

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, July 6, 2020

6:00 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic some members of the Council and public attended this meeting virtually.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Richard Paul, and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Dick Swanson.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Planner Lori Johnson; Recreation Manager Nate Monahan; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Administration Technician Lisa Derr; Fire Chief Charlie Smith; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Communications Coordinator Ben Hayle; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Senior Cooperative Building Proposal – Applewood Pointe.

Community Development Director Thorvig stated staff has been approached by a real estate broker representing United Properties. United Properties is interested in constructing an Applewood Pointe senior cooperative housing building on two properties located at 11967 and 11985 Radisson Road. The properties are currently occupied by two single family homes, where owners are wanting to sell. There is a third property at 11945 Radisson Road which is not part of this proposal, however is anticipated to be developed in the future. Applewood Pointe is a multi-family senior cooperative product that United Properties has built in nine communities throughout the Twin Cities Metro Area. A senior cooperative is an owner-occupied building where an owner purchases an interest into the overall cooperative community. Unlike a condominium, the owner does not own an individual unit. There are two primary costs: the share cost and monthly payment. The share cost is a one-time down payment that purchases a share in the non-profit cooperative corporation. The developer offers multiple tiered pricing options, representing levels of equity. The share cost is a percentage of the value of the home (Initial Dwelling Unit Value), and percentages differ depending on the community. The higher percentage someone pays in equity, the lower the monthly cost.

Mr. Thorvig explained overall, the site is 9.7 acres. The developer has provided two different site plan options. Each option includes a 100-unit, three and four-story cooperative building on approximately 7.2 acres. One option includes nine villa homes on the remaining 2.5 acres. The second option includes a city park on the remaining 2.5 acres. The site plans provided are basic, however provide an opportunity for staff to identify areas of concern prior to if/when a formal proposal moves forward. Staff has shared the concerns

with the developer and encouraged them to look at other sites in Blaine. The developer has indicated this is the preferred site. Staff provided the Council with a summary of concerns that staff has regarding the project and requested direction on how to proceed.

Mike Holly, United Properties representative, thanked staff for putting together a comprehensive presentation on his proposal. He explained he has constructed 16 Applewood Pointe senior cooperatives in the past 10 years. He stated residents had to be 62 or older to buy into the cooperative but noted the average age was 70. He discussed how residents were independent but appreciated the social aspect of congregate living. He reported Blaine would be the perfect City for this type of development and noted the proposed site would be a great fit. He understood that a traffic study would have to be completed for this project. He described how traffic would flow in and out of the proposed development. He explained a nice neighborhood park could be completed within this project. He thanked the Council for their time and asked for comments or questions.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the project would have trail or sidewalk access. Mr. Holly reported a sidewalk extension would be completed along the length of the 121st extension.

Further discussion ensued regarding cut through traffic and traffic flow through the development.

Councilmember Robertson stated she liked the project and believed it was a great use of the space. She appreciated the fact that the developer was willing to create a community space or park. She indicated her only concern was with traffic and how the adjacent neighborhoods would be impacted.

Mayor Ryan commented on the importance of having a neighborhood meeting. He indicated the traffic with the proposed use would be less than a medium density project. He understood that Anoka County would be concerned about any access to Radisson Road. He discussed the difference between this type of senior housing development and assisted living. He stated he appreciated the fact that this development would be for those 62 and older.

Councilmember Garvais stated he was in favor of the project and supported the development including a park. He explained he would like to further understand how the internal roadways would work and if the project would have access to Radisson Road or not.

Councilmember Paul requested further information on the proposed landscaping. Mr. Holly stated the plans before the Council were rudimentary at this time and noted more robust plans would be coming back to the City if the Council offers support to the project.

Councilmember Paul asked if this development would require a neighborhood meeting. Mr. Thorvig reported Mr. Holly would be holding a neighborhood meeting and if there were significant concerns staff would work through the issues with the applicant prior to bringing this item back to the City Council.

Councilmember Paul stated he supported the project.

Councilmember Jeppson reported she supported the project as well and liked the idea of a cooperative development. She appreciated the fact that the development would require buyers to be 62 years of age or older.

Mayor Ryan anticipated these types of units would be well-received in Blaine.

Council consensus was to support the project and recommended a traffic study be completed in order to address concerns regarding cut-through traffic routes. The Council requested a community discussion be held regarding access points, potential screening options, and minimum age requirements.

3.2 3M Open Hospitality Options.

Mr. Thorvig stated this year's 3M Open will be held without spectators. As a result, the city will not host a hospitality tent like in years past. The tournament has offered limited opportunities for the city to host guests. It was noted on Monday and Wednesday, the city has reserved a four-some for both the Monday and Wednesday Pro-Am. This is an opportunity to play 18-holes with a golf professional. The city can invite three guests each day to play. This is an extremely unique experience. There is an opportunity for one councilmember to walk with the group for a portion of the round. Staff would like to discuss who to invite, what councilmembers would be interested in walking along and the possibility of a separate meet and greet for the city council with our guests. Staff commented the city will have a commercial prepared to be aired during the Friday telecast of the event on the Golf Channel. This is a unique marketing opportunity that has been made available to the city. North Metro TV will prepare a commercial for the city highlighting the community. These opportunities allow the City of Blaine to host prospective businesses, developers, and/or brokers, and to market the city on a large stage.

