



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND /PUBLIC WORKS
COMMITTEE MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
August 11, 2008**

The Community Development/Public Works Committee of the Merriam City Council met on Monday, August 11, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present included: Chair Gayle Stephens, Councilmember Christine Evans Hands, Councilmember Chad Rowe and Councilmember John Crabtree. Staff present included: Phil Lammers, City Administrator; Bryan Dyer, Community Development Director; Susan Hayden, Director of Parks and Recreation; Randy Carroll, Public Works Director; Beth Linn, Neighborhood Services Manager and Judy Devereay, Recording Secretary.

Public Items

Chair Stephens said at the Finance Committee meeting there was discussion of the use of the city share of the new county ¼ cent public safety tax and Phil Lammers, City Administrator, and Cindy Ehart, Finance Director, are looking for ideas from Council on where the funds could be used and where the money would be helpful. Chair Stephens stated that the tax would generate approximately \$225,000 a year. She said it was discussed that the money should be used in the safety field. Chair Stephens said that Councilman Burks suggested sidewalk work and at this time she would ask Randy Carroll, Public Works Director, to put together costs for sidewalks for Council. Chair Stephens noted she thought this money could be put toward the radio system that the county is asking Merriam to join. She said that Councilwoman Hupp had suggested at the Finance Committee meeting that the public safety tax should be reviewed every year by the council and she agreed with Councilwoman Hupp's suggestion.

Phil Lammers, City Administrator, added that staff could narrate all the issues and maybe start suggesting some policy options. Chair Stephens replied she thought that was a good idea and members of the CD/PW Committee should forward their ideas to Mr. Lammers and Ms. Ehart. Mr. Lammers added that staff may prioritize a few of items staff thinks are the best ideas.

Councilmember Rowe said he liked the idea of looking at the tax every year but he thought Council needed to have some very specific public safety items because the voters specifically approved the tax for public safety.

1. CIP Monthly Update

Beth Linn, Neighborhood Services Manager, presented the CIP monthly update stating that the 61st Street/Residential Streets Group I is substantially complete with the exception of sod replacement. She said the contractor will be finished with several punch list items in the next couple of weeks. The sod placement operations will begin on approximately September 1st.

Ms. Linn said that Merriam has been approached by the City of Mission to participate in their Fall Home Ideas and Renovation Expo to be held on October 11th at Sylvester Powell and is very similar to the one that Overland Park did in the spring. Ms. Linn noted that she thought they were going to try and alternate events. It will be free to the residents and hosted by the City of Mission and some surrounding cities including Merriam, Prairie Village, Overland Park and maybe Fairway.

Ms. Linn said reusable shopping bags would be given away at the expo with the city logos on them for any of the participating cities and will have similar things like they had in Mission where there were booths, vendors, presentations and home renovation workshops. She said that Mission is finalizing all the details and she should have everything ready on Monday to send out in e-Merriam, press releases, Merriam Highlights and put brochures at the Community Center front counter. Ms. Linn added that possibly a postcard could be sent out to the residents depending on costs.

Ms. Linn said that the Neighborhood Services Manager in Mission told her they would be selling an Earth Machine which is a composting machine for under \$50. Councilmember Hands commented that Lenexa and Overland Park were doing some neighborhood meetings about sustainability and those machines were probably the same sort of thing. Ms. Linn added this was a good opportunity for the city to help encourage residents to make an investment in their property. Chair Stephens suggested that perhaps Home Depot might want to be at the expo and give out discount cards.

2. Consider Approval of Facility Usage Agreement with Johnson County Nutrition Program

Susan Hayden, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided the background for this item stating that the item is the semi-annual renewal of the Facility Usage Agreement to allow Johnson County Nutrition Program to use the Hocker Grove multi-purpose room and the kitchen at the Irene B. French Community Center. Ms. Hayden said the agreement permits the county to administer a Sr. Citizens congregate meal program from October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009 and is renewable for an additional year pending release of federal funds. She noted this is a program that the city has had at the Community Center since 1990 with the meal site operating Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. The county provides a nutrition site manager and also a kitchen manager. The kitchen manager packages up home delivered meals and volunteers deliver the meals in Merriam and Shawnee. Ms. Hayden said the volunteers are currently delivering 75-80 home delivered meals a day. She said the meal site averages about 20 people per day with a couple of specials events a month drawing 40-50 people.

Ms. Hayden stated that the agreement was prepared by the City Attorney and is the same format as in previous years. The city receives \$200 a month from the county for the use of the facility.

Councilmember Hands asked if the amount charged had fluctuated at all over the years with Ms. Hayden replying that this had come up once or twice and she noted that it was more of a gift from the city to the residents. Councilmember Hands asked if the gift was in line with other cities and Ms. Hayden said she thought Merriam is the highest of all the rents.

COUNCILMEMBER ROWE MOVED TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO THE FULL CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE THE FACILITY USAGE AGREEMENT WITH JOHNSON COUNTY NUTRITION PROGRAM AND PLACE ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

3. Update Regarding Light Pollution Issues

Bryan Dyer, Community Development Director, stated that a letter from Mayor Wilkes was included in the packet regarding the light pollution issue. He said the Mayor and staff met with Mr. Zarda and based upon their observations there was not a nuisance and did not rise to a level of violating the city ordinance so the matter would not be pursued any further.

4. Update on Development Projects

Bryan Dyer, Community Development Director, provided an update on the following projects:

- Pointe at Prairie Haven
- Merriam Village
- Timber Ridge
- Merriam Pointe
- South Park
- Auctioning of 2 city properties in September

Mr. Dyer noted that staff would be attending a conference on hoarding Tuesday.

Councilmember Hands commented on an e-mail she has sent to councilmembers that was an overview of a series of neighborhood meetings in partnership between Lenexa, Overland Park and KCP&L talking about compact fluorescent light bulbs, and other sustainability and energy saving ideas in the home. She said it was on the line of neighborhood parties but she had not talked to Eileen Horn who was on one of the committees to see how well attended everything was. Mr. Lammers said he was going to be meeting with a KCP&L representative, Tom Robinson, on Friday and could follow up with him on the meetings. Mr. Lammers noted he was in a meeting on Friday at MARC that was a round table of City Administrators and Managers around the area and the topic of sustainability came up and nobody in the room could honestly say that they had an elected body that was really doing anything or was

anything other than a latent desire to maybe look at something. He said MARC was at a point of using it as an underlying theme for pretty much everything they were going to do for the next year but none of the communities or very few of the communities that were represented that day were doing much at this time.

5. Discussion Regarding List of Drainage Projects

Chair Stephens invited everyone to come up and use her yard to look at the detention basin that is going in next door to her that DDR is putting in. She said she sees that as this project goes forward it will become over 5 to 10 years from now is something that she would like to see the city look at in different drainage areas. Chair Stephens noted that in reviewing the drainage projects, that something similar to this could be done on a smaller scale. It would help in slowing down the flow of water going through and would be green and a positive thing. Chair Stephens added that there are things that have been tried that have not been successful but she really thought the detention basin by her was going to work. It will be planted in Buffalo grass and trees and in time the wildlife would return to a natural area. Chair Stephens referred to some drainage projects areas and asked if there was anyway the city could make them a green area instead of putting in a long concrete channel that is ugly with chain link fence on it that has weeds growing up on the sides and adds nothing for anyone. She added that some things can not be changed but there are areas that the city should start taking forward steps thinking outside the box and seeing what can be done in all kinds of things. Chair Stephens added she would like to see windmills going in with Merriam being totally energy supplied by windmills. She said she thought it would be wonderful if Merriam, as a little city, would start making a big push to be green, environmentally conscious, that anything built in the city would have to have certain requirements that make it look greener, rain gardens, etc.

Randy Carroll, Public Works Director, stated that Public Works has a concern with bio-engineering because of the maintenance and has gotten away from that with the lined channels. He added that whether they agree or disagree with that, the lined channels cut down on a lot of maintenance. Mr. Carroll said his crews have to clean out trash, weeds, silt and grass from the detention ponds several times a year. He said he liked the Merriam Village Detention Basin better than the bio-engineering.

