**UNIVERSITY CITY COUNCIL**

**STUDY SESSION**

5th Floor of City Hall

6801 Delmar

June 12, 2017

5:00 p.m.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The City Council Study Session was held in Council Chambers on the fifth floor of City Hall, on Monday, June 12, 2017. Mayor Welsch called the Study Session to order at 5:07 p.m.

In addition, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Rod Jennings; *(Arrived at 5:16 p.m.)*

Councilmember Paulette Carr

Councilmember Steven McMahon

Councilmember Terry Crow

Councilmember Michael Glickert*; (Arrived at 5:20 p.m.)*

Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance was Interim City Manager, Charles Adams; Senior Vice President

GovHR USA, Lee Szymborski and City Attorney, John F. Mulligan.

Councilmember Smotherson stated that he would like to amend the agenda to add more time to citizen participation in the first section to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to speak. At least fifth teen additional minutes or whatever Council fills is appropriate. The Mayor asked if would make the motion when the meeting starts.

Hearing no other requests, Mayor Welsch turned the meeting over to the Interim City Manager, Mr. Adams.

**AGENDA**

*(Requested by City Council)*

1. **Discussion regarding the City Manager Search**

Mr. Adams introduced Mr. Lee Szymborski, Senior Vice President for GovHR USA, who was present to review and explain the process and roadmap details for the City Manager search.

Mr. Szymborski thanked Mr. Adams and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the City. He stated several things would be covered during the meeting including a proposed recruitment calendar to step members through what to expect along the way for the recruitment of the next City Manager. He would then move to the memo that everyone received in advance of the meeting which outlines some of the mains points that he plans to talk about during the discussion. The discussion will fall into three categories; one is to understand from the Council what skills, attributes and background you’re looking for in the next City Manager. The second is to understand the community issues; things that you want to make sure we highlight in the recruitment profile, and what we want to let candidates know about. We want to look at community issues both in the short-term and the long-term that we will bring to the attention of the candidates. And then thirdly we want to talk about organizational issues; again both short-term and long-term issues. Things we want to let candidates know about University City as an organization. Mr. Szymborski said he would be back tomorrow to meet with the department heads to gather similar feedback from them on the points laid out for tonight’s discussion, and then tomorrow evening he would conduct the community forum with similar thoughts in mind from the community stakeholders to get as rounded of a picture as possible of the community as well as what skills, background attributes and trait’s you’re looking for in the new City Manager.

The recruitment profile is important because it serves as the touch point that we will keep referring back to throughout this process. Mr. Szymborski plans to distill all the input that is received to understand all the issues and things that are important to highlight and lift up. So as the recruitment process moves along and a portfolio of candidates is presented for consideration, you will be able to compare how the candidate’s measure up to what is in the profile. So the profile is a guide for the recruiter but it also a guide for all of you. Early in the process you will receive a draft of the profile to review and agree upon.

Copies of the proposed timeline were handed out. Mr. Szymborski stated the dates are based on what was presented in the proposal to the City. So GovHR said they would be able to accomplish the recruitment from the point of kickoff to when the Council would be ready to make an offer to a candidate in about 12 weeks. The handout is an outline of the steps that will take place during the 12 week timeframe. Then you add to that, which could be an additional 30-60 days before the new City Manager is actually in the seat; because candidates today will typically need to give 1-2 months’ notice if they’re currently employed. Meeting with all of the stakeholders is the opportunity to gather input and develop the ad for the position and also for the more detailed profile. The plan is to have a draft back to you in time for next Council meeting in two weeks. If necessary he could be available to talk via conference call or skype to check in to see you if concur with profile. The calendar here suggests that once the ad and the profile are complete, the deadline for resumes would be toward the end of July. The idea would be to have interviews soon after Labor Day. In the time between when resumes are due and when he returns to St. Louis, which would be mid-late August, he will be talking to candidates to understand how their resumes actually match up with their experience. He hopes to boil it down to a portfolio of 8-12 candidates for Council to take a closer look. Then he’ll come back to walk Council through each of the candidates and provide detailed commentary about his thoughts on each of them. Out of the pool, Council will decide who they want to talk with, typically between 3-6 candidates. He will also help us decide how we want to structure the interview process. Weather it includes a community reception to give the community an opportunity to meet the candidates; that could also include the department heads talking with candidates. All of which could go into the mix of your decision.

