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SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 10, 2012 at 3:30 p.m.
Central Library Fourth Floor Conference Room

Members Present:	Jacob Dorer, Diane Gerth, Deb Jessen, Melanie McMahon, Mark Miazga, Gene Olson, Dave Pinto, Paul Sawyer, Pat Sellner, Michael Steward, Darren Tobolt, Gary Unger, D'Ann Urbaniak Lesch
Members Excused:	Monica Bryand, Becca Hine, Avi Viswanathan
Members Absent:	
Visitors and City Staff Present:	OFS – John McCarthy and Betsy Hammer Parks – Jody Martinez

1. Convene

Meeting convened at 3:35 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Olson moved approval, Mr. Sawyer seconded. Committee voted all in favor.

3. Approval of August 13, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Olson moved approval, Mr. Sawyer seconded. Committee voted all in favor.

4. Chair's Comments

Ms. Gerth asked staff if the Committee would be getting any new members. She noted that it would be tough for a new member to start too late in the on-year process. Mr. McCarthy said that the Mayor's Office is accepting applicants and noted the point about timing.

5. Action Items

Parks and Recreation – Jody Martinez

RES PH 12-262: Amending the financing and spending plans in the 2012 Capital Improvement Budget in the Department of Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$24,533.00 received from STAR grant funds for the Payne Maryland Security Camera project.

Ms. Martinez introduced the project and noted that it was submitted by District 5 and Councilmember Bostrum. She said that Parks will be providing the management and administration of funds and the project will be implemented by the Police department.

Ms. Gerth said it looks like a pretty minor adjustment on much large project.

Mr. Olson moved approval, Mr. Unger seconded.

Ms. Gerth asked about the location of the cameras. Ms. Martinez said they will be around the periphery of the project. Mr. Olson asked if they would be running along Maryland and Ms. Martinez said she didn't have the exact locations.

Committee voted. 1 opposed, all others in favor.

6. 2014 – 2015 CIB Process Discussion

Ms. Gerth passed out a handout with a new proposal form created by Mr. Pinto and Mr. Viswanathan. She reminded committee members that they ask groups to fill out a form and explained that this is a reworking of the form. She asked Mr. Pinto to share highlights.

Mr. Pinto said that this form was intended to replace the application. He said that last time the Committee met they talked about the process, duplicate questions, and questions that weren't tied to scoring criteria. He said that he and Mr. Viswanathan met and created a rough draft, and then he made some additional changes.

Mr. Pinto said the first section (A) is pretty much the same, except they moved up the question on the public art ordinance information and added a short project description that should describe what this project is. He said Section B was intended to give respondents free reign to say whatever they want about the project. Mr. Pinto said Section C questions tie to scoring criteria and reminded members that 4 of the 5 scoring criteria are the same for all three task forces (Community Facilities, Streets and Utilities, and Residential & Economic Development). He said that what was frustrating to him last time was seeing all this text but it was hard to pull out what applied. He said the applicants could feel free to repeat some things but ultimately this is what reviewers are going to be looking at so they should tell how it all fits. He said Section C language comes right out of the scoring sheet.

Ms. Gerth suggested spelling out acronyms. Mr. Pinto said he thought Survey Monkey directed respondents to different tracks once they chose what type of project they were submitting. He said staff could fix as needed. Committee discussed.

Mr. Dorer said he was wondering why the drop to 50 words or less for a project description when the old form had 150 words. Mr. Pinto said that section was intended to be an expanded title in a way, a shorthand way of saying what this project is. He said

it was intended to get at what the project is trying to do and why. Mr. Dorer asked if other sections would be limited too. Mr. Pinto said maybe that would be a good idea. Mr. Sellner suggested adding a general note asking people to please keep to pertinent facts and expanding during the presentation. Mr. Pinto said Survey Monkey can set limits, and thought that maybe 1,000 words would be good. Committee discussed.

