

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 20, 2017

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:32 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 20th day of December, 2017, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmember Clark, Holman, Wilson, and
Chairman Hickman

ABSENT: Councilmember Karjala

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Lynne Miller
Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney
Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and
Community Development
Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator
Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Marketing Coordinator
Mr. Travis King, Fire Chief
Mr. Ken Komiske, Director of Utilities
Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic
Engineer
Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

CLEVELAND AREA RAPID TRANSIT (CART) RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2017.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Marketing Specialist for Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART), highlighted CART Ridership Reports for November 2017, and said fiscal year-to-date ridership (July to November) had a decrease of 7% over the same period last year. In October CART transported 124,836 passengers that included 754 riders who traveled with bicycles and 324 riders who traveled with wheelchairs.

CARTaccess transported 2,736 riders in November, a decrease of 16% over the same month last year with an average daily ridership of 126 riders. Year-to-date primary zone ridership increased by 19% while secondary zone ridership increased by 16%.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Johnson highlighted November activities that included the “Fill the Trolley” event, which was a huge success with 50 boxes of toys and 19 bicycles delivered to the Cleveland County Christmas Store. The CART Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) met on November 13th to discuss amenities and access at the Brooks Street Transfer Station and CARTaccess fare structure. He said CART Staff has been participating in the City of Norman’s Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation/Transition Plan since bus stops in the public right-of-way are included in the scope of that plan. CART also attended a meeting concerning the Volkswagen emissions settlement and Oklahoma is expected to be allocated around \$21 million to use towards reducing nitrogen oxide (NOX) levels. Councilmember Clark asked what the NOX money could be used for and Mr. Johnson said the money can only be used to replace vehicles with high emission levels.

Mr. Johnson said CART applied for a Clean Air Grant through the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments for the cost difference of purchasing two Compressed Natural Gas buses.

Councilmember Holman said amenities and access at the Brooks Street Transfer Station have been discussed many times by this Committee and CART has been unable to install a water fountain or vending machines due to costs. He is happy that these conversations are still taking place and asked what was specifically discussed by CTAC and Mr. Johnson said CTAC mainly focused their discussion on wheelchair ramps as well as vehicle speed within the area. Councilmember Holman said he would like to know the cost of constructing restroom facilities with water fountains at the Brooks Street Transfer Station especially since it is the main hub and Mr. Johnson said he could prepare costs for the Committee’s review; however, CART has provided costs for a water fountain to the Committee, which was \$30,000. Chairman Hickman suggested Council think about budgeting \$30,000 in the City’s Capital Budget to cover the cost of a water fountain.

Chairman Hickman said he would like information on the cost of expanding the Bike Share Program and Mr. Johnson said CART will provide information on that in January; however, CART felt that conversation should take place between the City and University of Oklahoma (OU) Staff. He said OU is still working out the “kinks” in the system and is hesitant on expanding the program at this time. Chairman Hickman asked Mr. Johnson to request OU Staff reach out to the City Manager regarding discussion of the Bike Share Program.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the months of November 2017
2. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Monthly Reports for November 2017
3. Pictures of “Fill the Trolley” event

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR THE CENTER CITY FORM BASED CODE DEVELOPMENT.

- a. James Garner Avenue concept from Flood Avenue across Robinson Street to Duffy Street
- b. Missing middle housing
- c. Retail strategies along James Garner Avenue
- d. Parking strategies

Ms. Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development, said the Center City Form-Based Code (CCFBC) was developed with the consulting firm of Ferrell Madden and a 15 member Steering Committee appointed by City Council. The Steering Committee began working on the CCFBC at the conclusion of a week-long charrette process in May, 2014. The Steering Committee held multiple meetings over the next three years to conclude with Council's adoption of the CCFBC in May 2017. She said the Campus Corner area was exempted from the CCFBC based on concerns about inadequate parking.

