

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, January 18, 2018

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, Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; Community Standards Director Bob Fiske; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Rental Licensing Update.

Community Standards Director Fiske provided the Council with an update on the City's rental licensing program. He explained his last update was provided in 2014 and new goals were set for the program. He discussed the fee schedule and inspections that were conducted on rental properties. He described the work being completed by the Rental License Clerk. He reviewed the number of rental licenses that have been issued by the City on a yearly basis since 2007 when the program began. A breakdown on the number of rental units was provided for the Council.

Councilmember Hovland believed it was unfair to cite a landlord for the improper use of extension cords when this action was being done by the tenant. Community Standards Director Fiske discussed how extension cords are addressed during inspections and described how owners are educated. He noted this was a fire hazard and had to be discouraged. He explained property owners are encouraged to complete a pre-inspection of their units prior to the City coming onsite.

Councilmember Clark recommended a fine or citation be established for tenants so as not to punish property owners based on the actions of the tenants.

Councilmember Garvais stated he saw the value of educating both the landlords and tenants regarding the use of extension cords. He commented he did not want to over burden staff with determining who was at fault in these situations.

Councilmember Jeppson asked how concerns are addressed or cited by the City. Community Standards Director Fiske explained correction letters are sent to landlords and the City then works with the property owner to remedy and inspect the property.

Further discussion ensued regarding electrical standards and outlets within rental units.

Councilmember Clark requested further information on the inspection cycle. Community Standards Director Fiske reported the City was broken up into three districts (A, B and C) and noted rental properties were inspected on a three-year cycle.

Councilmember Clark expressed concern with the amount of administrative time that was being used to enter data on the inspections and said he did not believe it was necessary to note those units that had non-violations. Community Standards Director Fiske stated this information was necessary for the City's software and in the event a situation went to court.

Community Standards Director Fiske requested the Council consider changing the license period. He stated at this time, the calendar year was from June 1st to May 31st. He indicated he would like this to change to January 1st through December 31st and in order to do this, one license period would have to be extended to 18 months.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if staff was proposing to increase the fee amount for the one time 18-month rental license. Community Standards Director Fiske stated he was not proposing an increased rate.

Councilmember Swanson questioned if the City would have enough funding to cover their expenses for 18 months if the rental rate was not increased. Finance Director Huss stated he would like to report back to the Council on how expenses would be covered if a change was made to the licensing period.

Council consensus was to support changing the license period start date from June 1st to January 1st.

3.2 Space Needs Study for Mary Ann Young Senior Center.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres stated last fall, the City Council approved conducting an updated space needs study for the Mary Ann Young Senior Center. The City entered into an agreement with 292 Design Group to review the old study from 2008, meet with Staff and the Senior Board to develop a building layout, size and preliminary cost for a future senior center. The goal is to develop a plan that fits the future needs of Blaine's seniors. They worked under the assumption that the location of a future facility will be in Aquatore Park. Two options for financing a new senior center are:

- Bonding - This would involve a referendum question that would be placed on a future ballot. The question to be placed on the ballot must be approved by the City Council 100 days before the election.
- Use of Capital Investment Fund - The City's Capital Investment Fund (CIF) has sufficient funds to cover this project. It would take six votes of the City Council to use these funds for a project of citywide benefit.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres reported the current senior center was approximately 4,000 square feet in size and the needs study calls for a center that was 12,000 square feet in size. He explained the current plan would be to demo the current building and replace it with a new facility.

Councilmember Hovland expressed concern with the amount of parking that would be lost by the park if a new, larger building were constructed at this park.

Mayor Ryan reviewed the number of visits that have occurred at the Senior Center in 2016 and 2017.

Councilmember Clark questioned if the City had plans for the lot in front of the current Senior Center. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres discussed the proposed plans for this property over the years.

Councilmember Hovland recommended the Blaine Festival Committee be included in the discussions for this property. He stated he was in favor of a new Senior Center, but wanted to be sure the City looked at the overall picture for this property.

Councilmember Swanson stated he had no problem including them in the conversation but noted they were an auxiliary function to the park.

Councilmember Clark summarized the two questions before the Council as being how to fund a senior center and if the current site was the best location. He recommended the Park Board review the future plans for Aquatore Park and suggested the Council continue their conversations regarding how to fund an expanded senior center.

Councilmember King stated he was not prepared to answer either of these questions. He expressed disappointment in the study completed by 292 noting there were no renovation options available. City Manager Arneson reported the current building was functionally obsolete. He noted he would forward further information to the Council from 292 from the study.

Councilmember Jeppson commented a renovated or new Senior Center only benefited one demographic in the City and for this reason she could not support this project moving forward. She recalled that this issue was on the ballot a year ago and should be a ballot question again.

Councilmember Garvais recommended the City Council further consider the long-term vision for Aquatore Park. He stated he would not support spending taxpayer dollars on a Senior Center without going back to the public for a ballot question. He suggested the Council begin working on an advisory question.

Council consensus was to bring this item back for further review directing staff to include costs on renovation, demolition, etc. of current building. In addition, staff was directed to begin phrasing of an advisory question while also reviewing the long-term vision for Aquatore Park.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.