Ms. Gerth said that the form seems very straightforward. Mr. Pinto said that was the goal.

Ms. McMahon asked about submitting attachments for pictures and that sort of thing. Mr. McCarthy said during the last process they tried to slim down the proposal books and had people bring that kind of stuff with them to the meeting for the presentation. He said in prior years people could submit them and the books were just huge. He said that during the last cycle, OFS posted materials on the web and some people brought handouts to meetings or put material in their presentations.

Mr. Unger said more is not necessarily good and it's good to get down to pertinent information, not bringing in tons of documents.

Ms. Gerth said the Committee should continue to give proposers the scoring criteria as reference to answer questions that might come up.

Mr. Sawyer said that last year, city staff often hit all the points but some of the community proposals struggled to hit the points or were kind of rambling and it took lots of questions to tease out what the reviewers wanted to know. He said he thought this would be immensely helpful to have more efficient public presentations in the Task Force meetings.

Ms. McMahon said she really liked the new form. She said her only concern is the format proposers get it in. She asked about Survey Monkey being able to do drafts and questioned whether it's the best vehicle. Mr. Pinto noted that the introductory language tells proposers they can copy-paste from Microsoft Word and he presumed people would do that. He said it could be played up a bit more in the introduction – something like “proposers are encouraged to draft in separate format and then copy in.”

Mr. Tobolt said he thought there should be some sort of word limits, maybe more generous on long narrative and tightened down on questions that pertain to categories.

Mr. Steward asked how somebody would determine which category best fits their project. Ms. Gerth noted that some are imperfect and said she'd had questions about that in the past. Mr. McCarthy explained that OFS staff does review all projects, and every year there are some on the line so they typically go to department staff to see which is a better fit. He said categories definitely aren't perfect, and brought up the example of more and more technology projects and said that a lot of it is a judgment call. He said there probably isn't time for this cycle but the Committee may want to think about redesigning categories for future cycles.

Mr. Unger said that the biggest thing that seems to throw District Councils off is CDBG eligibility. He asked if they are being advised on CDBG eligibility. Mr. McCarthy said that all Residential and Economic Development projects are submitted to PED to make sure they're eligible because for RED projects if they're not eligible for CDBG there's no way to get them funding through the CIB process.

Mr. Unger said that technology is really becoming a square peg in a round hole. He said there can be issues with the 10 year criteria, and said they are not really bricks and mortar, but projects can't get to bricks mortar without technology. He said that the county has wrestled with this and they finally set up a technology fund. Mr. Dorer said that for most it's much more of a utility than a facility because there's no community use, and he cited the example of the fiber wiring project from the last cycle. He said the category could change the view and wiring, servers, and all behind the scenes projects should be considered utility work. He suggested a "Streets, Utility and Technology" category and said it would be a nice way to make that clear.

Ms. Urbaniak Lesch asked if the committee had talked about this. Mr. McCarthy said there has been discussion about this in previous years. He said in the last cycle they were put in Community Facilities because they were tied to specific sites.

Mr. Unger suggested that maybe different types of technology could be in different categories, like software vs. fiber optics vs. computers. Ms. Gerth said that it is possible staff would have to juggle and make judgments based on different purposes. Committee discussed.

Mr. Pinto asked if further changes to categories could be made. He also asked if the Committee could provide any further direction beyond just the name of the category. Mr. McCarthy said that the memo does give some examples. He said that maybe some more specific guidance on the form might make sense.

Mr. Pinto said maybe it should be changed to SUT for Streets, Utilities, and Technology, and the Committee could provide a little more direction in the cover memo. He said there may still be gray areas that can be figured out. Ms. Gerth liked this idea.

Mr. Steward asked if the committee ever discussed how to handle public safety proposals. Ms. Gerth responded that she didn't know that the committee had that discussion, and that last cycle discussion centered primarily around PSA and fiber optics on east side.