Retail Strategies along James Garner Avenue

Ms. Connors said the Steering Committee felt that James Garner Avenue was definitely a street in transition and clearly an area that should be consistent with Main Street's Urban Storefront Frontage. Ms. Connors said Urban Storefront Frontage represents the prototypical "main street" forms of shopfronts along the sidewalk with a mix of uses above. The Urban Storefront Frontage limits the ground floor uses to retail sales, retail service, or professional service. She said the Urban Storefront Frontage areas would encompass James Garner Avenue between Main Street and Eufaula Street and the area of James Garner Avenue south of Eufaula Street would be designated Urban General Frontage, which allows development of multi-story buildings placed directly at the sidewalk or behind small dooryards. Urban General Frontage uses range from commercial to residential, municipal to retail, and restaurants. She said the difference between the two frontages is the ground floor use and the different uses are intended to complement and support each other as well as revitalize Downtown Norman.

Missing Middle Housing

Ms. Connors said the charrette process also considered "missing middle" housing defined as a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable, urban living. The types of housing include small and large duplexes; bungalow apartments; carriage houses; fourplexes; multiplex apartments; townhouses; live-work units; and courtyard apartments.

Councilmember Holman said regardless of whether or not new development takes place in Center City, much of the infrastructure is old and would need to be replaced and one way to get that done is through a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District. Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney, said the Johnson and Associates Study found the water lines to be in pretty good shape and the anticipated increased density from implementation of CCFBC was what would form the basis TIF increments that might be needed.

Item 2, continued:

Missing Middle Housing, continued:

Chairman Hickman said there have been continued requests for construction of four story duplex models where each side of the unit has four to six bedrooms similar to the mini-dorms being constructed prior to the CCFBC adoption. He said there is concern that the City is treating duplexes as residential construction and small apartment buildings, triplexes, townhouses, and other missing middle housing as commercial construction requiring sprinkler systems. He said this increases the cost of constructing these types of missing middle housing projects by 30% to 35%. He would like to have discussions about leveling that playing field. Mr. Bryant said the CCTIF adopted at last night's Council meeting sets a tool in place that the City did not previously have and Staff asked a representative of the Center for Economic Development Law (CEDL) to attend this meeting and help answer these types of questions. Mr. Bryant said the duplexes Chairman Hickman is talking about are allowed under the CCFBC, but the question is whether or not this is the form of housing the CCFBC envisions. He understands there may be a financial barrier in constructing something that is more in line with the form outlined in the CCFBC.

Ms. Emily Pomeroy, CEDL, said the City is in a great position to take the next steps for implementation of the TIF Project Plan and the questions being asked today are perfect examples of what needs to be analyzed when looking at providing financial assistance on a project. She said the policy principles will guide how assistance is provided so the Project Plan is basically the core of project goals. She said the means and methods of providing financial assistance for projects specifically unique to Norman have yet to be developed. While some projects may meet the requirements of the CCFBC, are they the types of development the City really envisions for Center City? She said this would be a great opportunity for assisting with public improvement costs or assisting the development if the project enhances the quality of life or public realm and is consistent with the Project Plan. She said Council needs to think about what would make a project eligible for financial assistance and projects should be considered on a case by case basis. She said on the heels of the adoption of the CCTIF, CEDL has begun thinking about the guiding principles of the policy document and first and foremost would be ensuring the City is implementing the vision that is Center City. She said the duplex Chairman Hickman mentioned is a great example of a project the City should probably not consider providing financial assistance to. The City should provide assistance to projects that are high level, super impactful, and will make a difference in the development of Center City. She said it is vital in the creation of a policy document to have guidelines on what projects will be provided financial assistance in the form of a development agreement.

