

**MINUTES OF THE
WATERTOWN CITY COUNCIL**
Workshop Meeting Tuesday, February 27, 2018

Steve Washburn
Deborah Everson
Lindsay Guetzkow
Adam Pawellk
Michael Walters

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Steve Washburn called the Watertown City Council Workshop to order at 5:31 p.m. Tuesday, February 27, 2018 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Council Members present: Washburn, Michael Walters, Deborah Everson, Lindsay Guetzkow, and Adam Pawellk. City Staff present: City Administrator Shane Fineran, City Engineer Andrew Budde, Utilities Superintendent Doug Kammerer, and Clerk-Treasurer Lynn Tschudi. Guest presenters: Tim Sundby and Paul Moline from Carver County.

2. New Business

A. Rick Johnson Park River Enhancements

Tim Sundby from the County approached the podium to walk through the proposed Park River Enhancements for the Crow River. Sundby is working on returning waterways to their original state by making them dam free. The reasons for removing the dam is to have stream connection, to have more natural fish communities, safety, and liability. Sundby showed a slide on the types and amounts of fish prevalent in the nearby streams. He pointed out that due to the dam the amount of fish decline significantly in the Watertown area. Also the walleye fish are almost diminished in this area while carp and catfish are more abundant. Sundby stated that low head dams increase the likelihood of drowning, causing a safety concern. There are liability concerns with dams since when the original dam paperwork was signed, the City was the signor.

Sundby reviewed the option of removing the current dam and replacing with a Rock Arch Dam. Pros for this is allowing a fish passage, however a major con is the costly price. Another option would be a full removal of the dam with no replacement. This returns the river to a more natural state. The final option is to do nothing. Sundby does say that some stream bank restoration needs to be done currently along the banks of the river.

Sundby is looking for Council feedback on the future of the river.

Washburn asked what kinds of grants are available for the different options. Sundby answered that if nothing was done and only the stream bank restoration, that funding would be through the DNR. Although it is a competitive grant, he thinks it would be worth trying.

Walters asked what other advantages there are to keeping the current dam. Everson would like to know if removal would affect flooding. Sundby answered that by the time the City hits flood stage, the dam is not making a difference. Everson asked about how a potential future walking bridge could affect recreational activities along this area. Sundby replied that a bridge would not affect the overall project, but would also not qualify for any funding. Guetzkow asked about dam failure and if it would be more costly to remove the dam after failure or to remove it now. Sundby answered that there would be more fill and rip rap to replace areas that have washed away. Council asked why the dam was constructed in the first place. Utilities Superintendent Kammerer answered that the original reason for the dam was to divert a foul smell from the downtown in times of low water.

Everson asked if this project is in the 2040 comp plan. Fineran answered that it is not, however stream bank restoration is in the Capital Investment Plan.

Washburn stated he is highly supportive of making the Crow a recreational facility in this area and he feels the DNR could contribute to this idea whether it is by providing canoeing routes or something similar.

Pawelk stated that if we do move forward with the project, it is creating better fishing, better kayaking, more of a chance for grant funding, and better stabilization.

Guetzkow asked if there is specifically only money available for the dam. Paul responded that there is likely other money available, but it would need to be drawn from different pots which are highly competitive.

Washburn asked if the County has been having conversation with County Parks & Rec around the Crow River. Paul replied that they are currently working on their budget and plan. Washburn stated we are highly interested in improving this waterway but we are looking for people who would like to champion this.

3. Adjournment

Workshop adjourned at 6:24 p.m.