City of Blaine
Anoka County, Minnesota
Minutes - Final
City Council Workshop

While this is a public meeting where interested persons are welcome to attend, it is a work session for Council and staff to discuss issues before them. It is not for the purpose of receiving public input.

Thursday, July 12, 2012	6:30 PM	Cloverleaf Farm Room A

Meeting Number 12-40

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Kolb at 6:33 p.m.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Clark Arneson, City Manager; Thomas Sweeney, City Attorney; Bob Therres, Public Services Manager; Bryan Schafer, Community Development Director; Joe Huss, Finance Director; Jean Keely, City Engineer; Roark Haver, Communications Technician; Al Thorp, Senior Engineering Technician; Jane Cross, City Clerk; and Recording Secretary Linda Dahlquist.

Present: 5 - Councilmember Clark, Councilmember Kolb, Councilmember Bourke, Councilmember Herbst, and Councilmember Swanson

Absent: 2 - Mayor Ryan, and Councilmember Hovland

2. [WS 12-35](WS 12-35)

SIGNAGE (READERBOARDS) IN B-1 (NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS)

Sponsors: Schafer

Attachments: Fastrip Letter June 22. 2012 Signage

Planning & Community Development Director Schafer stated the owner of Fastrip C-Store gas station located at 9850 Polk Avenue is asking the Council to allow a digital display readerboard. He stated the City has two areas where commercial property is zoned B-1 (99th Avenue and Polk Street and at 109th and Jefferson). He stated B-1 is the City's most restrictive commercial designation and is used when immediately adjacent and within residential neighborhood settings. He stated the City's sign ordinance also recognizes the unique nature of B-1 locations and minimizes the impact on residential uses in B-2, B-3 or PBD. He asked the Council if they are receptive to a readerboard in a residential area.

Councilmember Swanson stated the 99th and Polk location is in the first district and he does not have a problem with a readerboard in this location. The Council could make it work for both B-1 locations.

Councilmember Bourke commented the sign placement cannot encroach on the community. He asked about the size of the board. Community Development Director Schafer replied the board would be 140 square feet.

Councilmember Herbst stated readerboards were a large issue years ago. He stated if they are managed well and the boards do not flash into residents windows, it would be all right.

Mayor Pro Tem Kolb stated the new readerboards are very bright and can be obnoxious. She commented this is not a good location for a readerboard.

Councilmember Swanson asked about a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) with established hours the sign could be on. Planning & Community Development Director Schafer responded a CUP could have assigned hours of use.

Councilmember Bourke stated the store already has a sign. He commented he liked the idea of a conditional use permit and the location of the readerboard is important.

Council discussion took place on the 109th B-1 location.

Mayor Pro Tem Kolb stated the City should not change the zoning. She stated the storeowner could seek a CUP from the City.

Councilmember Bourke asked if the lot was rezoned to B-2, could they have a readerboard. Planning & Community Development Director Schafer replied yes.

Councilmember Herbst stated C-Stores rely on grocery sales and use the readerboards to advertise specials. He stated if the hours of the readerboard could be controlled by a CUP, he would be all right with one at this location. Planning & Community Development Director Schafer replied a CUP could control the hours of use.

Council discussion took place on other readerboards in the City.

Planning & Community Development Director Schafer stated staff will work on the ordinance.

Discussed

1.   WS 12-34   **DISCUSSION ON SPECIAL ASSESSMENT POLICY**

Public Services Manager Therres stated on June 21, 2012, the Council tabled the motion to levy special assessments for the Cloud Drive/119th Avenue reconstruction project that was done in 2011. The Council passed a motion to discuss the City's Special Assessment Policy at the Workshop on July 12, 2012.

Councilmember Bourke questioned the Senior Citizen Deferral portion of the Special Assessment Policy and its application process with the senior citizen providing financial information. He is also concerned that residents have one PIN number, but are assessed for more than one lot. Public Services Manager Therres referred the Council to the Special Assessment Policy, Section 6 - Methods of Assessment, paragraph b) Unit Method (Lot, Building Site), second paragraph Equivalent Unit/Lot.

Finance Director Huss commented the same dollar amount is assessed by the number of lots.

City Manager Arneson stated the cost is assessed by area.

Councilmember Bourke asked about the cost for a front foot assessment. City Engineer Keely stated the commercial front foot rate was $25.07 per front foot and the residential rate was not calculated for this project.

Councilmember Swanson shared the Xylite development scenario.

Councilmember Bourke stated what if the owner never develops the lot. He stated can the City have a hook on the property. He stated the assessment should be by PIN.

Mayor Pro Tem Kolb stated the City should have a hook on the property.

Councilmember Swanson stated City projects have to pay for themselves and he does not want the residents in the first and third districts pay for a project in the second district.

Councilmember Clark entered at 7:02 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Kolb stated some senior citizens own their properties outright.

Public Services Manager Therres commented a connection unit charge would be an impact fee, which is not legal to put on streets or sidewalks. City Manager Arneson stated the City has to follow the 429 Process.

Councilmember Clark stated the City needs to review the senior deferment program which is needs based. He commented the program has been in place since 1978. He stated currently the deferral comes due at the time the property is transferred. He suggested changing to the assessment would come due when the property is split.

Councilmember Swanson suggested getting rid of the per lot assessment and go by footage.

Councilmember Bourke stated seniors over 65 should not be scrutinized by finances and one PIN number on a single-family lot that is their home should not be assessed for more than one lot. He stated the senior citizen program needs to be streamlined.

Community Development Director Schafer commented charging by linear feet was deemed by the Council as not fair.

Mayor Pro Tem Kolb suggested charging by lot size.

Public Services Manager Therres stated the Pavement Management Program is assessed on a per lot basis.

City Manager Arneson stated some residents have tried to pay their assessment and they cannot until the City levies the assessment.

Councilmember Swanson asked staff to research age scenarios for the senior deferment program, he suggested after age 70 you can apply for a senior deferral without showing need. Finance Director Huss stated the policy is governed by a statute that designates the age 65 and a hardship has to exist. He stated the Council can define the hardship.

Councilmember Clark questioned the assessment policy for a busy City street. Community Development Director Schafer replied 50% of the project is paid by MSA dollars.

Mayor Pro Tem Kolb tabled this item for the Workshop on July 19, 2012.

Councilmember Bourke requested staff to research assessments scenarios by lot and by front foot under current policy. Councilmember Clark requested staff to research assessments scenarios by foot and PIN.

City Manager Arneson commented the Council had ordered assessments by unit last year.

Councilmember Clark suggested funding from the Pavement Management

Program where Council could grant a hardship/special use fund. Finance Director Huss replied he is familiar with another city that has an assessment abatement that is tied to a hardship.

Councilmember Clark stated if a fund is created now, can the City make the program retroactive. City Attorney Sweeney replied the City would have to levy the project and then go back and use abatement proceeding.

Discussed

ADJOURN

The Workshop adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Adjourned