

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, March 16, 2017

6:30 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Dave Clark (arrived at 6:55 p.m.), Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Julie Jeppson

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Finance Director Joe Huss; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Chris Olson; Public Services Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Jean Keely; City Attorney Andy Pratt; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Discuss Ham Lake Request for Water Connection.

Public Services Manager Therres stated the City of Ham Lake has requested that two properties in Ham Lake be allowed to connect to water main from the City of Blaine. One of the properties has an existing building and one is vacant. The request is being made to primarily provide fire protection to the properties. Not having city water requires a more expensive fire suppression method be use. It was noted the City of Blaine has similar water connection agreements with most of the cities that we share boundaries with. With our existing agreements, however, the properties served are directly adjacent to the boundary. Only one of the Ham Lake properties is directly adjacent, the other is a few hundred feet away.

Councilmember Garvais questioned where the closest lines were for the Ham Lake municipal water system. Public Services Manager Therres reported the City of Ham Lake does not have a municipal water system.

Councilmember Hovland asked who would pay the expense of installing the requested water lines. Public Services Manager Therres indicated staff has not held this conversation yet. Further discussion ensued regarding how to collect on outstanding utility bills.

Councilmember Swanson did not believe the line extension should cost the residents of Blaine anything. He inquired if the City had enough water capacity to cover the proposed project. Public Services Manager Therres stated the City did currently have enough capacity for the project.

Councilmember Swanson questioned who would be responsible for maintaining these water lines. Public Services Manager Therres commented the lines could remain the City's responsibility or be made private. He explained this would have to be negotiated with the applicant.

Councilmember King stated he did not object to the project but did not want to see the expense put on Blaine taxpayers.

Council consensus was to direct staff to discuss the expense of the project with the properties owners in Ham Lake and for staff to report back to the City Council.

3.3 Contract Language for Construction Projects.

City Engineer Keely stated Council expressed concern over the City's contract specifications after the 2016 construction season and asked for a Workshop item to discuss. Two issues that Council raised were the quality of top soil on the Hastings Street project and the heavy rain event that lifted sanitary sewer cover plates in the street and allowed storm water to enter adjacent basements.

City Engineer Keely explained the City's current specifications for top soil are based on Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) standard specifications. The Engineering staff has discussed the materials delivered to our construction sites this last season. On the 91st Avenue project, the top soil delivered was 1% short on organic material and on the Hastings Street project Councilmember Swanson reported that a neighbor found debris in the topsoil. Staff is recommending a modification to our current specifications that will require the addition of compost if native top soil is reused. If top soil is going to be brought to the project from another location, a sample must be approved by the Engineering Department prior to delivery. The imported top soil will be required to meet MNDOT specifications for boulevard top soil which should be more acceptable to adjacent property owners. The specifications will emphasize the need to have the material screened before placement.

City Engineer Keely reported the City's current specifications require the contractor to protect work, property and persons. On the Hastings Street project, the contractor had left the road bed low after removal of the existing pavement and water main construction. The contractor had not yet started to place aggregate material in the street. The sanitary sewer manhole covers had been removed and temporary metal plates covered the manholes. There was a heavy storm that filled the street with water that entered the sanitary sewer system and then entered some of the adjacent basements. To try to prevent another occurrence of this event, the Engineering Department is recommending an addition to our specifications that requires all sanitary sewer manholes be sealed water tight during construction. Both changes to the specifications may result in additional bid cost, but will have a positive impact to future projects.

Councilmember Swanson suggested language be added to the contract that states if a road drainage is below "X" amount of inches, the contractor will have pumps available to move the water offsite.

Councilmember King asked how much more it would cost the City to have the soil screened. City Engineer Keely estimated this would not be any more than 5%. She reported the City would learn more after bidding the 2017 projects.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if the soil would be screened onsite or prior to being brought to the City. City Engineer Keely anticipated staff would address this issue during the 2017 improvement projects.

Council consensus was to direct staff to proceed in amending the language as presented and as amended above.

Councilmember Clark arrived at 6:55 p.m.

3.2 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary.

Public Services Manager Therres stated during open forum at the January 19, 2017 City Council meeting, residents expressed concern over the wetland sanctuary project and removal of trees. A neighborhood meeting was held on February 8, 2017 for residents to raise their concerns to the City Council and Natural Resource Conservation Board. Staff reviewed a list of concerns that have been brought to the City from residents in preparation for the upcoming neighborhood meeting on March 29, 2017.

Councilmember Hovland questioned how the City would be able to keep four-wheelers out of the wetland sanctuary. Public Services Manager Therres stated staff was proposing that a gated fence and landscaping berm be installed in order to block off access to recreational vehicles.

Further discussion ensued regarding the access point into the wetland sanctuary.

Councilmember Clark suggested some sort of signage be posted at the gate entrance.

Councilmember Hovland supported this recommendation and asked that a sign be posted that reads "No Recreational Vehicles Allowed". He asked that staff be ready to address questions regarding access and how often the wetland sanctuary will be accessed by City staff. In addition, staff should be prepared to answer questions regarding what type of maintenance would be conducted.

Councilmember Clark questioned what it would cost the City to have the site surveyed. He thought this may benefit the City and improve trust with the surrounding homeowners. City Engineer Keely estimated this would cost the City \$3,000. She reported a survey was completed by the City in November prior to the contractor completing any work.

Councilmember Garvais suggested the City explain to the homeowners the process the City followed to survey the site noting that markers were put in place and no trees were taken within 10 or 15 feet of these lines.

Councilmember Hovland recommended the Council consider how to create a buffer between the homes and the wetland sanctuary. Public Services Manager Therres reported the contractor has provided the City with a list of wetland tolerant trees and shrubs.

Mayor Ryan questioned how much it would cost the City to provide a buffer around the access point. Public Services Manager Therres estimated this would cost the City \$50,000 and would be an additional \$50,000 to provide screening behind the homes.

Councilmember Clark supported the Council providing a buffer between the homes and the wetland sanctuary.

Mayor Ryan agreed.

Councilmember Hovland looked forward to addressing this further with the neighbors.

Mayor Ryan anticipated that once the wetland sanctuary was thriving, the property values around this amenity would increase.

Councilmember Swanson suggested the shrubs that are planted be butterfly and bee friendly. He asked if the City had been in contact with the University of Minnesota regarding the opportunities that would be available within the wetland sanctuary. Public Services Manager Therres indicated staff has been in contact with the University of Minnesota and they were excited about the potential learning opportunities that would be available in the near future.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.