CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

September 8, 2015

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a conference at 5:34 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 8th day of September, 2015, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:	Councilmembers Allison, Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, Jungman, Lang, Miller, and Mayor Rosenthal
ABSENT:	Councilmember Williams

Item 1, being:

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR THE UPDATE OF THE NORMAN 2025 LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN (COMPREHENSIVE PLAN).

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said at the June 25, 2015, the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) meeting, members discussed the update to the Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The Committee requested a Request for Proposal (RFP) be drafted and brought back to the Committee for review on August 27, 2015. At that meeting, the CPTC discussed amendments to the RFP and requested the RFP be presented to the entire Council before being mailed to consulting firms.

Ms. Connors said the Comprehensive Plan update was budgeted in FYE 2016. The RFP includes community background, planning history, scope of work that would encompass the entire City, project criteria, RFP criteria, and a selection process. She said changes were mainly made to the public participation section. She highlighted the scope of work and said the objective of the project is to develop a Comprehensive Plan to guide future development in the City of Norman. The Comprehensive Plan should be creative, innovative, and encompass the entire city. The RFP also provides all planning documents that have been adopted since 1954. The elements of the Comprehensive Plan includes community profile development; development of goals, objectives, and policies; future land use plan and map; transportation; stormwater plan; infrastructure element; technology infrastructure; economic development/redevelopment; parks, trails, and open space; housing; neighborhood revitalization; sustainability; healthy community; resiliency; special planning areas; community character and urban design; and an implementation plan.

Ms. Connors said public participation will be a large element of the Comprehensive Plan and structured to include the creation of a Steering Committee consisting of approximately 30 members, but should not consist of more than 50 members. The City wants to ensure full participation by residents, businesses, agencies, and organizations, as well as a wide range of ages on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be involved from the beginning of the process to the end. The consultants should provide an element for public input on a website.

Ms. Connors said an executive summary is expected to be developed that outlines the vision, detailed goals, and objectives, and policy statements that are laid out in the Comprehensive Plan. The summary will be used as a guide for decision making and as a means to educate the citizenry of the community, it is expected the summary will be located within the Comprehensive Plan document, but can be a stand-alone document in a form that is suitable for easy distribution.

The timeline is to release the RFP in September and move through a series of requirements, proposals, interviews, consultant selection, contract negotiations, and have a consultant selected by February 2016. The entire process is expected to take 18 months.

Ms. Connors said the RFP includes ranking point criteria for the different elements of the RFP and the CPTC requested an element for how the consultants will approach public participation and Staff has added that to the draft. She said a selection committee will be created to perform interviews for the selection process.

Councilmember Castleberry found it interesting the points for "project team" were not higher as far as experience and key personnel. He felt the points for "public approach" and the "project team" should not be an equal value and Ms. Connors said Staff changed the points because of the public participation element. Councilmember Castleberry said the public approach element is important, but if the RFP requires a public participation element, all consultants will provide that so he is not sure points need to be part of that. He said if he were to hire a consultant for a project he would be more concerned about their expertise and experience than how much they talk to the public. He said Council can mandate the public participation approach element without needing to use the point system. Mayor Rosenthal said the intent of the point criteria was to see what innovative techniques might be used and although public participation is a given, the questions are how to manage that and how to bring a large amount of people into the process and manage that effectively going forward.

Mayor Rosenthal asked what Staff is looking for regarding past project experience and Ms. Connors said there may be some new team members with the consultant who do not have past experience or the consultant company may be new and not have a lot of past experience. Ms. Connors said past project experience points can be removed and those points assigned to project team; however she would advise putting five more points on project approach because that is very important. Councilmember Miller said a consultant's past project experience is important to her as it ties in with public participation, but she does not care about the number of points given.

Councilmember Castleberry asked how Staff envisioned the outcome of the Comprehensive Plan and how different would it look from the last update. Would properties be rezoned through the process? Ms. Connors said the consultant will prepare various scenarios for the Steering Committee and Council to consider. She said 20 to 30 years into the future, there will be some areas that will have to change because redevelopment will occur and some of the older portions of town will shift in the way they are developed. Ms. Connors said one of the questions to be answered early on will be how far urban development should extend to the east.

Mayor Rosenthal said the vision questions are generally about what Norman wants to be, i.e., does the City want to remain the style of community it is now or do we become more urbanized. She asked at what point those kinds of questions are envisioned in the process because it seems like these questions should be decided early on or even before a consultant is chosen. She said Norman is an interesting size as a community and there are questions about whether Norman should be denser in the core and whether Norman should allow subdivisions out to Lake Thunderbird. Ms. Connors believes the consultant should be on board before public meetings begin although the City could hold some major vision meetings with the public. She felt the Steering Committee and consultant should be selected at the same time so work can start simultaneously.

Councilmember Miller asked about sustainability in terms of water and how that will be considered. Ms. Connors said the consultants will be asked to integrate the latest measures of sustainability because things keep changing from a sustainability point of view. She said some areas of sustainability are under the City's control and that is why it is an element of the Comprehensive Plan. She said healthy communities are another important new element because of walkability and the City needs to know how to create a healthier community.

Councilmember Castleberry asked what the element "resiliency" means and Ms. Connors said resiliency is a very new word in the planning field and deals with natural and manmade disasters as well as economic health. She said a lot of firms may not have approached this element so the City will have to see what the firms come back with as they discuss resiliency. Mayor Rosenthal said infrastructure investments are so huge the City wants them to last and that is the essential nature of resiliency. Mayor Rosenthal said technology will dictate a variety of other formats the City currently does not have.

Councilmember Holman asked if the Comprehensive Plan will include infrastructure costs of developing to Lake Thunderbird or beyond. Ms. Connors said yes, but she did not know how specific the consultants will be. She said Staff has suggested there needs to be costs for development, but there will be no definite amount.

Councilmember Lang said there are other costs to consider as well, such as light rail, and how that will affect the overall vision of the City. He said he wants points to be based on what is best for the community even if it goes against prior adopted plans or preconceived ideas. Ms. Connors said that should be accommodated in the different scenarios the consultant brings forward. She said the point system has worked best in these types of consultant choices.

Councilmember Castleberry asked how the consultant will handle the various types of agendas such as smart growth, no growth, etc. Ms. Connors said the Steering Committee will have the authority to take information and boil it down to priorities.

Councilmember Allison asked how many consultant firms are expected to respond and Ms. Connors said eight to ten. Councilmember Allison said looking at the firms past studies, can the City tell if the company favors growth or non-growth or if they truly develop their findings from a public driven approach. How does the City hold the consultant accountable for listening to the public and not just doing what they think the City needs to do? Mayor Rosenthal said that is why the RFP emphasizes public participation as a critical piece of the process.

Councilmember Miller asked what City's process will be for choosing a consultant. Ms. Connors said the will be a Selection Committee and everyone on that Selection Committee will receive all the RFPs to determine which firms will be interviewed. Councilmember Miller asked who would be on the Selection Committee and Ms. Connors said that has not been decided. Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said traditionally it is City Staff and a couple of citizen volunteers who participate. Mayor Rosenthal said this issue was raised at the CPTC meetings and there may be some type of hybrid committee that would pull in citizens with extensive experience and expertise as well as Staff and a Councilmember.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated September 3, 2015, from Susan Connors, AICP, Director, Planning and Community Development, to Mayor and Members of City Council
2. Draft Request for Proposal, Professional Planning Services for Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan for the City of Norman, Oklahoma

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The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

ATTEST:

Brenda Hall
City Clerk

Cindy Rosenthal
Mayor

CITY OF NORMAN CORPORATE SEAL OKLAHOMA