Councilmember Wilson asked if every project will go before some type of review board because that seems to be a burdensome process and Ms. Pomeroy said it will definitely be a process, but the goal will be to make that process as less burdensome as possible. She envisions drafting of a policy document that literally walks through how each project is analyzed. She said as an example, CEDL represented the City of Owasso in the creation of a project plan to help fund infrastructure improvements necessary for their basically dead original downtown. They developed a policy that created a City level Staff review that included representatives from several departments to review the project application and decide whether or not the project was eligible under their policy document to receive TIF assistance. She said Owasso created a specific percentage formula for overall development costs; however, she does not believe this type of formula would work in Norman. She said Oklahoma City adopted a policy for TIF assistance by defining a funding gap and a Staff review committee determines whether or not the project is eligible for TIF funding and makes a recommendation to City Council.

Item 2, continued:

Missing Middle Housing, continued:

Councilmember Holman asked why certain residential developments are being required to install fire suppression, which increases costs, while other residential projects are not. Ms. Connors said one and two family construction, which includes duplexes, fall under the International Residential Code and those do not require sprinkling systems; however, three units or above fall under the International Commercial Code and do require sprinkling systems. Councilmember Holman said the IRC is State law and cannot be changed, correct? Ms. Connors said that is correct.

Chairman Hickman asked if the City could have stricter local rules than State rules and Ms. Connors said yes. Chairman Hickman said there have been some duplex projects proposed where the developer has expressed an interest in converting a duplex into a small apartment building, but that would cost an additional \$200,000 because a sprinkler system would be required. He would like to find a way to close the gap on these developments because this type of development would be considered “missing middle” housing. Mr. Bryant said Staff has been working with the developer regarding the type of housing that would be more desirable by citizens and the developer’s willingness to build that type of housing. He said Staff is exploring options of encouraging particular developments through development agreements that could include financial assistance for Council’s consideration. Ms. Pomeroy said Council should be thoughtful about the types of projects the City incentivizes because it is not a good policy to provide financial assistance to every development. She said reviewing what public improvements a project will bring and tying those improvements to the enhancement of the public realm could make the project appropriate for financial assistance.

Chairman Hickman asked if Staff has begun working on a policy document and Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney, said Council should take their time working on a policy and what is being presented tonight is basically “food for thought.” He said Ms. Pomeroy’s comment about the City not being able to finance every project is critical to this discussion, but Council may find value in “kicking off” a project that reflects the vision of the area. He said there is a project just outside of the CCTIF that would fit perfectly with the vision of retail on the bottom and other uses above; however, there is no parking solution and that is the reason that area was specifically exempted from the CCFBC. He said Campus Corner merchants are concerned that increasing density without a parking solution would further impede their ability to do business with their customers. He said Staff is working through a potential development agreement in coordination with the Norman Economic Development Coalition (NEDC) to work with the developer to meet parking requirements. He said NEDC owns a vacant lot in the area that could potentially be used for parking. He said the project would generate a lot of increment and is the type of project the City is looking for to kick off bigger projects. He said both projects discussed tonight are equally important and that is why it is so critical to think through financial assistance guidelines.

Councilmember Wilson said it sounds like Council will be open to arbitrary findings and asked how Council can approve one project and turn down another? She also asked about the timeline for creating a policy document because project applications are already being submitted and Council has no guidelines. Mr. Bryant said the first step was approving the CCTIF, which was approved at last night’s Council meeting, so Council can move at its own pace on developing a policy document, but Staff will be working with developers within the CCFBC concepts and no projects will be put on hold.

Item 2, continued:

Missing Middle Housing, continued:

Chairman Hickman asked if Staff could use the guiding principles outlined by CEDL to create draft guidelines for a policy document to be reviewed in the CPTC January meeting and Ms. Pomeroy said CEDL will work with Staff on drafting a policy document while continuing to analyze projects as they are submitted.

Parking Strategies

Mr. Bryant said the vision for Center City has always taken into account that increased density will create parking issues and Staff will continue to review parking opportunities by partnering with churches, NEDC, Cleveland County, etc.

