

City of Eldridge City Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

The City of Eldridge, Iowa, City Council met in an open Committee of the Whole session at the Eldridge Community Center at 5:30 pm on January 13, 2025.

Council Members Present: Brian Dockery, Scott Campbell, Dan Collins (arrived at 5:39 p.m., and Ryan Iossi. Adrian Blackwell was absent.

Presiding: Mayor Frank King

Also Present: Nevada Lemke, Jeff Martens, Martha Nieto, Letty Goslowsky Marty O'Boyle, Jill & Dale Grunwald, Zach Howell, Lynn Snyder, D. Ranson, C. Braet, Marilyn Ralfs, Mike Lacker, and Erin Gentz

Motion by Campbell to approve the agenda. Second by Dockery. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

Old Business

- A. Discussion on HOA fees for maintenance of detention ponds
 - a. Within meetings on this topic, it has been the consensus of the City Council that the City should not assume direct ownership of private detention facilities. There were discussions that perhaps the City could maintain these detention facilities without ownership. Martens posed this question to the City Attorney and here was her response:
 - i. The City has established Ordinances to deal with property maintenance issues that include fees for services to enforce compliance.
 - ii. City funds must be used for a public purpose. It's possible that maintaining stormwater management systems would qualify for this if an agreement between the City and the property owner was in place.
 - iii. However, city practice has always been to enforce ordinances against private property owners, and agreeing to maintain private property would be a change in the current process.
 - iv. If the City chose to maintain only some detention ponds and not others this would create scrutiny. We already have a process in place to address properties that are not maintained. In this case instead of forcing property owners to comply with City Code the City is taking over their property and maintaining it for them.
 - v. Taking these steps could create a slippery slope with other residents by incentivizing them to request assistance with their own private property needs. Residents in disagreement could argue that the City is using funds to maintain private property and force the City to explain why they should not use public funds to help with whatever their private property request entails. The City could have difficulty defining a consistent standard that meets the public use doctrine.

- vi. Maintaining detention facilities, we do not own would also result in increased considerations for liability and insurance purposes. Maintaining the property would transfer responsibility to the City to ensure it is in good condition. This would include repairs and changes as needed, unless otherwise determined by an agreement, and could mean the City assumes liability for damages, injuries, and environmental issues arising from their operation or condition.
 - b. The recommendation from the administration would be as follows:
 - i. Update the City Ordinance on stormwater detention facility maintenance to ensure broad and fair enforcement, which is on tonight's City Council agenda.
 - ii. Consider repealing or enforcing Resolution 04-31 defining a Storm Water Utility Fee for residents draining into the regional detention pond.
 - iii. Consider implementing a city-wide Storm Water Utility Fee to create an additional revenue stream for stormwater maintenance including stormwater-related street infrastructure among other things.
- B. Goal Setting Discussion
 - a. Strategic plan was last done in 2019, and it was an update from 2010 strategic plan and the Comprehensive Plan was done in 2011
 - b. When and what are the next steps, do we want to hire a consultant or see what other cities have been doing in setting their goals, do we want to create a steering committee to help structure that process
 - c. Council would like Lemke to start this process
- C. Review of plans and specifications for the South 1st St Overlay project
 - a. Shive completed plans are completed for this project, and hoping to go out for bid this week, and receive bids back the first week of February, Howell asked if the council had any questions or comments about it before it was sent out.
- D. Review of preliminary plans for the 4th Ave & LeClaire Rd traffic signal project
 - a. Shive came out with a layout and they met with the Big 10 Mart about removing the entrance on N 4th Ave, they were on board with it. This would get rid of the median and then have a dedicated left and right turning lane with a through lane as well. There would also be a sidewalk connection on the east side of N 4th Ave
 - b. The plans also show to remove the colored concrete crossings on LeClaire and a pavement patch would be put in its place
 - c. They are hoping to have it go to bid in the early spring
- E. Review of the Terracon geotechnical engineering report for Hickory Creek pond project
 - a. Terracon did the Geotech a few months ago, and Shive put together a memo per their investigation. The findings were that the soil did not have as much clay as they originally thought, some sort of clay liner would be needed to hold the water. The size recommended would be 5-10 acres, and it would need to be drained and dredged every 30 years. This may not be the ideal location for a recreational pond due to cost and maintenance.

F. Review and discussion of TEAP Report

- a. The council received a 260-page report, Lemke touched on some of the projects, including markings and signage at the 4 crossings that currently don't have them, the sidewalk infill from Muhs to Pinehurst, speed limit signage shifted south, and illuminating all of the crossings and installing two speed back signs, intersection at 1st and Lincoln to enhance pedestrian safety and calm the traffic

Motion by Dockery to adjourn at 6:32 pm. Second by lossi. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Submitted by Ashley Lacey, Billing Clerk