

Coralville City Council

Work Session

December 8, 2020

Via Electronic Meeting because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Council members, staff, and the public presented by COVID-19

Present: Mayor John Lundell; Council Members Laurie Goodrich, Meghann Foster, Jill Dodds, Mitch Gross, Hai Huynh

Staff Present: City Administrator Kelly Hayworth, Assistant City Administrator Ellen Habel, City Attorney Kevin Olson, Director of Parking and Transportation Vicky Robrock, Parks and Recreation Director Sherri Proud, City Engineer Dan Holderness

Others Present: Zachary Smith, Press-Citizen; Tom Cope and Jon Murphy, Cope Murphy and Co.

Mayor Lundell opened the meeting at 7:10 pm.

1. Legislative Update—Cope Murphy and Co.: City Administrator Kelly Hayworth reminded the council that Tom Cope and Jon Murphy are available for questions during the legislative session. Cope said the Republicans will continue to hold the executive branch and majority in the State House and Senate for another two years, which will be a total of six years at a minimum. He noted the Republicans built on their majority in the House and Senate. Looking ahead, Cope said the property tax backfill may be at risk in 2021, but Governor Reynolds has supported it. Cope identified housing, broadband access, and mental health as opportunity areas. Murphy commented the session will begin on January 11. Murphy reviewed the leadership positions. Cope said they are working to add technology to the committee rooms at the Capitol to allow for virtual access, and outside groups will be limited in the space they can rent for meetings. Returning to issues he anticipates in 2021, Cope said the State appropriates \$150 million annually to local governments for the property tax backfill. Local control issues Cope said he sees as potential issues are limiting regulation of Airbnb and cities that pass laws to prohibit landlords from denying rentals based on source of income. Cope said the Economic Recovery Advisory Board's 18 recommendations will be part of Governor Reynolds' agenda and will have broad support from urban and rural, Republican and Democratic legislators. Cope said it is a redistricting year and he does not anticipate changes in the system, whereby the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency draws the maps. Murphy reviewed additional key dates, including the revenue estimating conference on December 11, March 5 for first funnel, April 2 for second funnel, and the end of per diem for the 110 day session on April 30. Councilor Gross inquired about additional help from the state for local governments. Cope responded that he believed the federal government was the best opportunity for that assistance.

At this time Cope, Murphy, Holderness, and Proud left the meeting.

2. **Parking and Transportation Department Report:** Director of Parking and Transportation Vicky Robrock provided her departmental update. Robrock said fares were suspended from mid-March through August 17, and reported that fare revenues and revenue miles decreased. She added that service was cut when ridership fell. Robrock said the department received \$1.2 million in CARES funding for COVID response or general operating costs, which has backfilled the revenue loss. Robrock added that paratransit ridership is down by 53%. Hayworth noted that every transit system in the County has seen a loss in ridership every year since 2015, and that is true nationally as well. Robrock said that she hopes to have a draft fee structure for review within the next six weeks. Robrock said the proposed structure would allow passes to work on any of the systems in the county. Robrock said since implementing the route changes in October, she has received very positive comments, that people like the connectivity between 5th Street and the west commercial area, the new Iowa River Landing routes, and the improved on-time performance. She said drivers feel more relaxed and they have some flexibility in the schedule to accommodate any additional ridership. Robrock commented that the drivers have gone above and beyond throughout the pandemic to be helpful. Regarding parking, she said use is down in the North Ramp and South Lot as a result of fewer events at the Marriott. Robrock noted parking cashiers were furloughed in March and people have become more accustomed to using the automated pay option. She reported they are ready for parking for arena events and are now managing 500 parking permits in the IRL.
3. **City Administrator's Time:** City Administrator Kelly Hayworth reported on the following:
 - A developer is looking at building a new warehouse/office building south of Highway 6. Hayworth said they would like to take advantage of the five-year industrial property tax credits, which must be approved by the County Assessor and City Council.
 - SRF (State Revolving Fund) provides a percent of project funds back for storm water projects. Hayworth said that with closeout of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements, the City will have about \$2.7 million, which will go toward the Arena green roof, hotel green roof, Arena cistern, and purchase of Colony property for future park space.
 - SRF funds can be borrowed to help pay the initial cost of the creek work at 0% interest for three years, and then the streambank mitigation credits could be sold to pay off the loan. Hayworth said Judy Joyce will have a proposal for the next council meeting.

Councilor Gross inquired about the hotel operator selection process. Hayworth responded that Councilors Huynh and Goodrich are on the CHC, which is reviewing proposals and corporate versus franchise operation. Hayworth said the CHC will make a recommendation to the Council.

Councilor Goodrich inquired whether an existing building could be used for drop-off recycling. Hayworth said that staff would look into that and it would need to be staffed.

Adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Notes taken by Ellen Habel, Assistant City Administrator