Council Present: Patty Acomb, Tim Bergstedt, Bob Ellingson, Tony Wagner, Brad Wiersum, and Mayor Terry Schneider. Dick Allendorf was excused.

Staff: Geralyn Barone, Perry Vetter, Jeff Sebenaler, Dave Johnson, Lee Gustafson, John Vance, Merrill King, Brian Wagstrom, Julie Wischnack, Corrine Heine, Joel Merry, Liz Berger, Elise Durbin, Darin Ellingson, Will Manchester, Jeremy Koenen, Jim Malone, Mike Pavelka, and David Maeda

Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Barone introduced the CIP. She said the city is at the point of its lifecycle that things like streets, sewer and water systems are aging and that was reflected in the CIP. The five year CIP is $111.6 million, a five plus percent increase from last year.

Gustafson reported on the Ridgedale area improvements.

Wagner said his biggest concern was for those coming from the Best Buy, Slumberland, and Kinkos, the only option to keep going around Ridgedale was to go through the parking lot, take a right, and then take a left. Everyone from the neighborhoods was being funneled through Byerlys to get to Target over to Best Buy. Gustafson said there was not a perfect solution.

Wiersum said the problem was too much traffic particularly during the holiday season. Currently people who drive to the area are used to doing some convoluted things to get through. This works if there was not too much traffic. The problem was when there was heavy traffic, it's aggravating for everyone. He said the solution that did the best job at solving the too much traffic issue was the one that should be focused on. An issue like having to cut through Byerlys would be an inconvenience but was not a big enough deal in the bigger picture than trying to solve the heavy congestion during the holiday season.

Wagner asked if consideration was given to other trail connections to the neighborhoods to the south. Wischnack said that was discussed but there was a lot of opposition from neighbors who did not want that to happen. Wagner said the people most vocal at the neighborhood meeting expressed opposition but he suggested getting further feedback from others in the neighborhood. He said there was definitely support for a connection from the Essex neighborhood so residents did not have to go all the way up to a road with no trail through the Best
Johnson provided information about the plan for proposed improvements to the Glen Lake Activity Center and the outdoor skating facility.

Schneider said although he agreed the Glen Lake Activity Center was badly in need of improvements, he thought the $15 million cost was too high. Johnson said the first phase of the study would be to look at what possibly could be done. The $15 million was a placeholder. The council would be given different options as well as cost estimates and whether or not to proceed at all. Schneider said he thought it was possible to build something for a much lower cost that would still be useable and functional.

Schneider called a recess at 8:16 p.m. He called the meeting back to order at 8:31 p.m. Ellingson was excused.

2. 2016 – 2020 Economic Improvement Program (EIP)

Barone gave an overview.

Schneider said one concern was the city was losing opportunities in terms of affordable housing because of a lack of being proactive. He didn't know what the right answer was given the limited resources available. Wagner said if the council wanted the EDAC to be more proactive, the council would have to provide policy direction. He noted the city had recently used TIF to get affordable housing and historically this had not been typically done. What the city was not doing was funding Homes Within Reach as much. He said 20 years ago the city invested in projects like Minnetonka Heights and Crown Ridge. The EDAC had spent a lot of time on those with the $10,000 or $20,000 funding and it wasn't really clear the impact. As a result there was an uneasiness about what to do. Acomb noted the school districts had programs that included an affordable element. There were programs that offered a broader array of resources. Wiersum said when a program is first established there was a greater impact. Over time it gets to a level of being maintained. This did not mean the program wasn't working but one could not expect continual improvement.

Wiersum said given the Met Council's goals and the tools available, the city might want to adjust its approach. During the recent TIF discussion he ran some numbers and realized Homes Within Reach was providing the best cost effectiveness. If the city wanted to deliver more affordable housing cheaply, then Homes Within Reach was the answer. This was not practical given the program's limits. He suggested going through a process that might involve the council, staff and EDAC to look at the broad issues and what the city was doing to meet the Met Council's goals. This might shed some light on what could be done to
increase effectiveness, reach, and access to funds. Schneider said he would encourage the idea of looking for cooperative efforts on a broader basis where resources could be pooled to make everything work better. This was the better long term approach. Wiersum questioned if there were things the city could do, where it provided a facilitating role and existing resources that could be valuable to non profit organizations.

Acomb said she would like to see better balance on where affordable housing is located in the city. She would like to see it throughout the city.

3. Adjournment

The study session adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

David Maeda
City Clerk