February 12, 2019
State Capitol

Members present:
Council Member John Edwards, Clive
Council Member Chris Coleman, Des Moines
Council Member Eric Johansen, Grimes
Council Member Tom Cope, Johnston
Council Member Jaki, Livingston, Norwalk
Council Member Curt Gause, Pleasant Hill
Mayor Bob Andeweg, Urbandale
Mayor Dave Burgess, Windsor Heights
Councilmember Zach Bales-Henry, Windsor Heights

Staff Present:
Kandi Reindl-Sullivan, Asst. to the City Manager, Des Moines

Guests Present:
Rep. Jennifer Konfrst
Rep. Kristin Sunde
Rep. John Forbes
Rep. Marti Anderson
Senator Charles Schneider
Senator Brad Zaun
Jen Schulte, Governmental Affairs Director, Des Moines
Alex Hassell, Policy Liaison, Des Moines
Marketa Oliver, Bondurant City Administrator
Robert Palmer, Iowa League of Cities
Andrea Woodard, Greater Des Moines Partnership

Approval of the January 9, 2019 minutes were moved for approval by Dave Burgess, seconded by Tom Cope. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

MAC LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION POINTS

See attached handout.
Tom Cope discussed the attached legislative topics with the legislators and explained the impact to cities on each topic.

Questions/Comments:

Elections:
Rep. Konfrst said SF183 would draw much confusion to the voters.

Fireworks:
Rep. Forbes said his caucus passed the bill narrowly so it was not a fun caucus. This bill gives me a lot of heartburn at my pharmacy in Urbandale and I have a lot of people coming in and they don’t like it. My feeling is this will not pass and I’m hoping my caucus stays at 54-46 against it. It might get through the Senate but probably not the House.

Chris Coleman said veterans and firefighters have compelling reasons to oppose this bill.

Jaki Livingston said there was a pushback from horse farmers and the expense they go through to sedate their livestock because of fireworks.

Rep. Forbes said he had a lot of veterinarians call in for tranquilizers for dogs because of the fireworks.

Message Therapy:
Rep. Knofrst – I’m introducing an amendment to protect the victims of human trafficking. I would like to hear from the police chiefs from Des Moines and Windsor Heights and other cities on this amendment.

Tom Cope gave a synopsis on why home rule is important to cities.

Rep. Sunde said in her perspective there was a disappointing vote last night with school funding and my constituents want more school funding.

Judiciary – The way we appoint our Judges now is great and has worked for years. I didn’t get one complaint about our Judges.

Rep. Knofrst – There is an accountability issue with the judges and the problem is there is no electoral accountability for me. I’m all for local control and I’m grateful of the work for our cities. I have met with Mayors and have had great conversations.
Rep. Forbes – We are focusing right now on the budget and concerned on the revenue. We need to have a minimum of 3-4% and we got 1.7% so it will be a few difficult years. Things will get difficult in the next couple of weeks and we will need to start slicing the pie and someone will get left out. We will probably be looking at the backfill, not this year, but in the next few years.

Rep. Sunde – I have been talking to providers of Medicaid and they are needing to take out loans to pay their employees because they are not getting reimbursed. It is very frustrating and we are looking at a bill that would move the most vulnerable under state managed care. Something needs to happen soon or there will be more tragedies that will happen.

Chris Coleman – The story came out last night that just infuriated me about the state renting out very expensive office space and paying property taxes, but yet they can’t provide payment to the City of Des Moines who provides fire, sewer, road maintenance etc.

Senator Schneider – In regards to property taxes, it is just talk right without any concrete plans. I don’t know if we will agree on anything with property taxes. We are hearing about seniors getting taxed out of their homes because of the increase in property taxes. If there is a way to stabilize for the seniors or fixed incomes, we are open to suggestions. In regards to backfill, no one has talked about this yet. I don’t want to see something passed that would make you go back and amend your budgets after it has been certified.

Marketa Oliver asked about multi-family taxation. Is there consideration to cutting that off and not let it decrease further?

Senator Schneider – I am all for that, but no one has filed a bill relating to that. I would encourage you to make that point with your representative.

Jen Schulte talked about the right of way bill HSB32. There is a court case with Century Link not allowing cities to charge both direct and indirect costs.

Chris Coleman – The city spent a lot of time and effort working with Century Link to repair streets after they were torn them up and we like the way the bill it is now.

Rep. Anderson – The first four issues on your list will be dealt with after March. Does MAC have positions on sports betting?
Tom Cope – There will not be a direct impact on sports betting. On the fireworks, we don’t believe any change in current law is necessary.

Rep. Anderson – Are there any bills besides fireworks taking away local control?

Tom Cope – Right now just fireworks, massage therapy and elections.

Senator Schneider said he is not in favor of changing the fireworks legislation nor the election bill especially with bond referendums. It would be short sided to move it.

Rep. Anderson – There is a bill to not require massage therapists to have a license and I do not support that.

Chris Coleman – In my time of being on the Council, I’m amazed that people talk that home rule is do you believe in it or not. In November, you are the 50th class for home rule and citizens voting for it. The reason why it’s been wildly successful in our discussion today and I think it’s the cities right to regulate things like fireworks and massage therapists. There is mounting evidence that we are leaving home rule a little bit at a time. We will continue to fight and champion home rule. We are a big metro that can have uniqueness about it.

Senator Zaun talked about the election bill. I voted for the getting rid of the contiguous cities. I am hearing from a lot of people that are upset that there are so many elections. We want to have good turnout at elections. I respectfully disagree with you on when cities have elections.

Tom Cope – There is a concern with the bond referendum vote because of the interest rates.

Senator Zaun – A lobbyist snuck the amendment in on the massage therapy bill and I was unaware of it. It was not intended and we fixed it.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 a.m.