

**ANN ARBOR CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
WORKING SESSION - APRIL 13, 1998**

The working session of the Ann Arbor City Council was called to order at 7:10 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber by Mayor Ingrid B. Sheldon.

ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL

PRESENT : Councilmembers Tobi Hanna-Davies, Patricia Vereen-Dixon, Jane Lumm, David Kwan, Jean Carlberg, Heidi Cowing Herrell, Christopher Kolb, Mayor Ingrid B. Sheldon, 8.

ABSENT : Councilmembers Stephen C. Hartwell, Patrick A. Putman, Elisabeth L. Daley, 3.

HUMAN RESOURCES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE REPORT

Associate Administrator/City Clerk Winifred Northcross introduced Susan Newton of Development Strategies Plus, facilitator of the Human Resources Oversight Committee, who presented the ACity of Ann Arbor Human Resources Department Review - Findings and Recommendations= (on file in the City Clerk=s Office). Ms. Newton introduced Human Resources Oversight Committee Members Ronald Olson of the City of Ann Arbor, Jim Hamilton of Detroit Edison, Phil Smith of the University of Michigan; and Jo Littleton of the City of Ann Arbor. The committee members not present were Sandra Harris of the Ann Arbor Public Schools and Verna McDaniel of Washtenaw County.

Ms. Newton briefly reviewed the recommendations and conclusions of the report. She stated that, based on extensive data from various sources, the committee recommended the dissolution of the existing Human Resources Department, with a total redesign of human resources functions in order to provide quality and level of service necessary to support the needs of the City. Recommendations included the immediate hiring of a new Human Resources Director; newly established and defined positions; centralizing benefits, workers compensation and safety as part of the Human Resources function; and Human Rights and Labor Relations reporting directly to the City Administrator.

Questions from Council followed the presentation.

LONG RANGE FINANCIAL PLAN

Finance Director A. Dean Moore reviewed drafts of the "City of Ann Arbor Long Term Financial Plan 1998-2002" and "City of Ann Arbor Annual Assessment of Financial Condition 1998" (draft reports on file in the City Clerk's Office). Mr. Moore explained that the Long Term Financial Plan, which will be adopted by City Council, contains the goals and objectives used to guide City departments and the City Administrator in making financial decisions for the city's future. He stated that the Annual Financial Assessment was expanded this year to include charts and historical graphs in the following five different areas: the city's financial health, financial independence and flexibility, municipal productivity, deferral of current costs, and financial management practices.

Mr. Moore reported on the following conclusions in the financial analysis: 1) while revenue growth is limited, revenues are keeping pace with inflation and the local economy is healthy; 2) growth of expenditures has been stable; 3) revenues from grants and state shared revenues are constant; 4) debt service payments are low relative to other cities; 5) municipal productivity is stable; 6) residents are satisfied and supportive of the level of services provided; 7) long term pension liabilities are extremely well funded; 8) tax delinquencies are very low; 9) the General Fund balance has grown to a level of 12.6% of expenditures; 10) the City maintains an Aa General Obligation bond rating; and 11) the city's overall financial health is good.

Mr. Moore named the following members who serve on the city's Strategic Financial Planning Team: City Administrator Neal Berlin, Associate Administrator Ron Olson, Public Services Director William Wheeler, Budget Director Alan Burns, Planning Director Karen Hart, Utilities Director Frank Porta, Solid Waste Director John Newman, and Accountants Willie Powell and Bruce Weeks.

Questions from Council followed the presentation.

BROADWAY BRIDGES PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING

An informal public hearing was conducted on the proposed Broadway Bridges project. The Mayor announced that the public hearing would be continued at the April 20, 1998 regular session of Council, and that participants in tonight's public hearing would not be eligible to speak at the scheduled public hearing on April 20.