Mr. Steward asked if individuals are allowed to submit proposals. Mr. McCarthy responded that they are allowed. Mr. Steward suggested that the proposal form should clarify that by changing the language to read, "Proposing agency, group or individual." Committee agreed.

Ms. Gerth said thanks to Mr. Pinto and Mr. Viswanathan for doing this.

Mr. Olson moved approval, Mr. Tobolt seconded.

Committee discussed word limits on the project description section.

Mr. Pinto raised the issue of cost effectiveness of projects. He said it was important to him to know about bang for the buck. He recalled that task forces are told not to consider money, but people think about it and it doesn't make sense not to.

Ms. Urbaniak Lesch pointed point that a lot of projects submitted by non-city groups can't control project estimates, which are calculated by city staff.

Mr. Unger pointed out that thinking about costs may make it easier for task force members to be selfish about ward or neighborhood projects. He said it's important to not think about the money and to put Saint Paul first. He said the question should be "What's good for Saint Paul?" He said members shouldn't be judging on money, they should be judging on merit. Ms. Gerth said projects that leverage outside money are considered from a bang for the buck angle.

Committee discussed ways to measure bang for the buck and cost effectiveness.

Mr. Tobolt proposed a friendly amendment to limit the description to 500 words. Mr. Dorer seconded. Mr. Pinto accepted the friendly amendment. Committee accepted.

Committee continued discussing cost effectiveness. Mr. McCarthy confirmed that a final version of the proposal form needed to be ready by the end of the meeting. He said other parts of the process could be changed since they don't start until early 2013, but the proposal form is mailed out to organizations in early October.

Mr. Tobolt said that a cost benefit analysis is implicit throughout the form and said it doesn't need to be added. Ms. Jessen agreed and said she liked Mr. Unger's point about thinking about the betterment of Saint Paul. Mr. Steward suggested emphasizing effectiveness in the memo with the instructions. Mr. Pinto said there's no good place in the current system to score on cost effectiveness, except outside money. Ms. McMahon suggested putting it in the instructional memo and also emphasizing cost effectiveness at the open house meeting this fall.

Ms. Urbaniak Lesch reminded members that the proposal form is different from the scoring sheets. Mr. Pinto said the proposal form he created is based on the scoring criteria.

Ms. Gerth noted that question 5 refers to "tangible return on investment." She suggested working with language there to emphasize cost-benefit analysis. Committee discussed the different ways of measuring cost effectiveness and the challenges with it.

Mr. Pinto suggested adding a bullet under question 5 that refers to "benefits gained for cost incurred." Mr. Sellner said that bullet 3 refers to investment, which is the same thing. Committee discussed.

Committee discussed whether or not this type of consideration would require changing the by-laws of the CIB Committee for task forces to consider money. Committee discussed whether or not it would be a good idea to change this aspect of the task force process.

Committee reviewed the proposed changes to question 5.

Mr. Steward raised the question of considering impact on operating costs. Committee discussed.

Committee reviewed the proposed changes to question 5. Mr. Pinto clarified that his proposed amendment added a bullet for cost effectiveness. The text would be "benefits for costs incurred." Committee discussed, ultimately agreeing to keep the existing bullets, but to move the "tangible return on investment" bullet to the top of the list.

Mr. Pinto suggested a limit of a couple hundred words for questions in Section C.

Committee voted. None opposed, one abstained.

Ms. Gerth asked if the draft calendar had changes. Mr. McCarthy explained that staff had adjusted some dates.

Mr. Olson asked if task forces would still meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Mr. McCarthy confirmed days would stay the same as in previous cycles.

Ms. Urbaniak Lesch asked if the Committee was planning to talk about evaluations from the last cycle. She specifically recalled some concerns about the final task force meetings, where members start with a list in of projects in order based on scores and then can vote to change the order. Committee discussed. Ms. Gerth suggested honing the process closer to the orientation date.

7. Reminder: October meeting will be held in basement of City Hall.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Olson moved to adjourn, Ms. Jessen seconded. Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.

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