In short the calendar suggests that you’ll have the recruitment profile within 2 weeks; then the process gets underway. He will return to St. Louis around mid-late August to talk about the candidates and then back again after Labor Day. He asked Council to think about and decide if this is sufficient and to provide him with any feedback.

Mayor Welsh asked for clarification on whether the position would be posted before the draft profile is approved; does the position announcement not talk about the profile? What is usually put in the positon announcement? Mr. Szymborski stated the position announcement is a one page ad, which will also be part of the profile but it’s just to get a head start on getting the word out. You will find that it’s a quick mini version of the profile. It talks mainly about the community in a one paragraph snapshot, the skills that we want to lift up for example if skills in economic development are important to this body; we will lift that up in the ad. And of course the basics, it will have a copy of the position description for the City Manager, the amount of years of experience and the starting salary range; which he needs to understand tonight if possible. The profile will be much more detailed.

Councilmember Crow asked what the normal response numbers have been in other cities with regard to the resume deadline; is it 50 or 100 responses? And then how many do you comb through typically? Mr. Szymborski stated that a few years ago you could expect a range of 75 to 100; today we have a “candidates market” so we’ll see a range of about 40-60. That’s because market it very competitive today. Mr. Szymborski tracks of one of the main sources of advertising which is the International City Management Association newsletter; it comes out weekly and has grown to several pages.

Councilmember Crow asked if people want to relocate for shorter or longer distances or just not at all? Is there any kind of trend that Council should be aware of?

Mr. Szymborski stated that most likely we will see people from around the region which will make up the majority of the candidate base. We will not see a lot of cross country movement; it’s just nature of the beast. It depends on where a person is in both their career and their personal life. It’s sometimes hard to get candidates that are mid-way in the career and have a family to relocate. Mr. Szymborski asked if there were any other questions about the calendar? He stated if 60 or so applicants are received for the position he would look at each resumes individually. They are not put through any kind of software application; they look at each resumes very closely. The process is not just advertising but also the old fashion way of getting on the phone and talking to people. The Firm has a pretty wide network to tap into to inquire if people have you taken a look at University City? The City has a great story to tell in terms of the community profile and his job is to highlight that story.

In terms of timing; a few weeks ago he was at the Missouri City Managers Association’s summer conference and starting getting the word out there. He will attend the Illinois conference as well as the Wisconsin conference, which will provide an opportunity to get the word out at those conferences as well. Mayor Welsch asked if there were any other questions about the calendar and there none.

Mr. Szymborski referenced the memo outline and stated the three things that he is looking to learn from Council as the following;

* 1. What background, attributes, skills and traits are important for the next City Manager to have?
  2. What are the organizational challenges and opportunities?
  3. What are the Community opportunities and challenges both short and long term?

He started in inverse order with what are the community issues that you want make sure get lifted up to candidates?

Councilmember Carr stated the City is in the process of looking at some redevelopment. The City has two major streets; one is Delmar for which the Loop is the premier retail area and the second is Olive Blvd. which is largely untapped, so redevelopment is needed.

The City is currently in discussions about a proposed plan, which is pretty exciting because it’s the first large redevelopment to be considered that looks like it has real potential. She thinks it’s a good opportunity and a challenge as well. Another right out challenge has to do with something the entire Country is facing right now; and that is the clean water problems. Making sure the sanitary waste is not dumped into the rivers and streams and backs up into basements. We recently received a proposed plan by Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) that does not at all fit with the vision for the City. MSD is planning to put 2 larger tanks in a very dense populated single-family residential area, so we will be trying to find another solution. Somebody else may want to talk about the School District. The City has a partnership with the School District and also with a large private University. These are challenges and also opportunities because each of these could play positively for the City.

