



VISION STATEMENT:
"The Magic City: A diverse,
welcoming community
where people prosper and
business succeeds."

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

February 6, 2023

5:30 P.M.

220 N. 27th St.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I
Councilmember Gulick, Ward I
Councilmember Neese, Ward II
Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II
Councilmember Denise Joy, Ward III
Councilmember Danny Choriki, Ward III
Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV
Councilmember Pam Purinton, Ward IV
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V
Mayor William Cole

Absent/
Excused:

Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Louis Engels, Utility Engineer
Scott Walker, Transportation Planner
Debi Meling, Public Works Director
Jennifer Duray, Public Works Deputy Director
Wyeth Friday, Planning Director
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director
Mike Whitaker, Parks Director
Mike Pigg, Parks Superintendent

Public Comment:

- **Aries P., minor**, spoke of drug and mental health issues.
- **Amber Dunn, 832 Dorothy Lane, Billings, MT**, spoke of Dorothy Lane issues.
- **Wesley Dunn, 832 Dorothy Lane, Billings, MT**, spoke of Public Works issues.
- **Sean Callahan, 836 Dorothy Lane, Billings, MT**, spoke of meth issues.
- **Katie Harrison, no address given**, spoke of single use plastics initiative.

1. Energy and Conservation Commission (ECC) – LEED.

Louis Engels, Utility Engineer, spoke of the members and history of the Commission. He introduced Glenn Foy, Chief Executive Officer, who gave an overview of the executive summary, and commission goals. He reviewed estimated kWh saved, how LEED for cities worked, and local media attention. He showed the LEED structure and ECC management, the LEED gold scorecard and ECC next steps.

Council congratulated ECC, spoke of the great accomplishment LEED was, discussed further cost reduction options, and sustainability.

Councilmember Choriki made a motion to direct staff to renew the ECC term, seconded by Councilmember Shaw. Approved 10-1, Neese opposed

Public comment:

- John Halvorson, spoke of audio issues hearing Councilmembers through Zoom.

2. Grand Avenue System Change Request.

Scott Walker, Transportation Planner, reviewed a map of the location, and indicated residential and commercial growth issues were causing increased traffic, accidents and lack of curb, gutter and sidewalks. He indicated the change would allow the community to explore a variety of funding options to address the issues.

Council discussed proposed changes, how the change would benefit the City, and areas affected.

Public comment:

- None

Councilmember Boyett made a motion to direct staff to place the item on a future Council meeting for approval, seconded by Councilmember Joy. Approved unanimously

3. Transportation and Parks Capital Improvement Plan.

Debi Meling, Public Works Director, gave an overview of FY24-28 transportation projects, no increase in operations and maintenance costs, increase PAVER and financial statistics of the PAVER program. She reviewed an increase of traffic calming, safe routes to school (SRTS) implementation, accelerate SRTS – sidewalks, modifications to the CIP prioritization tool, downtown improvement project and financial impacts. She ended the presentation with staff recommendations.

Council discussed street maintenance, SRTS opportunities, TIF funding, landscaping and the sidewalk program.

Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, briefly explained how the delay in redistricting would affect SRTS.

Councilmember Choriki spoke of not shifting money to PAVER from arterial reconstructions.

Council discussed 2-way street conversions and the negative responses to back in parking.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of the increase in safety by using back in parking and the overall temperature of downtown business owners regarding 2-way traffic.

Council discussed the need for improvements on Grand Avenue from Shiloh to 62nd, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding being used for a reduction in single occupant vehicles.

Public comment:

- **Morgan Tuss, 2837 US Hwy 3, TrailNet, Billings, MT**, spoke of the locations of Active Transportation Trails.
- **Erin Claunch, 641 Chinook Place, Billings, MT**, indicated the newer arterial streets provided more safety.

Council discussed timing traffic lights and traffic calming solutions.

Councilmember Shaw made a motion to direct staff to proceed with the Transportation Capital Improvement Plan, as recommended by staff. Councilmember Rupsis seconded. Approved 7-4, Councilmembers Neese, Owen, Choriki and Tidswell opposed

Recess at 7:48 pm. Reconvene at 7:58 pm.

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, gave a brief recap of how the Parks presentation had changed based on Council input.

Mike Pigg, Parks Superintendent, spoke of Council's request for an indoor tennis bubble at Pioneer Park. He spoke of reasoning why the bubble would not work well at the park. He spoke of three different types of spray parks, costs, and benefits.

Council discussed costs, possible efficiency upgrades, and how a certain design may work better at certain parks.

Andy Zoeller reviewed bonded projects recommendations for Parks, Recreation and Public Lands (PRPL), updates, and adjusted costs. He spoke of a group currently discussing parks financing that would not be decided until after the CIP. He suggested Council identify parks projects that should be pursued and adopt a plan knowing that this portion of the CIP would change. He reviewed the PRPL CIP as amended.

Councilmember Shaw recommended the indoor tennis park be removed from the list as it seemed to have leapfrogged projects that had been needed for longer. Councilmember Boyett agreed.

Council discussed ways to move forward with adoption of the Parks CIP while allowing funding adjustments.

Mike Whitaker, Parks Director, spoke of plans and the need at Landon's Legacy parks for an accessible route to the playground.

Councilmember Owen spoke against a bond schedule that would push out Cottonwood, Castle Rock and Coulson Parks years further.

Councilmember Rupsis indicated there were many pledges in the works that would reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Public comment:

- None

Councilmember Shaw directed staff to remove the indoor tennis/pickleball court from the 5-year CIP. Councilmember Neese seconded. Approved

Councilmember Rupsis indicated he would like to see the project remain on the list but the timeframe could be extended.

Council discussed the merits of leaving the tennis courts on the CIP versus the bonding lists.

Approved 6-5, Councilmembers Joy, Choriki, Purinton, Rupsis and Mayor Cole opposed

Councilmember Rupsis directed staff to delay irrigation automation in Spring Creek and Evergreen Parks from FY2024 to F2025 and use those funds (\$315,097) for accessible sidewalks and matching funds at Poly Vista. Councilmember Purinton seconded

Approved unanimously

Councilmember Boyett directed staff to bring back the Parks CIP, with approved amendments, for Council approval. Councilmember Gulick seconded

Mr. Zoeller indicated he would bring back a revised document outlining Councils amendments.

Approved unanimously

4. Council and Leadership Team Retreat.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, indicated there was not a weekend that would work for all Councilmembers but he had wanted to ensure that relevant staff was available.

Mayor Cole spoke of his timing conflict as he was hoping to attend a USS Billings ceremony.

Council discussed the merits of various weekends and scheduling future retreats with more advance notice.

Public comment:

- None

5. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, indicated the upcoming agenda for February 13, 2023 was very large. He indicated one of the land use items could have a very large number of public in attendance.

Public comment:

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-AGENDA ITEMS". Speaker Sign-in required. (Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments are limited to 3 minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)

- None

ADJOURN: 8:39 pm