



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Thursday, March 07, 2024 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met as the Business and Community Affairs Committee in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 7th day of March, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the 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

Chairman Peacock called meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock (Chair)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Mr. Anthony Francisco, Finance Director
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney III
Ms. Jane Hudson, Planning and Community Development Director
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Public Works Director
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor
Ms. Roné Tromble, Administrative Tech. IV
Ms. Kelly Abell, Planner I
Ms. Sandra Simeroth, Administrative Tech. III

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING ACCESSORY COMMERCIAL UNITS.

Ms. Jane Hudson, Planning and Community Development Director, said this topic was before BACA back in December of 2021. One of the things that Council kept coming back around to was the idea of the neighborhood engagement, and Council focused on the Core. One of the points from that last meeting, was could Neighborhood Alliance do the organization and get those meetings set up. The Neighborhood Alliance contract will renew on July 1, 2024, so it would be a good time, if Council wanted to expand these meetings into their contract.

Council also addressed the standard of expectation, utilizing the existing structures and not changing the footprint so the neighborhood remains intact. Additionally, Council discussed not wanting the applicant to have to come in and do a Simple Planned Unit Development (SPUD) application. Staff has come up with the idea of having a Neighborhood Commercial District Zone that Council could adopt and put into the Zoning Ordinance. Staff also thought it was still important for the applicants to still come before Council and give the neighbors the ability to have the Pre-Development meeting and express any concerns. The City would have a checklist of the small amount of uses that owners could do within that Neighborhood Commercial, and have the opportunity for Council to see the uses.

It would be similar to Special Use Permit but it would be straight zoning. Staff is looking at some specific applicable neighborhood uses. Staff has also been talking about the change of ownership, and the selling of a business. Staff in that event could reissue a Certificate of Compliance or Certificate of Occupancy to make sure, what was approved going forward is what was adopted.

In the previous Plan Norman, Former Councilmember Hall pointed out it included a type for Neighborhood Commercial Node, which actually had an area requirement of one-half acre. This is just a generalized definition of the Neighborhood Commercial we had gone over last time.

Chairman Peacock said most residents are thinking it would not be good for the neighborhoods, but when you see the actual example, they are beautiful little projects. They are small, and fit in the neighborhood. He said Council is talking about Accessory Commercial Units, but I think the broader discussion is how to get commercial services into neighborhoods without dropping a bunch of convenience stores

Ms. Hudson said Norman has Midway, a corner lot, and The Earth a mid-block. Neighborhood business stores. Both businesses have been there a lot of years. Clearly it can be successful and it is not deterring from the neighborhood

Councilmembers agreed to move forward with Neighborhood Alliance facilitating the discussion. Neighborhood Alliance could help flush out that list of uses with neighborhood feedback.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING A REQUEST FROM THE WEATHER MUSEUM TO HOLD A GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ELECTION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WEATHER MUSEUM.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney, said I brought this to Council back in February and it is coming back today because staff has a specific request from Ross Forsyth to place this proposition on the ballot for June for General Obligation Tax Bond.

She said, that would require this be put on the Council agenda on Tuesday March 12, 2024, and she felt like staff needed to discuss this before going to a Council and this BACA meeting was available. The First Reading on the ordinance would be March 12, 2024, and Second Reading would be March 26, 2024, if the June 25, 2024, election date were to go forward.

Ms. Walker said Mr. Forsyth is asking for \$15 million of seed money for purpose of purchasing the land, construction, equipping, planning, branding and development and any other activities to aid in the obtaining of gifts or grants to create The National Weather Museum and Science Center- Weather Experience. Mr. Forsyth is anticipating the cost of the facility would exceed \$100 million and the bonds would be issued immediately to fund those beginning activities. When Council talked in February, Mr. Anthony Francisco, Finance Director, talked through the Constitutional provision that authorizes these kind of bonds that can take up to 30 years to pay them.

She said possible ballot language could be, for the broad purpose of economic and community development then it could be narrowed down to this specific project. More information could be added to limit flexibility within this ordinance. She said Council should determine if restrictions are needed or more flexibility is desired. She said she talked with Bond Council to confirm that it is so broad for economic development purposes, it could be used for a privately owned business and the weather Museum would not necessarily have to be a non-profit. It would not have to be owned by the City that just effects weather it is a taxable or non-taxable debt.

Councilmembers in agreement with getting deliverables attached to it, and wanted to know if there are any commitments by other funding available and thinks pledges should be lined up before moving forward.

Ms. Walker said language could be included in the election ordinance itself or put together a separate agreement that would be approved by Council at the same time with all the deliverables.

Mr. Francisco said OU did not have money in hand, but they had pledges, the State's authorized bonds, and Noble Foundation had given a \$10-million donation, but it was not cash in hand yet, at the time so he felt if language could tie that down would be useful.

Ms. Walker said putting it into an agreement gives us flexibility in the future if something happens and it needs to be adjusted. Mr. Forsyth and property owners are having really positive conversations to purchase but, it is not a contract to purchase. If a location is included in the ordinance the approval would be limited. The location could be included in the development agreement, which would allow Council to make changes if necessary.

Item 2, continued

Councilmembers would like an education campaign and wanted to know who would be responsible for running the campaign and who would pay for it.

Ms. Walker said the City should only do the education campaign because it is an election that Councils calling and hopefully the Weather Museum would put together a group for a Yes Campaign to do advocacy. We would need to know how long we would want to go. Staff can get some projections together to see what it looks like in 10 years, 15 years up to 30 years, this is a discussion for the taxpayers to have. What you have to put in the ordinance would be the maximum interest rate. That's set in the Constitution is 14%, obviously hopefully not anywhere near that, then the length of the term and then the purpose of those funds.

Councilmembers were open to an August election if they can get the surveys and education campaign done.

Ms. Walker said staff will bring it back to BACA in May and possibly a Study Session right after that for full Council discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 P.M.

ATTEST:

Brenda Hall

City Clerk

DuSelee

Mayor