Mr. Szymborski asked if anyone could elaborate more on the clean water issue? Councilmember Carr stated MSD entered into a consent decree; they have about 23 years to comply with the terms of the decree. They are addressing sewage overflow problems right now, but we also have flooding problems in University City especially in Ward 2; where the River Des Peres runs through it. MSD will not be addressing the flooding per se; they are addressing only the sewage. Their proposal is to put 2 large, three plus story tanks into the middle of a very dense populated area; largely inhabited by African Americans. This is a City of diversity, we pride ourselves, in fact we brag about it. We like to consider ourselves inclusive and seek all kinds of diversity. These issues are being addressed with MSD, and the City has indicated that their plan is not acceptable. We are at the beginning of negotiations and could use a strong City Manager to help. Councilmember Carr stated, she “*with great pride”,* this is a City where the people who live here feel their two cents is worth five; because it is.

Mayor Welsh stated there are multiple challenges (these are in no special order):

1. The Police department is housed in a temporary facility, that has be changed and do it at a cost that will not be overwhelming for the residents
2. The pension funds (uniformed and non-uniformed) are underfunded by $11 million
3. Streets, sidewalk and curbs are in need of millions of dollars of repairs before they can get to a level that can be routinely maintained within our regular budget

Residents already consider themselves highly taxed, some feel we’re the highest taxed in the region; which we’re not, but people feel they are highly taxed. A lot of the work that needs doing in the City; the Capitol work may necessitate tax hikes which will put real pressure on a good portion of the residential population. Tax revenues are not coming as quickly as was hoped this year. In fact the budget is down about $4 million from when she first came on the Council. The Missouri State Legislator is passing multiple bills that are trying to limit local control on a number of issues that will be an ongoing challenge for the new City Manager. She would like to see the new City Manager get the pay scale for all employees into the top 20% region wide, which was the goal in the past when the budget was more expansive. Not just emergency services personnel but department directors and everyone else. She also believes this a diverse community but it is still divided by race and geography.

Councilmember Jennings thanked Mr. Lee from coming and working with Council. It is imperative that new City Manager have strong communication skills, not only to deal with and keep the Council informed but also to enlist comments and input from staff and other employees. And also to communicate with every group, every class and all residents and their differences no matter what part of the city they’re from. It’s important that he/or she can deal with the businesses to build strong relationship. The businesses are important because we are a flat revenue land locked inner-suburb that has to be savvy in doing economic development. The Mayor mentioned race, Councilmember Carr mentioned diversity, which are true but University City as well as St. Louis City have to deal with the Delmar Divide and here in University City we also have the Olive Divide. This is not necessarily a bad thing but we have to understand it and deal with the issues around that. They will need to have strong organizational skills and be prepared to explore community policing. One problem with crime in the region is the lack of beat cops; police officers that live in the neighborhood they work in. It used to be that police officers had relationships with the residents, we have gotten away from that as a community and he would like to see more community policing and open government. Some cities have all the things that go in government listed on their websites; with details and statics available to the residents and residents are able to receive responses right away.

Mayor Welsch added that there a lot of vacant and foreclosed homes in the community with a large concentration in one ward, but also in the other two wards as well. She feels this pulls the whole community down.

Councilmember Glickert stated he would agree with all that was stated earlier. He would like to see a City Manager that understands a landlocked community and have the ability to work within that parameter to redevelop. They will need to understand the nuisances and the financial tools that are needed to redevelop. In his experience with City Managers he observed that a lot of them have experience in counties where they have acreage to build, but we do not; we’re locked by municipalities on each side of us. We have a definition of ourselves which is much clearer than some others which is a plus, but being landlocked is an issue that he or she will have to deal with. He believes there is some settle gentrification taking place north of Olive. His mother lives there; she’s 92 and has lived in the same house for 76 years. Her street the 6700 block of Etzel, has had 3 white families move in and buy the homes. When he was growing there, he and his brothers were the only Caucasians on that street; so there are some good things going on that the new manager should understand. There are positive things that we can build upon which goes back to redevelopment, infill and things of the nature.

Councilmember Jennings mentioned that another group stated banks will not loan money to individual owner occupied situations for anything less than $50 thousand dollars. For economic development perhaps the new manager to look at ways to encourage banks to provide starter loans for families that want to come to U City and want to be homeowners for less money. Maybe provide improvements monies. It’s not a bad thing that landlords and investors are buying, but it does make some gentrification when we really need families embedded in our community.