Chairman Hickman said he would like to ask Staff if there must be 15 feet of passage on a street for emergency vehicles to maneuver and Mr. Travis King, Fire Chief, said that is the City's basic guideline; however, the Fire Department can adapt and overcome challenges, if necessary. Chairman Hickman said in some areas of the City, parking is allowed on both sides of the street and with an increase in density there are concerns regarding emergency vehicles being able to maneuver through a street where parking is allowed on both sides. He suggested the City proactively identify those streets, particularly Apache Street and Symmes Street, and adopt a resolution prohibiting parking on both sides. Councilmember Wilson said she would support that suggestion because there is a significant safety issue if emergency services cannot respond fast enough because they cannot maneuver through the street.

Councilmember Holman said he would like to identify areas where there is parking on both sides of the street citywide because Center City is not the only part of the City where parking along both sides of the street creates problems for other vehicles to maneuver. He felt Council should be able to prohibit parking on both sides of a street if there are safety issues.

Mayor Miller said she would like to review possible unintended consequences of Council having the ability to arbitrarily change parking on streets and bypassing the usual petition process by property owners living on the street. Councilmember Wilson said if there are significant safety issues created by allowing parking on both sides of a street, Council should have the authority to make the decision to prohibit that. Councilmember Holman agreed and said a two-way street should always offer the ability for two cars to traverse the street at the same time.

Mr. Darry Stacy, Cleveland County Commissioner, said Kimley Horn recently completed the Downtown and Campus Corner Parking Study and suggested the City ask Kimley Horn what their perspective would be on unintended consequences of prohibiting parking on both sides of some streets in Center City.

Chairman Hickman felt safety problems created by allowing parking on both sides of the street will only become more acute with the anticipation of greater density within the CCFBC area and if the City does not get ahead of this issue now, it will only become more problematic. He said developers also need to be aware that parking on both sides of the street will not be allowed so they can plan their developments accordingly. He asked Staff to draft a resolution for the Committee's review in January.

Item 2, continued:

James Garner Avenue Concept

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the City did not have a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) until 2014, which is the foundation to transportation planning. The CTP has to facilitate growth, development, and connectivity within the community. The CTP recommends adoption of a Complete Streets Policy, which Staff has prepared in a draft form that will be presented to the Committee at a future date. He said complete streets are a network for all users that includes walking, biking, transit, and autos. It is also about right sizing streets for that network of users. He said the CPT identifies the needs of Norman and some of the needs identified include better north/south capacity, improvements for east/west capacity, connectivity between Downtown and Campus Corner, and parking solutions.

Mr. O'Leary highlighted the draft Thoroughfare Plan as part of the CPT that will add definition to functional classification of all major roads in Norman; provide design options for roadway sections; formalize an internal loop for regional connection; identify collector network supporting section grids; identify special corridors (i.e., Porter Avenue, James Garner Avenue, Flood Avenue; Berry Road; and Lindsey Street); and identify railroad grade separation improvements. He said special corridors are different because there may have limited right-of-way, different development standards, adjacent railroad tracks, etc. He said the best example of a special corridor is Lindsey Street because the University of Oklahoma (OU) requested the City not construct a four lane roadway through the heart of their campus and the City agreed since there is a lot of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in that area.

Mr. O'Leary said the Thoroughfare Plan will enhance traffic capacity, distribution and circulation of traffic, and mobility of bicyclists on the roadway network. He said the Thoroughfare Plan includes the extension of James Garner Avenue north of Acres Street to Flood Avenue north of Robinson Street. This improvement addresses the deficient level of service along Flood Avenue at Robinson Street during peak hours. He said this project will use the already provided abutments created for the Robinson Street underpass of the railroad and create a connection to Flood Avenue north of Robinson Street. In conjunction with that project, Legacy Trail will be realigned north of Acres Street to extend Legacy Trail over the grade separated Robinson Street to eliminate the potential safety hazards for bicyclists and pedestrians of the existing at-grade trail crossing of Robinson Street. Also, Staff is advising that side streets on James Garner Avenue between Acres Street and Robinson Street be closed for safety reasons and feed-back from property owners on the closures has been very positive. He said these side streets are well served from Flood Avenue so closing off connection on James Garner Avenue will not cause a hardship for property owners. Councilmember Holman agreed and said he has heard a lot of support from property owners regarding closing the connections due to the higher volume of traffic expected. He said aligning Legacy Trail with the overpass abutment will definitely be safer for bicycles and pedestrians crossing Robinson Street.

