

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
BUDGET HEARINGS
August 28, 1995

The meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Yarish.

Town Administrator Pollard briefly summarized the budget process. This is the second of three hearings and is an opportunity for Council and the public to review the proposed budget and make any comments or suggestions. Discussed tonight will be the Robson Stop By, Isabel Cook Complex, Open Space Committee, Planning Services, Engineering & Inspection, Street Maintenance, and Capital Improvements.

Robson Stop-By

Town Administrator Pollard said the Stop-By Program has been operational for a number of years providing free after school care for students of Wade Thomas School, and has been funded by the Town for the last two years. It is proposed that the Town finance the program again for \$12,000.

Kate Hacker, Stop-By Program, said this is the third year of a contract with the Town. They are requesting more money this year because their enrollment has increased dramatically and they want to do more projects with St. Anselm's that will require more staff. Another paid staff person would provide more continuity for the children. In addition, a community merchant has proposed paying a Drake student to work every day with the children.

Dorothy Hughes, Campaign for a Healthier Community for Children, said the program provides a community service and increases community awareness for participants as well. They are looking for more funding.

Chignell asked how much more they are asking. Hacker said there is a shortfall of about \$4,000 in their budget; but they are requesting \$1,000 more from the Town.

Pollard said her recommendation is the \$12,000 in the proposed budget.

Hodgens asked about the average daily attendance at Robson. Hacker said it is between 15 and 25 children per day, elementary school age. Next year there may be some children coming back as CIT's, sixth graders who will be at White Hill, but are graduates of the program.

Hodgens asked if there is only one paid staff person. Hacker said there is one paid staff person and also volunteer students from Drake and Branson.

Yarish asked from where the other \$4,000 in funds might come. Hacker said they would come from a variety of community resources and grant requests.

Planning Services

Town Administrator Pollard said the Planning budget is similar to last year's, and includes the recruitment of an Assistant Planner. Accomplishments include approval of the Housing Element and Downtown Revitalization. Goals include working on the plan checking process and implementing the Housing Element.

Kroot asked when the Assistant Planner might be hired. Pollard said the process has begun and January 1st is the estimated start date.

Hodgens asked where money for implementation of Downtown Revitalization is located in the budget. Chaney said it is in "Consulting Services."

Hodgens asked what services are expected from Michael Friedman for \$7,000. Chaney said the downtown revitalization committees are looking into priorities and will be reporting back. In addition, more services may be needed from the consultant on the Housing Element, and that money would come from this fund.

Chignell asked about plans for an in-house plan checker. Chaney said Lisa Wight is currently doing the in-house work.

Breen asked about planning fees and whether planning expenses are actually offset by fees. Chaney said that the planning staff spends time answering questions that are not included in the planning fees. Their fees are fair in that small projects pay proportionately less than larger projects. A lot of money goes into pre-planning on projects, such as Bald Hill, Housing Element, etc. Large projects do generally pay their own way.

Breen asked if the time sheets for specific projects could be audited to see if project fees are actually covering planning costs. Chaney said they could do a sample to see if the fees are fairly assessed.

Chaney said she would like to present a resolution on the consent agenda tomorrow night that the Planning Commission's quorum be set at a majority of those presently on the Commission. The consensus of Council was to take action on this as long as it is properly posted. Chaney will post a notice immediately.

Engineering & Inspection

Town Administrator Pollard said the Department's accomplishments are listed in the proposed budget. There are no major differences to this budget over last year. The Equipment fund is proposed to include an Autocad computer mapping program. The plan checking process can be discussed tonight, as both the Planning Director and Public Works Director are here.

Chignell noted that in the plan checking area consultants' fees are quite high; it seems like there should be a better way. This may foster delays, which cause a number of complaints. Would in-house people be better?

Public Works Director Bush said that responsiveness would be increased with an in-house person, depending on the number of hours assigned to that person. More hours would probably be needed to account for the number of questions the person would be asked at the counter.

Yarish said he shares this concern, but expending additional funds is worthwhile if they increase services to the public.

Bush said there are a number of needs in the department that can be combined to create staff positions, including plan checking, Measure G work, code enforcement, and engineering. He said the only functions that wouldn't work together are plan checking and Measure G work.

Yarish said he thought the Code Enforcement Officer was not approved last year.

Pollard said the code enforcement work was to be included in the Assistant Planner position.

Kroot said he feels it would be more efficient to have the plan checker in house. He said that the parallel plan checking currently being tested may not be saving time, as everyone has to go back and check out what the others did.