Councilmember McMahon stated he agreed with many of the comments already made. Regarding people buying new homes where these issues exist, we still need to maintain and allow for different stratifications of our society to be thread throughout the City. So it is a good thing that people are moving in but we don’t want to that to the exclusion of other people. We need starter homes, middle of road homes and higher end homes, but none are contained in one pocket of the City but that we have that diversity spread throughout so that we all share in the new increases and at the same we all share in the help and burden of things that are being spread. That’s the focus of the discussion in those areas where we’re trying to shift the type of housing in a way that doesn’t exclude people. But that it brings them in. Other Cities when faced with these problems, where people had lower income homes; the $50-75 thousand dollar homes, they get priced out of the City completely. That would be a new problem, where you love the changes but want to make sure we don’t lose the openness that U City has, so it’s a double-edge sword. Another thing we need to be aware of is returning to a full service emergency services unit. We outsourced our EMS service to a private for-profit company and much of the community was not happy with that decision and we need to look at ways to bring them back. While we might be looking at monetary issues and equipment issues that have to be maintained so that when we pull the trigger we are ready and can handle that situation so that the residents feel comfortable with their safety in their homes and their bodies based upon the services provided. This could be a short-term issue or could take a couple of years, but hopefully sooner than later.

Councilmember Crow thanked the Mayor and stated his comments would be brief. He looked at the previous Cities that Mr. Lee have done recently and U City has a little bit of Ferguson, a little bit of Kirkwood and a little bit of Maryland Heights; so we have a little bit of all three of them and the issues that those communities have faced. Looking at the list; the police station issue has to be addressed in the near term not immediately but in the near term. He agrees with Ms. Welsch that there are number of capital improvements that have needed to be done for some time and we need to be addressing them. However, they may not be able to be done within the current confines of the budget. Speaking of economic development, there has not been a substantive discussion for years on this Council. The opportunity to develop a quadrant of the City that is an entry point by way of massive transportation is very exciting for all of us and likely exciting for a candidate that would like to come here. The candidate should know that we have very engaged and educated Electorate that participates to a strong degree. There have been overflow crowds in the Chamber with over 200 people that have let their opinions be known very clearly rather pro or con. We have a neighborhood partner that is quite large, Washington University; this is both good and has challenges when properties are coming off the roll. But they also do wonderful things for the community and employee a number of our citizens. We are clearly an inner-ring suburb and the location has been key; years ago the folks who came before us designed University City to be a residential community without much of an industrial base. It’s made for a beautiful place to live but not for a large tax base going forward. This community has a mix of just about every faith based group you could imagine. Within the state of Missouri we have as big a mix as anyplace. He appreciates Councilmember McMahon bring forth the EMS issue because that issue has been a paramount concern for a number of our citizens. So any candidate will need to hit ground running on that type of an issue.

Mayor Welsh stated she believes the new manager should know and will have a challenge in that the City does not run the School District; it is a separate taxing district. The district has some challenges; it has a board and a superintendent working the meet those challenges. However many people think the district is run by the City but it is not. And the perception of the district, some will argue it’s accurate some will not, has been challenging for our community. She is on the other side of the EMS issue than her colleagues. She feels this is one of the challenges that the new manager will be pressed hard to move on this issue and she feels it would put the City in very direr fiscal straits short and long term with the pension plans and with the quality of care received. The person will have to understand that whatever he/she decides to do, there is going to be pressure within our community.

Councilmember Carr stated regarding a decision such as EMS, it is not the City Manager’s purview to make the final decision; it’s his purview to recommend and provide all of the information. The Council makes the decision; and Council is a group of seven equals in terms of voting.

The matter is which things have been conducted over the last several years has been such that we have moved away from a Council/Manager government to a strong Mayor/strong manager government. That has been a great source of frustration for her personally and for others in the community. So she wants the new manager to clearly understand the Charter and to act accordingly and provide information to all equally; interacting with all members of Council equally. The job of the Council is to determine the policy and it is the job of the City Manager to decide how to institute that policy and to do it.