Mr. O'Leary said the proposed extension of James Garner Avenue northward to tie directly to Flood Avenue will bring a component of through traffic to the segment of James Garner Avenue south of Acres Street. This section of James Garner Avenue is currently a meandering two lane roadway with on-street parking to Boyd Street. The proposed extension will modify the existing James Garner Avenue roadway to add pockets of left turn lanes to facilitate traffic movement while retaining a two-lane roadway through downtown and removing various areas of curbside parking to create pockets of off-street parking in the public right-of-way.

Item 2, continued:

James Garner Avenue Concept, continued:

Mr. O'Leary said traffic volumes on James Garner Avenue are projected to increase tenfold with the extension and connection of Flood Avenue. He highlighted projected traffic volumes as follows:

LOCATION	EXISTING TRAFFIC	PROJECTED TRAFFIC BY 2040
Eufaula Street to Main Street	2,256	17,327
Gray Street to Acres Street	1,727	18,495
Acres Street to Flood Avenue	0	19,218

Mr. O'Leary said Phase I, James Garner Avenue and Acres Street Intersection Project, is in the design stages, Phase II, James Garner Avenue between Acres Street and Flood Avenue, is also in the design stages, and Phase III, James Garner Avenue between Eufaula Street and Acres Street, is unscheduled at this time. He said the new Central Library is scheduled to open in 2018, which would cause major traffic issues so Council requested Staff move forward with Phase I to coincide with the library opening; however, Phase II will be delayed approximately three years due to federal funding challenges. He said while there is no funding at this time for Phase III, there is a plan for the project. He said James Garner Avenue will consist of two 17 foot north/south lanes with a landscaped center median and additional turn lanes at the intersection of Acres Street. He said Staff is currently reviewing intersection options for James Garner Avenue and Flood Avenue that include a multi-lane roundabout versus a signalized intersection. He said increased traffic projections are so dramatic that a roundabout may not be able to handle the traffic volume so Staff is reviewing that carefully, but Council will make the ultimate decision.

Councilmember Holman was concerned about speeding problems since James Garner Avenue would be a long straight away with extra wide lanes and Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Traffic Engineer, said 17 feet is what is needed in order to construct a center median. He said a stalled vehicle would basically block the lane completely if the lanes were narrower.

Mr. O'Leary said Staff will be recommending a fencing system along the railroad tracks for safety reasons.

Chairman Hickman said the CCFBC includes regulations regarding construction of public streets that fit the complete streets principle and asked if Staff is also reviewing improvements to James Garner Avenue south of the CCFBC and Mr. O'Leary said yes, Staff is reviewing south of Acres Street in the design process. He said Council has discussed a Main Street and Gray Street conversion from one-way to two-way and if that were to happen, then that design would need to fit with James Garner Avenue as well. He said James Garner Avenue is one of the challenges with the conversion to two-way so Staff is trying to align the various projects at each step.

Chairman Hickman asked if federal funding for north of James Garner Avenue is expected in 2021 and Mr. O'Leary said Staff will know more about that in mid-January. Mr. O'Leary said obtaining federal funding has become very competitive in Oklahoma. Chairman Hickman said he would like to have as short a gap as possible on beginning the processes for improvements to north and south of James Garner Avenue especially since the adoption of the CCFBC and CCTIF. He asked if the design portions of these projects could be budgeted by the City in FYE 2019 to allow Staff to move forward more quickly and Mr. O'Leary said that could be done. He said federal dollars are reducing and there is so much competition for them that it may be time for Council to start thinking about

Item 2, continued:

James Garner Avenue Concept, continued:

projects without federal funds or the City could be waiting years to begin projects dependent on federal funding.