Bush said they are tracking permit progress with a log book so that when the trial period is over the results can be quantified.

Breen asked if it would be possible to chart this out for those who are not technically oriented. Prospective customers could benefit from this as well. The chart could include estimated time frames. It is important to get information on the Town's process to the public, especially to realtors who can give the information to prospective home buyers.

Yarish asked about the GIS computer system.

Bush said this would provide a computer-aided drafting system for the Town's parcel map. Each parcel would be numbered and referenced to the County Assessor's parcel rolls. This will streamline the process for noticing residents. The budgeted \$7500 is for software.

Hodgens asked if the computer system would help with coordination of the work of the various utilities. Bush said ultimately it would.

Town Administrator Pollard said that an in-house plan checker would incur more costs because the position would need more time for questions from the public. Also, there would be no ability to fluctuate hours with the fluctuation of permit activity.

Open Space

Town Administrator Pollard said the Open Space Committee assists the Town in acquiring or preserving open space.

Jonathan Braun, Open Space, said it has been a busy year and their accomplishments are listed in the budget document.

Breen asked if it would be possible to use some of the budgeted money for the remainder of the match for Sorich Park.

Braun said they are accruing volunteer hours and in-kind donations that will hopefully make up the match.

Town Administrator Pollard said they hope they can make up the match with the hours and donations, but the money is in the budget in case it isn't enough.

Hodgens said she would like a reconciliation of first year activity on the grant. She asked if there are any minor/major activities coming up this next year.

Jonathan Braun said more activity is of an enabling type. He said the endowment balance is about \$30,000.

Kroot asked if they are working with Ron Zeise on the Tree Ordinance. Braun said they have consulted a number of different sources to get information, including the Fire Chief.

Street Maintenance.

Town Administrator Pollard said the passage of Measure G has given this Department a boost. The change in the proposed budget is in the addition of the stormwater maintenance program, which is a state and federal mandate. A \$24,000 fee is required of the Town to participate in this program.

Hodgens asked about "Outside Services." Bush said that is for signal maintenance and street light maintenance, approximately \$60,000.

Breen complimented the Street Maintenance Department on a job well done.

Sarah Nome, 77 Alder, asked about the \$500 for Building Maintenance; it doesn't seem like enough. Bush said the \$500 is for maintenance of the Corporation Yard only.

Capital Improvements

Town Administrator Pollard said that items recommended in the Capital Improvements budget are high on the priority list, primarily due to safety, liability, or cost benefit. Measure G is not included in this budget as it is an entirely different fund.

Breen asked about the \$10,000 for Lansdale Park. Pollard said this is for disability access improvements to the park.

Hodgens asked if the Isabel Cook driveway repair is for the bottoming out problem. She feels this should be moved up to this year rather than 1996-97.

Breen asked about the house that previously housed the Peace Center. It could be used for parking if it were demolished.

Kroot asked about the Lincoln Avenue footbridge. Bush said the footbridge needs some members replaced due to rotting. The street lights at Morningside are on the budget to replace the lights as they are failing.

Chignell asked about the Rivera bridge. Bush said one bid has been received; work should begin shortly.

Breen asked if the whole electrical lighting system out in the Morningside area is failing and if an assessment district could be formed.

Pollard said the potential nuisance abatement projects are included in the budget, including Haprin Park slide repairs, for which it now looks like outside funds are not forthcoming.

Bush said the Camino de Herrera slide project is out to bid. Halprin Park needs more remedial measures than originally thought. It is estimated to cost about \$24,000, and is a public safety issue. On the Sequoia slide it looks like the insurance company is going to take responsibility for repairs. The work should be completed by October 15th.

Isabel Cook Community Center

Pollard said the principal cost in this budget is for the maintenance worker to perform maintenance type work. It is recommended that two projects be funded this year, painting the preschool center and some roof repair. It is planned that the vacant house next door be examined for possible action around mid year or thereafter.

Hodgens asked how the Recreation Department space is accounted for. Town Administrator Pollard said the Town departments are not accounted for in this budget even though their space is in the building. Hodgens asked about the source of funds for the lead abatement at Isabel Cook.

Pollard said money was spent on a study for alternatives to take care of the problem. The solution will cost \$75,000. Ideally, this should be funded from the Isabel Cook fund, but there isn't enough money, so it would have to come from Capital Funds. Grant funds could be explored for this. The area with the lead has been cordoned off from the children.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Debbie Stutsman