October 8, 2019
Botanical Gardens

Members present:
Mayor Dean O’Connor, Altoona
Mayor Drew Merrifeld, Carlisle
Council Member John Edwards, Clive
Mayor Frank Cownie, Des Moines
Council Member Chris Coleman, Des Moines
Council Member Eric Johansen, Grimes
Council Member Tom Cope, Johnston
Mayor Tom Phillips, Norwalk
Council Member Curt Gause, Pleasant Hill
Council Member Robert Sarchet, Polk City
Supervisor Matt McCoy, Polk County
Council Member David Russell, Urbandale
Council Member Kim Sacker, Van Meter
Mayor Dave Burgess, Windsor Heights

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

Guests Present:
Art Witmack, Taxpayers Assn. of Iowa
Dan Stalder, Iowa League of Cities
Shelly Watkins, Central Iowa Services and Shelter

Approval of the September 10, 2019 minutes were moved for approval by Dean O’Connor, seconded by Kim Sacker. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

WASTEWATER RECLAMATION AUTHORITY (WRA)

Scott Hutchens Director of the Wastewater Reclamation Authority presented on the attached powerpoint. (Also see the attached WRA Fact Sheet)
**Questions:**

Tom Cope – Do you talk about high flows because you have combined sewers?

Scott Hutchens – That is part of it and our flood resiliency is also important and so we are raising levies and placing flood walls.

Tom Cope – How much combined sewers still exist?

Scott – It’s mostly in the Des Moines area. We try to separate the sewers when there are projects being built. We have several separation projects that are going on right now.

Chris Coleman – We have spent a lot of money on the separation of sewers.

Matt McCoy – How are you building in the heavy rain events for the future that is being predicted and how do we benchmark costs for our treatment costs compared to other cities our size?

Scott Hutchens – By building detention basins and rerouting flows. No one designs for a 10-inch rain right now, but they may in the future. We basically have 17 communities and we send out 17 bills and then the communities themselves set their sanitary sewer rates. We just have the trunk lines but we do check on rates in other communities. The rates for each community are all over the board. We are not the highest and we are not the lowest, Des Moines is somewhere in the middle and I can provide that data. The projects are expensive, but they are needed and we have to be ready for that. EPA is requiring that we have cleaner and cleaner water.

Tom Cope – Where do the biosolids come from?

Scott Hutchens – A lot of it is from biofuel industries such as Anderson Erickson Dairy, food producers and we actually have had trucks from down south come to our facility.

Eric Johansen – Are there benefits for having additional communities join the WRA?

Scott – Yes we want to be the leader in central Iowa. It benefits the other communities that are already members since it will spread the cost. Indianola looked at joining, but it wasn’t going to be cost effective for them. It is expensive to join, because a lot of infrastructure has already been built and they would have to join in those costs. It’s better than building your own treatment plant.
Dean O’Connor – Joining the WRA was one of the best things Altoona ever did.

Chris Coleman – I’ve done this a long time and we haven’t had a complaint ever. If all regional authorities could run like this facility it would be great.

MAC PRIORITIES

Air BnBs/Rental Property Regulations

Curt Gause – This thing has drug on forever and we were going to tie in with what Des Moines is doing. Des Moines held a 90 minute public meeting last night and ¾ were owners and the ¼ were affected by Air BnBs. It immediately went south. The responsible owners want regulations so they don’t get a reputation. We need to get the trust of the neighbors that live next door to them. It was suggested that the Air BnB people create an organization. I now have enough direction and will create a draft ordinance to vote on it in November.

Chris Coleman – Our wonderful city attorney is preventing us from getting into trouble and in our first draft we are planning to pass the first amendment in November and December and additional ones next summer.

Curt – An AirBnB will have to go through the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a conditional use permit and that is not negotiable.

Stormwater Mitigation Strategies

Capital Crossroads group is forging ahead with regional tools.

OTHER BUSINESS

We need to start thinking about meeting up at the Capitol in February and March.

David Russell – It’s beneficial if our representatives attend.

Tom Cope – Last year we did have one meeting that was well attended. It’s difficult sometimes to schedule around the legislative calendar.

Eric Johansen – A lot of the reps who came by last year were freshmen legislators and they heard our concerns and issues. Having both meetings is important.
Tom Cope – We will hopefully have the MAC’s legislative issues by the November meeting.

Nominating Committee to come forward for MAC Executive Committee members

Looking at issues in the metro – E-scooters and model bicycle ordinance.

Matt McCoy thinks these presentations would be premature since there isn’t agreement yet from all communities.

Matt McCoy would like a presentation on regional water efforts.

Dean O’Connor would like to see discussion on building alternatives – not taking low bids.

Matt McCoy – We also need to discuss build lease/purchases.

Tom Cope – This is a multi-step process and we will put together a meeting to discuss the MAC’s legislative issues.

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 a.m.