Mr. Lee stated he had a few questions on what is a pretty hearty list of issues. *“And of course you want it all to be addressed in the first ninety days…right?”* He heard tonight and hears it from every Council… that communication is vitally important.

**What does strong communication look like…what would be your expectation in terms of how the City Manager keeps you informed and keeps you up to date?**

Councilmember Carr – said she would give a couple of examples of what not, sometimes it’s easier to say what not. In the case of EMS, two Council members found out about the outsourcing 48 business hours ahead of time. Whereas the rest of Council fully knew that it was happening; in fact that the contract was put together, etcetera. With regard to the MSD problem, the Council in general found out on May 19 in the Council packet. She would like to see the City Manager communicate the issues on an ongoing basis equally and stays out of politics; which has not always been the case. The longevity (some City Managers were here for 25 years or more), depends upon walking that tight rope and making sure that he or she does not align himself or herself with one group or the other. There will be times when all 7 members disagree and there will be times when it’s clearly bifurcated. Communication means in a timely manner, providing as much information and opportunity to question; “*because I ask a great many questions*”. And that the information is provided in a timely accurate complete manner and nothing is withheld. We can add the words transparent and accountable.

Councilmember Crow – stated one of the biggest issues for us that would overshadow so many things is for the City Manager to be apolitical. It is incumbent upon the City Manager to share information with all of Council at the same; not picking and choosing. Because we have been there and clearly we are frustrated. A timely and professional manner of sharing information is something we should all expect and receive. Directors have told citizen groups they didn’t need to talk to their Councilmembers but to instead talk with them and then Council is left dealing with citizens who are frustrated because Council was supposed to know about something and they didn’t. While we are all very proud of our community we also recognize the reputation that our government, not the school district, but City government has in the boarder St. Louis community. All you have to do is google U City and you will get more video tapes and news articles than you can imagine. He believes that a large part of this could be prevented with open, transparent sharing of information by the City Manager to all of Council. Council decides policy and then the manager decides the best way to implement it.

Mr. Lee stated that candidates who will look closely at U City and also from the conversations he had with people a few weeks ago at the City Managers conference, confirmed that people do pay attention and will do their own research and they will draw their own conclusions. His job is to put U City in the best light. One question a candidate will ask, especially with a lot of issues that will need to be dealt with, is where should they begin?

**Is there a current strategic plan in place and if not is the Council open to a candidate suggesting doing some strategic planning giving the robust list of issues?**

Councilmember Glickert stated Council has done some strategic planning in the past, but not as much recently. For the stake of Councilmembers understanding each other this would be something that we should want to get back to doing again.

Councilmember McMahon stated communication is a subset of trust. The goal for all members of Council is to be able to trust what their City Manager tells them; so they go out to the community and have everyone doing the job of selling University City and making sure the residents have the information because that’s who we all work for; whether its staff, City Manager or Councilmembers. He vision on communication is that everyone is given what is needed to do what is right for the residents. Nobody on Council is trying to harm U City, we all carry the same burden and communication with the City Manager helps us do that. We should be open to strategic; that might be why the list of issues is so long.

Mayor Welsch stated one of the things she liked that Mr. Walker started was the Council Brief that was sent out every couple weeks. It lists all the things that are going on in every department; the department heads put it together and the City Manager’s office consolidates it for distribution. This gave her much better understanding of what was going on and she had never seen that before. She stated she had been on Council under a previous City Manager’s administration and there was nothing like that. He also continued with the weekly crime reports, which she thinks is beneficial. She would like to see an open door policy for all members of Council. She happens to be in the office 4 days a week and would see different members of Council coming in regularly, some almost weekly to sit down with the City Manager which she thinks is good. The City Manager needs to be open to that and she would encourage all members of Council to do that. She appreciated being updated on everything that goes out. She disagrees with her colleague in that she does not think there was so much communicating with only one member of Council as other members believe there was. The City Manager has to speak on many issues and shares it all with Council. She wants to know what is going on in the whole city and that’s why the briefs have been good. They should also understand that communication extends beyond City Hall out to the residents; we have the ROARS newsletter and she hopes it or something like it continue under the new City Manager. It is currently mailed to every household and business in University City every 6-7 weeks which we never had before. There used to be a tabloid that went out 4 times a year and was basically a PR rag for the departments. ROARS provides more updated information to the residents and she hopes the new manager understands that type of need.

Councilmember Crow stated based the calendar that indicates the manager would come around mid-October/November which is about 5-6 months from the time when there will be a whole new election cycle when a majority of this Council is up. This person is coming right as things will heat up more so than they have been so it will be an interesting time. He said he can’t state enough that there has to be an opportunity to restore the creditability of City Hall. Speaking of ROARS… you can read it and determine how it was used for good or not. You can tell that we are not all necessarily on the same page. Mr. Crow said it would good for Mr. Lee to spend some time with the Interim City Manager to determine how the priorities have been set since he came on board in November. There has been a level of candor and understanding, not only amongst the Council but a clearly delineated data stream from Council as to where we are, where we’re going and how the steps are implemented. There really haven’t been surprises. He appreciates getting details from department heads, but this board isn’t about the details from departments but more about making policy and not having surprises. The goal since Mr. Adams stepped into the position has been to make sure there are no surprises, that we are moving forward and that we list out to the residents ahead of time what they should expect, what the priorities are and the direction we’re heading. If residents think we’re heading down the wrong pathway, please let Council know. We really don’t want 200 people showing up to protest about something they just found out about 48 hours before. This is not good government.

Councilmember Carr stated she is the keeper of the records and many of her colleagues would agree. The Council briefs were started by Julie Feier; she has copies of the ones that Ms. Feirer put out. She too is of the mind of wanting to know what is going. Regarding the question about strategic planning, which this Council does not do; we have not had a Comprehensive City Plan since 2005. There have been some addendums to it and some tinkering around the edges. We have been in the process for the 2 years, even hired a consultant to help us put out a strategic Comprehensive Plan but have been unable to bring it home. That speaks to management and we desperately need it. We can sit around and do the kumbaya here but we need the vision, the action and the guidance of a professional City Manager who knows where he or she can go. The strategic plans on all levels are missing which includes something to with the storm water masterplan.

Councilmember Jennings said Councilmember Carr mentioned the word kumbaya, he hopes to have someone who is strong enough to keep us focused on policy, working together on serving and to help us stay above the fray that we’ve been involved in before. They should help us take our service to a new level collectively.

**Mr. Lee asked if someone could elaborate on housing and community diversity. Does the Council currently have initiatives on the agenda to address any of the issues?**

Councilmember Jennings stated when he came to University City there was a stellar group called the University City Residential Services. They knew about every vacant property, provided resources for mortgage lenders and real estate agents and that helped. They took data and knew exactly what was going on in the neighborhoods and he believes it was created to level the field to help those who weren’t being welcomed readily. It was a way, a path to get into the community; he would like to see initiatives like that again. There may be some organizations maybe some churches but as whole we could do a better job to stabilize the neighborhood. To let the investors know that using University City as tax shelter, buying up property and pulling all the money out and putting any kind of tenant in the home; that we’re not happy with that. We would like to see them do business a better way in University City.

Councilmember Carr stated the recession of 2008 hit the City pretty hard; especially in the third ward where we had some of the smaller and lower priced homes and also where many seniors live. Many of those houses were vacated, at the same time the price of those homes dropped to below $50 thousand dollars. There is a study that was brought to Councilmember Smotherson by a group called WIT, where they looked at the third ward in particular regarding banking, services and schools, all of the things that go into making a community. With prices below $50 thousand dollars, banks will not make loans and so it’s the cash investor that comes in and buys homes for $20 thousand, puts a couple of thousand back into property and then rents people into for $800 a month or so. There is a sense of destabilization in these neighborhoods. WIT is a not-for profit group, they’ve already incorporated themselves and they are willing to work with the City. There are other groups that come in and take over delict properties and renovate them and resell them. These are resources that we as a City need to evaluate and take advantage of. She is pleased to see the millenniums coming into these areas. Her son is one and it seems that they are willing to buy whereas before they were not. The City is ripe for this transition if millenniums can actually get loans. This group has also worked with HUD. What we don’t want to do, because we know this area is vulnerable, is encourage more low income projects in that area because that will on only further depress the area. We would like to see more of a mix of residential types rather than excluding one. Ward 2 is a perfect mix of ward 1 and ward 3, with some pricy homes, some less pricy homes and some that experience the same things that you see in ward 3; where the value becomes so depressed that they become targets for rental as opposed to owner occupied. Ward 1 is fairly stable with moderate to higher income residences.

Mayor Welsch stated the City has a vacant home registry that was sent up a number of years ago. So we at least have someone within 50 miles of University City that we can call when we have problems with vacant properties. It might be more of a challenge with the foreclosed homes because we don’t know who owns them. We have worked Beyond Housing and Habitat for Humanity in renovating homes that already exist as well as working with St. Louis County in paying off the liens on the properties from St. Louis County and working the non-profits to build new homes. There’s a grant program, for which there is a public hearing tonight on the Community Development Block Grant; some of this money is targeting to expand the grant program to help qualified residents do some repairs and maintenance on their homes. The City has spoken a number of developers over the years to come up ideas of how they might work with current homes or the properties under those homes to do other developments. She would like to us move forward with that. She hopes the new manager understands this is a drawdown on the whole City not just the properties where the homes are located.

Councilmember Glickert stated Habitat for Humanity has come in and done some extensive work in the third ward. The question of what has the City done regarding real estate, we work with organization like Habitat because we’re not really in the realtor business but we can tap in to those resources that are there. The first and second ward’s pretty much run on their own. The third ward has a lot of properties that are in foreclosure and vacant lands. Habitat for Humanity took on some of the vacant lands and so property was put on those lots. One critical problem is when the houses were built they were 3 bedroom homes. In the third ward we have an inordinate number of 2 bedroom homes; which really suffocates the opportunity for people with families with 2 or 3 kids. He grew up in a 2 bedroom house with 3 boys in 1 bedroom. But this is an issue in the third ward.

**Mr. Lee asked that the discussion move to issues inside the organization. Regarding the issue raised by the Mayor regarding the compensation and classification system.**

Mayor Welsch stated when she was first on the Council which was back 2002 to 2006, they would do a review every year or every other year and the goal was to have all of the positions, the compensation to be at a level that was in the top 20% to other comparable positions in the region. When the economic downturn happened she was not on the Council and not around when City staff and the previous City Manager first started dealing with the challenges. But when came back on Council in 2010, the City was not able to raise the employee salaries for 3 or 4 years in a row. Then we raised it 2% for last couple of years, so we have gone down a bit in the region. But we had to do that to maintain the fiscal health of the City at that time, but she hopes that we can move back up again because it’s beneficial. There was story in Post-Dispatch a week or so ago on the highest average pay of municipal employees in the region and U City was number 10 or in the top 10, so we’re still up there but could be a little higher.

Councilmember Carr stated she agreed and would like to see the employees paid fairly and well compensated for the jobs they do because that helps in retention. But what’s happened over the last few years is that positions have been eliminated. So not only was there a freeze for 4 years but positions were eliminated which meant that the job responsibilities for each remaining person grew and again the compensation didn’t quite keep up. So we need a professional to take a look at it to see what was done in the last 7 or so years needs to be examined not in terms of pointing fingers but in terms of fixing the problem. At one point the Mayor talked about raising the compensation for firefighters and several years they were talking about not doing that and accusing the firefighters of demanding too much. We have 2 unions, the police and fire unions and other than that all employees are non-union. Up until the last few years she believes people felt they were fairly compensated, there wasn’t a lot of turnover. She is not in the position to evaluate each employee because they work for the City Manager.

Mayor Welsch said she believes if we can afford 2% for 90% of the employees, we give it to 100%. Her disagreement was we should give one group 2% and another 10%; which was requested. We should treat them all fairly. We did go through a reorganization, which she thinks was badly needed. 2008 hit us just as hard as it hit every other city in the country; we weathered it better than many but it was not easy. It did involve reorganization and some layoffs but some just not filling jobs that opened up.

Councilmember McMahon stated compensation isn’t the only thing you must deal with when you’re dealing with the classified and the unclassified workforce here in University City. When these disagreements about compensation and the City Manager allows that to become a disagreement internally between the different groups; it causes moral problems and that’s a big issue. It became a political issue especially when it dealt with EMS and firefighters. The City Manager has to be able to steer that ship through that so that it doesn’t affect the employees that touchstone to the residents in the community. It’s a bigger picture than just the dollars in their pocket because there’s dollars other places and these good hardworking people do leave for other jobs; so it’s not like they can’t do something else. They are hard workers and good people so want to keep them here but it’s not just money that keeps them here. It’s important that we focus on the morale that goes beyond how much a person took home the previous year. The City Manager has to be cognizant of because in the past that has been overlooked when we were focusing on dollars and not people.

**Mr. Lee asked if the City has looked at the workforce demographics in terms of will there be a wave of retirements within the next 5 or 10 years in the workforce in general and among department heads? Public sector workforces tend to be older than private sector; does U City’s workforce reflect that trend and is that something we need to make the new manager aware of in terms of transitions and preparing for the future workforce?**

Mayor Welsch stated the previous City Manager was aware and working towards that and if you look at his hires for instance in public works and parks, the one director knew he would only be here 3 or 4 years because he was nearing retirement. The next person down was a much younger director who has longevity. She believes he was aware of that in all of the departments’. When she talked with Mr. Walker in their meetings, he said they have to build bench strength which he did not feel was there when he came.

Councilmember Carr stated we have an older chief in the fire department that would need to be looked at. We have loss not in terms of directors but the next couple of levels down, so there has been some turnover so it’s right for reorganization or for refilling.

Mayor Welsch stated we have lost some people since November. She informed everyone there is about 6 minutes left and just about time to wrap up to be in place for the 6:30 meeting.

**Mr. Lee stated with all that we have on the list, issues both internal and external, he heard some of the traits that we say are important, is there anything else that he needs to understand in terms of the skills and abilities for the next City Manager?** He has noted that we have redevelopment issues, so we are looking for someone with experience or at least a good working knowledge in that area. What else?

Mayor Welsch would like a City Manager that has a Master’s in Public Administration, who’s resumes shows that they have steadily moved up the ladder and has worked in more than 1 department within the city although that’s not mandatory. They should be able to provide concrete examples of challenges in the past and how they met those challenges. She doesn’t think that having City Manager experience is mandatory if they have expansive experience in municipal government and is ready to make that step. People take the first step at some point, but they need the willingness and enthusiasm because it’s not going to an easy job.

Councilmember Carr stated the City Manager should be a people person because they’ve got a lot people to interact with. And they need to have City Manager experience; the last 2 City Managers did not and neither one of them survived for a period of time. Because we are in a sense in a crisis, we need someone that can step in and help us get back on track. The compensation should be fair and in line with other municipalities in this area.

Mayor Welsch stated that she’s been told that a City Manager is at his or her best when they’re in a community about 8 years. Ms. Fierer left quickly, Mr. Walker was here 7 plus years and that was not a short tenure. She is not looking for someone who been here 25 years or who wants to stay 25 years. This job and with many jobs after a certain amount of time, 8 or 10 years, you’re just kind of protecting your own legacy and new outlooks are needed.

Councilmember Jennings stated compensation should be tied to regular periodic evaluations. What are other communities doing, can we provide benchmarks, thresholds and incentives for meeting those goals and performance.

Mr. Lee said he would review the salary plan that is already in place to see what the range is also look at the surrounding area because there has been movement lately there’s current data out there that we can look at. He will bring back a draft and give a recommendation for where to advertise salary wise.

Mayor Welsch asked Mr. Lee if he was aware of the pool point of sales situation in St. Louis County? If not perhaps Mr. Adams could have the director of finance explain because some of the recent hires are in point of sales cities and their treasury can be much larger than ours. For instances Maryland Heights has the casino, we don’t. The point of sale will help you see what we’re dealing with.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Welsch adjourned the Study Session at 6:23 p.m.

Larette Reese

Interim City Clerk