Mayor Ryan anticipated there were business professionals that would be very interested in playing this golf course.

Councilmember Garvais agreed stating he would be interested in walking the course. He encouraged staff to seek out businesses that may be interested in participating in this golf event but also those that would consider moving to Blaine.

Councilmember Jeppson indicated she would be interested in walking along the course as well. She suggested legislators or MNDOT personnel be invited to participate in this event as it would allow for a time to discuss TH65 and why it would be a great idea for MNDOT to invest in the City of Blaine.

Councilmember Robertson commented she would be interested in walking the course but indicated this may not be the right time to have legislators on the course because they may be busy at the State. She reported she would be willing to put in extra time in the next week to assist staff with creating a list of businesses to contact.

Councilmember Paul stated he was available to help as well. He questioned what type of security would be available at the event. Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Podany discussed the security that would be provided at the course.

3.3 COVID-19 Impacts.

City Manager Wolfe updated the Council on how the City has been impacted by COVID-19. She discussed the level of activity that has been occurring at the beach. She noted the hours for the park had been adjusted to close at 9:00 p.m. She noted food trucks have started operations this past week at the beach. She provided further comment on parking concerns around the beach.

Police Chief Podany commented on the police calls that have occurred at the beach. He noted the beach has had a total of 97 calls dating back to May 27 and reported the proactive action of the police department has been well received, along with the UTV and patrol bicycles.

Recreation Manager Monahan discussed the food truck that has been located at the beach for the past week from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. He explained the City has received a great deal of positive feedback and noted the food truck has been a great alternative for the City given the fact the concession stand has remained closed. He thanked the Police Department for their strong presence at the beach.

Councilmember Robertson questioned what was being done to mitigate the health risks for the seasonal workers who would be working as parking lot attendants. Mr. Monahan stated staff would be putting up a table with some glass in order to create a drive up window. He reported the City would be providing masks, gloves and petty cash for the workers. He noted payments could be made electronically as well.

Ms. Wolfe reported the City has its first employee that was COVID positive but was doing well and noted the employee had taken the necessary steps to protect fellow employees.

Mr. Thorvig updated the Council on the City's loan program. He discussed how the CARES Act dollars could be used to provide small business loans.

Councilmember Garvais asked if the CARES Act dollars would be issued as grants or as loans. He recommended the City have a reimbursement plan in place for these dollars.

Communications Manager Hayle explained City Hall has been open by appointment for the past week. He discussed the program that has been utilized to assist with managing appointments at City Hall for staff. He noted all appointments were taking place on the first floor at City Hall. He stated there were also options available on the City's website for residents to meet with staff remotely.

Mayor Ryan thanked staff for their tremendous efforts to keep City Hall operational.

Councilmember Hovland stated he would like the City to encourage people to wear masks but did not want to see the City requiring individuals to wear masks in public places at this time.

3.4 2019 Department Accomplishments.

Ms. Wolfe stated the Police Chief recently reviewed the accomplishments from 2019. After the Council received this report, staff recommended all departments provide the City Council with a summary of their accomplishments from 2019.

City Clerk Sorensen reviewed the licensing, records and elections events that occurred in 2019. She noted over 40 special events occurred, along with two elections. She thanked the Police Department for their tremendous education efforts with the liquor license holders in the community and commented on the amendments that were made to the massage ordinance.

Mr. Hayle discussed the increases that occurred with the City's social media followers. He reported over 8.8 million impressions occurred in 2019. He stated the 3M Open had over 2,700 news stories last year and the USA Cup had over 100 stories. He explained six issues of the City newsletter, two economic development focused newsletters and three parks and recreation newsletters were sent out last year.

Mayor Ryan thanked Mr. Hayle for his tremendous efforts on behalf of the City of Blaine.

Councilmember Hovland questioned how many of the news stories were negative publicity. Mr. Hayle stated after reviewing the information it appears about 10% of the new stories were negative and 90% were positive.

Ms. Wolfe reviewed the activities of the Human Resources Department.

Mr. Thorvig discussed the activities of the Community Development Department along with the Building Inspections Department. He estimated approximately 500 inspections were conducted each week. He reported economic development continues to be active for the City.

Finance Director Huss commented on the activities that occurred in the Finance Department. He reported the City received an AAA bond rating.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres reported the Mary Ann Young Center was completed and came in under budget. He explained a 50th Anniversary Celebration was held by the Blaine Festival Committee. He indicated GIS projects were completed to improve the City's infrastructure and business applications. He stated a park master plan was completed.

Public Works Director Haukaas stated the Public Works Department was working to accelerate the streets improvement program. He discussed the upgrades that were made to the City's water infrastructure and SCADA systems. He noted a workorder system was implemented in 2019 which will improve efficiency.

Ms. Wolfe thanked the Council for allowing staff the time to share the highlights and accomplishments that occurred in 2019.

Council thanked staff for the extensive amount of work that had been completed in 2019.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Submitted by Minute Maker Secretarial