

CITY OF NORTON SHORES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
October 25, 2016

A regular work session of the Norton Shores City Council was held on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, large conference room, 4814 Henry Street.

Present: Mayor Nelund, Council Members Beecham, Dolack, Flanders, Hylland, Jurkas, Martines and Morgenstern; also, Mark Meyers, Doug Hughes, Jon Gale, Bob Gagnon, Mike Huston, Jerry Bartoszek, Anthony Chandler and Shelly Stibitz

Absent: Council Member Moulatsiotis

1. Consumers Energy Tree Program

Public Works Director Jerry Bartoszek introduced Consumers Energy representatives and gave a brief description of the intended tree program as it relates to utility lines in Norton Shores. Lee Natski led the presentation, Arborist Patrick Muenstermann addressed some Council questions and Associate Forester Emily was introduced as the customer service field representative. The substation at Henry Street and Hendrick Road was moved to the top of the list for action due to a three-year poor performance rating. Consumers Energy reports that the number one cause of damage and electrical outage is attributed to interference from trees. Trimming and removal of trees and brush to meet clearance requirements will take place based on size and location to the utility lines to improve the performance of the substation. Property owners will receive notice by mail and door hangers and have the opportunity to contact Consumers Energy with questions and concerns. Following the planning stage and notification, Trees Incorporated will serve as the contractor for Consumers Energy completing the work. Mr. Bartoszek asked about the recent Oak Wilt concern and recommendation to only cut during the winter months. Mr. Muenstermann stated that they cannot perform the work only in winter but have been cutting after mid-July and spraying the cuts with successful results. Mr. Bartoszek also asked that Consumers Energy be mindful of cleanup following their work.

2. Municipal Employees' Retirement System

City Administrator Mark Meyers explained recent discussions regarding new strategies for addressing underfunded liabilities including meeting with Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS) administrators. After seeing a recent presentation by MERS at a Muskegon-Ottawa Managers meeting, Mr. Meyers thought it beneficial for City Council to hear the presentation first-hand. MERS Regional Manager Mike Overly and Customer Relations Director Erin Boertman distributed and went over PowerPoint documents describing the history and status of the City's Defined Benefit Plan. The City joined MERS in 1965 offering defined benefit plans to employees. Assets of the 800 municipalities participating are pooled to provide a higher investment opportunity and investment earnings are attributed to more than half the pension benefits. Over time,

assumptions and actual experience have negatively affected the City's funding levels and the choice to move to a Defined Contribution plan was blocked by MERS funding requirements. In the last decade, the City reduced benefits, initiated employee contributions and increased funding above the actuarial required contribution to manage underfunding. In September 2016 the funding level requirement for moving to a Defined Contribution Plan was removed allowing for the City to explore that option in more detail. Mr. Meyers recommended conducting a required study actuarial and the City Council agreed.

3. Black Lake Park Phase II Master Plan

Improvements in Black Lake Park continue and Mr. Meyers recapped the purchase and intentions for newly acquired property. Ms. Pat Cornelisse of Cornelisse Design Associates, Inc. presented a draft plan and projected construction costs for Black Lake Park expansion. The design took longer than intended due to the need for additional inspection of threatened and endangered species. The first phase consists of adding parking, walkways, timber boardwalk, and a kayak launch. Spring Lake Township has verified their intent to contribute \$25,000 toward and help write the Coastal Management Grant application. Mr. Meyers asked for and received Council support in moving forward with a grant application.

4. Rental Inspection Program

Following removal of the Rental Inspection Program from the City Council agenda of October 18, 2016, Council Member Morgenstern sent a list of questions to staff for clarification. All Council members received the questions and their answers prior to the work session. Council Member Jurkas stated that her concern about vacation rentals still had no answer but the rest of the Council pointed out that it was now changed in the Ordinance and she was satisfied with the language as written. Discussion about rental properties versus rental units resulted in Council Member Hylland voicing a concern about the amount of costs for apartment complexes. Fire Chief Gagnon verified that he tried to involve three of our larger apartment complex owners, The Reserve, Shoreline Landings and The Hamptons in this dialogue with little response. Legal Aid of Michigan, Managing Attorney, Dan Bronner was invited to share some of his experience in representing renters of low income housing. Mr. Bronner hasn't had much contact with renters or landlords in Norton Shores and spoke of several other Federal and State safeguards for tenants. His opinion is that adopting a Rental Inspection Program provides an objective standard for all parties. The City Council agreed to consider adopting the Rental Inspection Ordinance at the next City Council meeting.

5. Fiscal Year 2018 Local Street Improvement Program

Mr. Bartoszek reviewed the proposed street program from the Year 9 Municipal Road Fund street millage proceeds. Resurfacing only is recommended in the next program year with Mr. Bartoszek reporting that roads needing reconstruction cannot be preserved and focusing on preserving other roads by concentrating on resurfacing efforts. This approach is a better use of the funds providing the ability to improve more streets. There are three roads recommended to receive hot-in-place recycling and five roads recommended for milling and resurfacing. City Council concurred with the recommendations.


Shelly Stibitz, City Clerk