



## MINUTES

### City Council Work Session

4:00 PM - Tuesday, March 18, 2025

City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

---

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in informal work session, Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

**PRESENT:** Grant Harper, Steve Jensen, Nicolas AbouAssaly, Will Brandt, Sara Mentzer, Randy Strnad, and Gage Miskimen

**ABSENT:** None

Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

The annual presentation from Marion Chamber of Commerce was removed from the agenda and will be held at a later date.

#### **Presentation regarding the Linn County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2025-2030**

Meagan Prestegard with East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) provided an overview of the plan including goals, analysis and risk assessment, critical facilities, vulnerable populations, strategies and action plans. A resolution approving the plan is on the agenda for March 20. Councilmember Harper asked how soon FEMA will be reviewing the document. Prestegard stated they're hopeful they'll respond within 45 days but it is in their hands.

#### **Presentation regarding the Marion 2045: A Plan to Reach New Heights Comprehensive Plan**

Charlie Cowell with RDG Planning & Design provided an overview of the above-referenced comprehensive plan. Cowell also shared updates regarding changes along Tower Terrace Road, Alburnett Road and the Central Corridor as well as traffic and trail networks. Next steps include updates to the design standards and ordinance changes. Deputy City Manager Kim Downs spoke more about the design standards process.

#### **OTHER DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION**

##### **Discussion regarding the K9 Program at Police Department**

Sergeant Paulsen with the Marion Police Department shared information regarding the K9 Program including total deployments, training, capabilities and budget. Councilmember Jensen asked how long of a career K9s usually have. Paulsen stated on average it is 10 years.

**Discussion and direction regarding the Central Plaza Sculpture design**

Parks Director Seth Staashelm provided an update regarding the sculpture including renderings of the design. Councilmember Jensen asked if there would be a plaque near the structure to show the artist and what it symbolizes. Staashelm stated there would be a sign. Council was in support of moving forward.

**Discussion and direction regarding updates to Schedule of Fees for Parks & Recreation**

Parks Director Seth Staashelm provided recommended fee changes including the administrative fee for violations and rentals of the Safe Room at Thomas Park and Oaks Room at Lowe Park. Councilmember Jensen asked if the rate has been determined for rental of the depot. Staashelm stated he doesn't recall the rate and will follow back up.

**Discussion and direction on Formation and Objectives of the Uptown Parking Implementation Taskforce (UPIT)**

Associate Planner Nicole Behrens provided an overview of the taskforce referenced above. Member recommendations are planned to come forward in April. Councilmember Harper recommended a resident at large who visits the Uptown would be a beneficial point-of-view and should be added to the member makeup. Councilmember Miskimen agreed. He also asked if this group will be ongoing or if there is an endpoint. Behrens stated it will be around for several years. Deputy City Manager Kim Downs stated this taskforce could evolve into a more strategic group. Councilmember Brandt stated he recommends the taskforce be larger. Councilmember Mentzer agreed and recommends adding a second member that would bring the perspective from an older adult. Councilmember Jensen asked that the study be refreshed in about two to three years as several buildings in the Uptown will be completed by then.

**Discussion and direction regarding amendments to Chapter 126 Building and Construction Codes**

Building Official Gary Hansen provided an overview of recommended changes to various building and construction codes. Councilmember Strnad stated he is in support of the recommendations brought forward as it relates to wind loading and structural wood sheathing. Councilmember Jensen asked if minimize size of the structural wood sheathing is included in the code. Hansen stated it is not but will add that minimum. Councilmember Harper spoke in support of the recommended changes.

**UPCOMING AGENDA REVIEW**

City Council review of the March 20, 2025 agenda - Council discussed the agenda items with no action taken.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion to adjourn to closed session regarding real estate transactions as permitted under Section 21.5(1)(j) of the Code of Iowa.

Moved by Brandt, seconded by Mentzer, to adjourn to closed session as stated above. City Attorney Kara Bullerman stated that she has reviewed the subject matter to be discussed and found it to be an appropriate topic for closed session. A roll call vote was taken.

Approved unanimously

Mayor AbouAssaly left the meeting and relinquished the gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Miskimen at 5:27 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Miskimen presided over the meeting.

Moved by Brandt, seconded by Mentzer, to reconvene to regular session.

Approved unanimously

### **ADJOURN**

Mayor Pro Tem Miskimen adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rachel Bolender, City Clerk

The undersigned City Clerk of Marion, Iowa certifies that the minutes shown immediately above were published in the Gazette on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

---

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk