

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

April 19, 2021

The City Council held a special work session at City Hall at 6:05 p.m. on April 19, 2021, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Robert M. Green, Frank Darrah, Kelly Dunn, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse, Mark Miller, Dave Sires, and Susan deBuhr. Staff members attended from all City Departments. Members of the community attended the meeting and teleconferenced in.

Mayor Green introduced the only item on the agenda, City Council meeting packet deadline.

Mayor Green introduced City Clerk Jacque Danielsen.

City Clerk Danielsen presented a power point discussing the reconsideration of Council packet submission deadlines, brought up at a Goal Setting meeting. The power point contained statistics regarding 18 comparable cities' meeting packet deadline timelines with regard to similarities and differences from City's current practice; the City's current deadlines with pros and cons to no change; moving the publication date of materials back with pros and cons to change; and staff recommendation of moving publication date back one day and agenda item submission date back one day, with regard to policy change required.

Mayor Green opened Council discussion; he stated if there is a consensus that Council would like to see more formal changes brought forward, then Council can give that direction this evening and give formal vote during Council meeting.

Councilmember deBuhr stated that no vote would be needed if no changes are made. Discussion several years ago expressed that the best interest of developers and businesses to leave as is; why is there now consideration of change. Mayor Green stated that if there is a consensus at Goal Setting then it must be discussed.

Councilmember Harding stated the agenda packet is received Friday at 5:00 p.m.; there is review time Saturday and Sunday but staff isn't readily available, however, if there's an emergency they are good at responding. Then there are City staff meetings Monday and Councilmembers are at work; it's not enough time, especially for controversial items, to really look at things. Councilmember Harding stated his initial goal was to push back the publication deadline to Monday at 5:00 p.m. the week before Council so there would be more access to staff and having time to get things done and look into things. Councilmember Harding suggested that developers could submit items to the previous Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) meeting so it makes the current Council meeting agenda or P&Z meetings could move one week earlier so they're on the same week as Council for agenda submission.

Mayor Green asked City Clerk Danielsen if any cities studied had a publication date of one week. City Clerk Danielsen responded that Waterloo puts their materials out one week prior to the meeting.

Councilmember Kruse states that inquiries indicate Waterloo likes it [having packets out one week early]. Councilmember Kruse agrees with Councilmember Harding that adjustments can be made to P&Z and developers can adjust their timelines to the new cycle. Weekend time for Council and Staff should not be spent on Council; Division Head meetings on Monday mornings render City staff unavailable until Monday afternoons as well. The City definitely needs to change something and changes to Administrative Policy 7 would be a one-time change, then there's a new cycle.

Mayor Green spoke with Waterloo Mayor Hart regarding the time change and it's going well; Waterloo also has a preliminary packet; the final packet doesn't post until Friday before Council, so if there's an emergency items can be added but typically they are asking for everything to be in earlier.

Councilmember Kruse states that Waterloo also recently switched Council meetings from every Monday to every two weeks.

Councilmember Darrah references the list of cons presented and what hardships will result from a change in timeline with regard to City staff and developers.

Director of Community Development Sheetz responded with regard to P&Z Commission. P&Z currently meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month with a Thursday noon item submission and Friday at 5:00 p.m. packet publication deadline prior to the next meeting, the same as current City Council deadlines. There are 4-6 times that P&Z and City Council packet preparation overlap, and getting packets ready is tough; smaller items are generally able to be added to the next Council's agenda, due the day after P&Z meets by noon. That would not be feasible with this change. Director Sheetz stated that accommodating Council and P&Z packets the same week is difficult when it occurs now and indicated difficulty with doing that consistently with Council packet deadline change a week in advance. Councilmember Kruse referenced a previous P&Z meeting change and Director Sheetz stated prior to 2104, a voting meeting was held once a month with a committee meeting the week before that; it was changed to two voting meetings each month. The intent was to help developers move through the process without having to wait a full month for the next P&Z meeting and to possibly even out the number of cases per meeting.

Councilmember Harding states that Citizens have requested more time to review the packet, to research and look into all the things in the Agenda; City staff are good about responding to questions and helping.

Councilmember Dunn states that staff has always been great; Citizens have reported to her that it's not enough time. Councilmember Dunn states that more time would help to balance between outside duties and Council duties.

Councilmember Sires asks City Clerk Danielsen how many of the 18 cities have subcommittees. City Clerk Danielsen responds that the question was not asked. Waterloo for sure has subcommittees.

Councilmember Miller asks if there are further pitfalls to moving the deadlines back one week. City Clerk Danielsen responds that starting on Friday and publishing on Monday

may interrupt staff work flow; she recommends Monday submission and Tuesday publication deadlines instead. Councilmember Harding states that this would be fine.

City Administrator Gaines states that staff can accommodate whatever Council wants; internal discussion of preliminary agenda and final agenda would create additional work and confusion. City Administrator Gaines recommends that the deadline be the deadline with no second agenda.

Mayor Green states that the first agenda could be the agenda for the next meeting; if an urgent item needs to be added, it can be added by Friday at 5:00 p.m. only if absolutely necessary. City Administrator Gaines stated that this policy is currently in place.

Councilmember Harding inquired that if publication occurs Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. would staff prefer that P&Z move or not? City Clerk Danielsen and Director Sheetz state that it would need to be discussed. City Administrator Gaines states that this change in publication could be made first and the ripple effect could be evaluated later.

Councilmember Harding asks for consensus of agenda and materials to be published the Tuesday prior to City Council meetings by 5:00 p.m. Councilmembers Kruse, Sires, Miller, and Dunn agree. Mayor sees consensus so staff will generate timelines and present proposed changes Administrative Policy No. 7 at the next Council meeting.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant