

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, September 7, 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 6:52 p.m.), Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Jason King.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Interim Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Dan Szykuloski; Finance Director Joe Huss; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Off-Sale Liquor License Review.

City Clerk Sorensen stated off-sale liquor licenses were last discussed after the Council retreat in 2016 with consensus that the ordinances remain unchanged. Staff recently received a request that Council consider amending City Code to allow for an off-sale liquor store at 9850 Polk Street. In conjunction with this request staff has also prepared some material for a larger discussion surrounding a potential grocer/liquor store component.

City Clerk Sorensen explained the property at 9850 Polk Street is currently zoned B-1 Neighborhood Business which does not allow for a liquor store, either as a permitted or conditional use. In addition, the proposed liquor store is located 0.92 miles from an existing liquor store, Central Spirits at 1438 93rd Lane. Current ordinance does not allow for a liquor store to be located within 1 mile of an existing liquor store. A liquor store at this location would require both a zoning amendment and liquor ordinance amendment. She said the proposal would include renovating the existing 4,755-square foot Fastrip convenience store by adding 1,725 square feet for a convenience store with gas (Shell), mobile phone store, and a liquor store. She said in addition that Council may wish to review anticipated market trends with locations such as Target, Cub and other grocers wanting to incorporate a liquor component and shared some options for Council review.

Councilmember Swanson recommended the Council decide policy prior to considering a single request.

Mayor Ryan stated this was an important issue and agreed the Council should take a closer look at the City's off-sale liquor license policy.

Councilmember Hovland questioned how the current policy would be impacted if the distance was reduced down to three-fourths of a mile. City Clerk Sorensen stated amending the ordinance in this respect would open up more locations. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer encouraged the Council to consider the overall long-term goals and philosophy of the City.

Councilmember Garvais stated he was in favor of reviewing the City's current off-sale liquor code on a more individual basis.

Councilmember Hovland anticipated that Target and Cub would be reviewing their business model in order to include liquor sales. He indicated the City may have to consider setting a number of liquor licenses versus a particular radius and recommended the Council review the City's off-sale liquor code in order to prepare for this change.

Councilmember Swanson stated he would like to learn more about what other cities of comparable size were doing. He recommended the Chamber of Commerce get involved in this topic and explained he did not want to see every strip mall in the City having a liquor store. City Clerk Sorensen explained the City's current code allows for one liquor store per 7,000 in population.

Council consensus was to direct staff to bring this item back to the Council on September 21st.

3.2 City Manager Recommended 2018 General Fund Budget – Part II.

Finance Director Huss presented the City Manager's Recommended 2018 General Fund Budget for Council consideration. The recommended budget reflected direction provided by the City Council in budget discussions up to this point. The goal is to provide a balanced budget with a safe margin of revenues over expenditures for approval as the Preliminary 2018 Budget and Preliminary 2018 Tax Levy that Council will approve at the September 21 Council meeting. He reviewed the City Manager's 2018 Recommended Budget further and requested direction from the Council and noted the Preliminary Levy would be adopted by the Council on September 21st.

Councilmember Swanson said now was the time to approve a larger increase in order to properly fund the City and create a proposed park/trail programming budget. He stated he would like a 1% increase in the levy and explained that \$250,000 could be placed into the Pavement Management Program with \$400,000 into parks/trails.

Councilmember Garvais indicated he would like the City to set aside more funds for park maintenance. He stated he would like more information on the City's Park Dedication fund.

Further discussion ensued regarding the cost to renovate a City park.

Councilmember Hovland stated he liked the idea of creating a park fund as this would provide a long-term revenue source for parks and recreation.

Mayor Ryan indicated he would like to see the City begin planning for its parks in order to keep them operational both now and into the future.

Councilmember Hovland questioned how the Council was going to close the \$250,000 gap within the budget.

Councilmember Garvais questioned when the police officers positions would begin with the City in 2018. City Manager Arneson reported the positions were budgeted to begin on July 1st.

Councilmember Jeppson stated that at this point she supported the proposed 1% increase. She indicated she was uncertain how those funds would be allocated and recommended the gap be further discussed by the Council.

Mayor Ryan commented he also supported the proposed 1% increase.

Councilmember Hovland said he fully supported the Council having a mechanism in place to fund parks and trails going into the future.

Council consensus was to direct staff to bring forward for consideration a levy that was \$650,000 more than the current levy proposal and requested that staff continue to work on closing the gap.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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