The following people appeared:

David Cahill, 1418 Broadway St., spoke in opposition to the closing of Carey

Street and the disruption of the traffic pattern in north central Ann Arbor. He requested that Council approve an amended site plan which would keep Carey Street open and delete changes to the intersection at the southwest end of the bridge. (Statement on file in the City Clerk's Office)

Beth Helmbold, 626 N. Fourth Ave., spoke in opposition to the plans for renovating the bridges which, she believes, does not adequately address the diversion of traffic through the surrounding residential neighborhoods. She stated that the environmental assessment only covers a small portion of the affected streets, and expressed concern with the increased traffic and peak noise levels on nearby streets when Carey Street is closed.

Laura Strowe, 1327 Broadway St., requested that the plans include a barrier between the roadway and the sidewalks on the bridge to address pedestrian safety and security issues, aesthetics and weather problems. Ms. Strowe stated that once the road is improved, traffic speeds will increase, making a sidewalk without a barrier unsafe and a discouragement to pedestrians. She further stated that a barrier would protect pedestrians from splashing rain and snow from traffic.

Ethel Potts, 1014 Elder Blvd., spoke in opposition to the proposed changes to the traffic pattern in the north central area of town. She stated that improvements to Division Street are being proposed at the expense of the other streets in the area. Ms. Potts expressed concern with damage to historic Carey Street, cutting into the Depot Street hill for private parking, and creating unnecessary and confusing new travel routes.

John Rasmussen, 600 Peninsula Ct., requested that the closing of Carey Street and the planned pedestrian mall be excluded from the proposed plan until the issues are revisited. Mr. Rasmussen questioned the costly trade-off of turning Carey Street into a pedestrian walkway because of the inconvenience to rerouted automobile traffic.

John Satarino, 808 Hutchins St., expressed concern that the closing of Carey Street was not by public mandate and questioned the project's planning process. Mr. Satarino asked for more time to explore other traffic pattern options that would leave Carey Street open.

Clark Charnetski, 2646 Traver Blvd., representing the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, expressed hope that the City will not ignore the aesthetics of the underside of the bridge for train passengers and pedestrians. He expressed concern that the plan places the southern

support peer closer to the tracks, and asked Council to consider having the peer moved back to its present location. He also requested that the design of the sidewalk allow for the possibility of installing a cover over the north long term parking lot in the future. Other concerns included the closing of Carey Street and parking during construction, which will cause difficulty for train passengers.

William Simpson, 1512 Plymouth Rd., expressed concern with the noise levels from traffic if Carey Street is closed, and presented slides showing how the proposal would increase traffic and noise levels on other area streets. Mr. Simpson requested that Council approve the bridge project without dealing with the Carey Street issue until better traffic, noise and neighborhood impact studies are available.

Larry Kestenbaum, 108 Kenwood Ave., Historic District Commission Chair, requested the installation of a median in Depot Street to separate the traffic from the parking, and requested that the plan be modified to avoid gouging into the hillside and constructing a retaining wall. Mr. Kestenbaum spoke against changing Carey Street into a pedestrian mall and requested that it be preserved as a street. He stated that the least expensive and destructive way to preserve Carey Street would be not to change it.

There being no else to speak, the Mayor declared the public hearing recessed until April 20, 1998.

WORKING SESSION

Public Services Director Wheeler reviewed the following major goals of the Broadway Bridges replacement project: to simplify and improve the safety at the southern road intersection; to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the bridges and to Broadway Park; to minimize impacts to surrounding historic properties; and to qualify for federal funds. Mr. Wheeler stated that these goals lead to the following specific design aspects: reducing travel lanes to 11 feet and increasing the sidewalk to 12 feet; increasing the approach radius on N. Division St. to meet safety standards for a 30 mph speed limit; increasing the clearance over the tracks which is currently inadequate; and closing of Carey Street to traffic due to the unsafe conditions and making it a pedestrian and bicycle path.

Engineering Project Managers Les Sipowski and Michael Nearing demonstrated traffic simulation patterns in the area surrounding the bridges.

Comments and questions from Council followed the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 10:38 p.m.

W. Northcross
Clerk of the Council

Janet L. Chapin
Recording Secretary