson, second by Bernatz, to recess at 6:58 pm.

Council came back from recess at 8:22 pm. Council direction to obtain rough estimate of Ash inventory to include trail corridor and natural areas and apply cost estimates to entire problem prior to expending funds. Staff to report back to council.

c. Discuss the desire to revisit 10-6-29; Chicken on Urban Residential Lots

Councilmember Porter shared her desire to have the ordinance revisited to be possible updated to be less restrictive and possibly remove the public hearing requirement as well as lower the fee based on current economy and citizen's desire to be self-sustaining.

Council discussion on process with the Planning Commission, fees, annual permit process, quantity of chickens allowed, where revenue is accounted for, and ordinance was updated in 2014.

Council direction is to send item to Planning Commission to discuss an ordinance review to include fees.

City Administrator Update

4. Adjourn

MOTION by Wilson, second by Bernatz to adjourn at 8:48 pm **APIF, MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Flaten
Assistant City Administrator/Human Resources Director