Councilmember Holman said as much as he enjoys receiving federal funding and the projects that funding allows he has always been concerned about the City having to give up oversight of quality control and timelines. He would like the City to be able to fund as many projects as possible on its own and Mr. O'Leary said Staff becomes frustrated with some of those same issues, but there should be a blend of projects using federal and City dollars. He said the most concerning project is Jenkins Avenue since OU is exploding in that area with residential units as well as NORMAN FORWARD improvements to Reaves Park. He said that two lane roadway will not be able to handle the traffic volume from these projects so improvements on Jenkins Avenue need to be advanced, but whether that should be done with federal funding or advanced by Council is something that needs to be reviewed.

Councilmember Wilson asked if OU participates in funding street projects and Mr. O'Leary said OU is exempt from development standards. Councilmember Holman said he is not a fan of OU constructing streets because the ones they have constructed do not include bicycle lanes or sidewalks and the streets are poor quality. Councilmember Wilson felt that OU should participate in some of the cost structure for Jenkins Avenue.

Ms. Leslie Tabor, ADG, Inc., said ADG is working with Cleveland County on a master plan and has worked with the City and County on a parking study as well as working with the City on NORMAN FORWARD Projects. She said ADG is excited about the new Central Library, the CCFBC, and proposed changes to James Garner Avenue south of Acres Street to the entrance of the planned campus for Cleveland County. She said Cleveland County is a friend and partner of the City, but envision a campus that is welcoming to all constituents which spreads beyond Norman to include Moore, Slaughterville, Lexington, Noble, etc. She said Cleveland County wants an environment where constituents know when they have entered Cleveland County property. The Cleveland County Master Plan includes courthouse renovations, construction of a parking garage, and development of a Healthy Living Block. She said the Healthy Living Block will be a true centerpiece that is innovative, creative, and new to the community as well as something they hope will receive national attention. She said the Cleveland County Campus will be a place that focuses on all facets of health, whether it is mental or physical health, and will include partnerships with the Veterans Center, Cleveland County Health Department, Pioneer Library System, City of Norman, etc. She said ADG is well aware of the CCFBC as well as other projects/studies taking place in Norman and has taken all of that into consideration during the County master planning process.

Councilmember Holman said he hopes the County is thinking about architectural compatibility with the historic nature of Downtown Norman since the Courthouse is the tallest building downtown. He does not like the idea of modern buildings being constructed among historic buildings because they stand out like a sore thumb. He said the City has discussed parking structures/facilities in Downtown Norman and Campus Corner and there have been strong feelings from the public and businesses that the bottom floor of a parking structure should not be a blank concrete wall or not be interactive with the street so it is important to have retail or commercial business on the bottom floor to address street activity. Ms. Tabor said the first floor engagement of the parking structure is equally important to the County because they want the structure to be sustainable, successful, and something people are

Item 2, continued:

James Garner Avenue Concept, continued:

drawn to so activation at street level is a priority. She said compatible architecture is also a priority because the County wants their campus to be a beautiful and viable asset in the community.

Chairman Hickman said he would like Council and the public to have a full presentation of the Cleveland County Master Plan in April or May 2018, if possible.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated December 15, 2017, from Susan Connors, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development, to Community Planning and Transportation Committee Members
2. Recommended Guiding Principles for Development of Policies in Implementation of the Center City Project Plan
3. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Section One: Center City Form Based Code District, and Section Two: Missing Middle Housing Types," dated December 20, 2017
4. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "James Garner Avenue Design," presented by Shawn O'Leary, P.E., Director of Public Works, Scott Sturtz, P.E., City Engineer, and Angelo Lombardo, Transportation Engineer, dated December 20, 2017

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Item 3, being:

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None

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The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor