Richmond Hills Park Neighborhood Roadway Improvements

City of Edina

Date: December 28, 2011

To: Property Owners of Richmond Hills Park Neighborhood
Edina, Minnesota

From: City of Edina and Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.(SEH)

Reference: Explanation of Conflicting Estimated Special Assessment Rate Amounts
Improvement No. BA-388

Due to questions stemming from the Neighborhood Informational Meeting on November 29, 2011 regarding special assessment amounts, we thought this would be a good time to explain why you have been seeing varying levels of special assessment amounts in previous correspondence to you.

On September 7, 2010 the City sent you a letter inviting you to a neighborhood open house. This invitation letter stated that "The exact amount that you will be assessed for this project will not be available in time for the open house; however, based on past projects, you can expect the amount to be between $8,000 to $12,000." At that open house the City introduced you its roadway reconstruction process.

On August 30, 2011 the City sent you another letter inviting you to a second neighborhood open house. This invitation letter stated that "The exact amount that you will be assessed for this project will not be available in time for the open house; however, based on past projects, you can expect the amount to be between $6,000 to $9,000." At the second open house, which was a repeat of the 2010 open house, the City reminded you about its roadway reconstruction process.

Both of these invitation letters were form letters used by the City to invite property owners living in all of the City's upcoming project areas to learn about the City's street reconstruction process. The estimated assessment amounts quoted in these 2 letters were not detailed estimates for the Richmond Hills Park Neighborhood (Richmond Hills) project. Instead they were representative amounts from a cross-section of recently completed City roadway reconstruction projects. We report representative amounts from a cross-section of recently completed projects because we are inviting property owners living in all of the City's upcoming project areas. Some of the Cities upcoming projects are of course less and more complex / expensive than a representative project.

We included the representative amounts in the invitation letters to educate property owners that the City uses special assessments to pay for part of the project's cost. In the event the project moves forward, the City encourages property owners to begin planning financially for the assessment as soon as they can.

Additionally, the representative amounts quoted in the invitation letters attract more curious property owners to the neighborhood open houses. The more property owners attending an open house the greater the benefit to the potential project.

As we mentioned at the 2 open houses, the City's process includes preparing a feasibility study specifically for each upcoming City street reconstruction project. Enough of the study for Richmond Hills was complete at the Neighborhood Informational Meeting on November 29, 2011 to provide Richmond Hills' property owners with a more accurate estimated assessment amount of $16,800. This amount consists of an estimated $13,400 for the roadway portion and $3,400 for the portion of the sanitary sewer service pipe that is in the right-of-way.

We understood the frustration expressed by Richmond Hills' property owners at the Neighborhood Information Meeting that $16,800 is more than the $6,000 to $9,000 stated in the second invitation letter. The Richmond Hills project contains a total upgrade of the water and sanitary sewer system. A more representative project to the Richmond Hills project is the 2011 Minnehaha Woods Neighborhood project. In Minnehaha Woods, the City also completely upgraded the water and sanitary sewer system. Minnehaha Woods has a pending assessment of $16,300 ($11,800 for the roadway portion and $4,500 for the portion of the sanitary sewer service pipe that is in the right-of-way).

Hindsight is always much better – so in the future the City will not include representative amounts from a cross-section of recently completed projects in its invitation letters to neighborhood open houses.

The City Council will consider accepting the Richmond Hills feasibility study and ordering the preparation of bidding documents at the public improvement hearing on January 17 at 7:00 p.m. at Edina City Hall. Enclosed with this letter is the official notice informing you of the public improvement hearing. If you would like to view other documents before the hearing, please visit the City's web page for the Richmond Hills project at the following link:
http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/L5_ConstructionProjects_RichmondHills_BA388.htm

To better communicate the overall happenings of the project, the City has introduced the City Extra e-mail notification service. This service is free and allows individuals to sign up to receive e-mail messages from the City on a variety of topics To sign up for the service go to the City Extra website at http://cityextra.cityofedina.com and place a check mark in the box next to your neighborhood project name (Richmond Hills Park). Please contact the City at 952.927.8861 if you are having trouble signing up for the City Extra.

We look forward to seeing you at the Public Improvement Hearing on January 17. Please contact either of us with questions or comments.

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