Councilmember Hands asked how the detention ponds were different than the rain gardens we hear so much about. Mr. Carroll replied that the detention ponds actually hold a large quantity of water and the rain gardens are designed for ditch line roads and where it holds the water and then releases it pretty quickly. The detention pond actually is a pond so there is a difference between the two.

There was further discussion of detention ponds and rain gardens in the area with Councilmember Rowe suggesting that the City Council schedule a meeting with city staff to look at the list of unprogrammed drainage projects. He added this could be similar to the housing tour.

Ms. Linn said the city used to do a CIP tour and she could discuss with Mr. Lammers and Mr. Dyer to schedule a tour. Chair Stephens noted that the reason she wanted to discuss the drainage projects was that there were so many of them and are very

expensive. She said that the council needs to start planning on how to address these, what kind of schedule the city would be looking at, how much money can be allocated in a year to go toward each project and how long would it take to do a million dollar project. Chair Stephens said she thought this is the next major thing that the Capital Improvement budget has to look at is the drainage problems in Merriam. She said that whatever is done, she did not want it to become involved with the money or bond for Turkey Creek; that has to be a totally separate issue. Chair Stephens agreed with Councilmember Rowe that a tour was a wonderful idea to get a clear picture of what the council should plan for and address.

Mr. Dyer stated that to do drainage projects is a huge, huge undertaking and very expensive. He said that staff needs to work on educating the council by demonstrating the size and scope of how large these projects are. These projects have a large impact over a large number of people and some of these projects can be very beneficial for a large number of people.

Chair Stephens commented that if the city has to look at a sales tax that the city continues what has been done because residents realize how many drainage problems the city has. Councilmember Rowe added that 53% of Merriam voted for the Public Safety Tax and that is the same percent that passed in the county and the local tax has been successful.

Ms. Linn pointed out that in reading the Johnson County study there are a lot of discussion of installing concrete lined channels and just as a reminder that in the city's recent experience with the Corps of Engineers it is very much a balancing act in what they will approve for a concrete structure or a concrete lined channel and what they would expect from the city in return. She said as the city moves forward in trying to figure out how best to deal with particular drainage issues there are going to be some give and take with the Corps of Engineers on how the city goes about installing those. She added that the other thing in looking at the list, some of those drainage projects meet the city's current drainage criteria in particular the Brookhaven neighborhood at 52nd and Farley is quickly approaching the point of flooding threatening habitable structure. She said that is different than an open channel that is doing a general erosion project so in some of the CIP tour and education of council and prioritization using that established drainage criteria on how the city prioritizes will help staff in looking at this.

Councilmember Rowe asked Mr. Dyer and Ms. Linn to think about the current developments and if the city is totally comfortable with all of the drainage and is correct because what is talked about now is problems that were developed 30-40-50 years ago and now they are coming back as big expensive projects. Mr. Dyer responded that the current developments, particularly Merriam Village and Merriam Pointe, all have approved drainage studies. Referring to the other projects, Mr. Dyer said the Planning Commission and City Council has reviewed them in regards to drainage issues and they met the city standards for those drainage issues. Mr. Dyer added that there are subdivisions that were built in the past with no storm drain systems and are severely lacking with no way to convey the water away from the subdivision without it going through peoples property and without it causing issues.

Chair Stephens said in the future, the city needs to look at those particular areas, and the council needs to have a list of areas, noting there are problems in those areas and are not on the drainage list but council needs to look at them. Councilmember Rowe added that sidewalks have the same issues in the older neighborhoods where they were allowed to build without sidewalks. Chair Stephens said if the city looked at some kind of sales tax issue in the future, one of the things that would have to be put in there is because of the CDBG funding being cut so drastically, that the city has to look at not just drainage but also need to put in the sidewalks and streetlights because those are two other things that we really have nothing left in our budget to take care of. If that is stretched out into the future, those are things that could be addressed.

COUNCILMEMBER CRABTREE MOVED FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Devere, Recording Secretary