

UNAPPROVED

**CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, March 8, 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 Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson (arrived at 6:43 p.m.), and Jason King.

ABSENT: Councilmembers Dave Clark and Dick Swanson.

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; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Stefan Higgins; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Review Water System Plan Update.

City Engineer Higgins stated the City has been working with Barr Engineering to update the 2002 Water System Plan. A draft Water System Plan Update has been prepared. A brief summary of the changes or updates from the 2002 plan, including filtration and storage capacity, water supply wells and other capital improvement plan items was presented to the Council. Staff commented on how the City has expanded since 2002 and was proud to report the City's current system had no deficiencies at this time. Current and future water demands were described and it was noted it would be important for the City to plan for the future. Issues identified within the report were discussed at length, along with the infrastructure needs. Further discussion ensued regarding the water connection with the City of Lexington.

Councilmember Garvais asked if it would benefit the City to further monitor the connection between Blaine and Lexington. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres reported it would benefit the City to monitor this connection more closely. He commented on the rising value of water to the community.

Councilmember Hovland stated he was pleased the City had put in several new wells to meet the growing needs of the City. He feared that in the future it would become increasingly difficult to install new wells. Mr. Therres agreed it would greatly benefit the City to have these wells in place.

Mayor Ryan thanked staff for the detailed report.

3.2 Senior Center – Census Discussion.

Finance Director Huss commented on the recent discussions held by the City Council that focused on the Senior Center. He explained the Council was interested in conducting a census of Blaine residents regarding the Senior Center and use of City funds. He understood the goal of the census was to reach the entire voting population in the most cost-efficient manner. He asked the Council who should be included in the census population and what questions should be included. He suggested a mailer be sent in hopes of receiving a response from each voting household. He indicated another option would be to pursue a ballot-type system. It was noted this would be a more costly option. Staff provided further comment on the estimated expense of mailing out a ballot or postcard census and requested feedback from the Council on how to proceed.

Councilmember Hovland supported the Council pursuing one mailer per household. He suggested this be included in the water bill asking homeowners to return this with their water payment. Mr. Huss shared concerns with this method including that a number of residents pay their water bill online and that water bills are only sent quarterly so a ballot/postcard would not reach everyone at the same time and lengthen the process. Staff commented on the reverse referendum outlined in ordinance which could also delay the process if a ballot question was eventually required.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if the census could be included in the next City newsletter. Mr. Huss explained the next newsletter would not be completed until May. In addition, staff felt the City may lose control over who was responding if the census was included in the newsletter.

Councilmember King questioned if a census could be completed via Survey Monkey only allowing one response per household. Mr. Huss commented staff had discussed this option, however the concern was how to control who was voting and how many times they have voted. He commented further on the benefit of having control numbers in place.

Councilmember Hovland suggested the census only have four or five concisely written questions with a brief explanation behind the reason for the survey.

Councilmember Garvais stated he would like to see at least three questions that will reach all City residents.

Councilmember Hovland indicated the City could ask if the residents were in favor of a new senior facility and a second question could be if residents were in favor of using capital funds to build this facility.

Councilmember Garvais explained he had a problem spending upwards of \$20,000 in City funds to ask residents if they want a senior center when this was already a ballot question in 2016 and voted down.

Councilmember King stated regardless of the number of questions on the census, he wanted to see if residents supported building a new senior center with existing funds that would not impact their taxes. He wanted to see this sent out to the maximum number of voters in the City in hopes of receiving a large number of responses. He commented the main purpose of the census was to receive response from the largest number of residents possible in order to gain accurate data. He indicated he supported the City spending money on the census in order to assist the Council with making an informed decision on this matter.

Mayor Ryan stated one of the differences now was that the City was not proposing a YMCA with the center that would involve additional operating costs. He commented he did not want too many questions included on the census as this may confuse residents and decrease response. He discussed the importance of getting the right information out to the public.

Councilmember Garvais questioned if the Council supported spending \$15,000 to \$20,000 on a census with one question.

Councilmember Hovland stated he supported spending the money on a census with one question, with an explanation of why the Council was seeking input from the public.

Councilmember Jeppson agreed it would be important for the Council to have data from the public on this matter. She stated multiple questions would lead to multiple answers which may not assist the Council.

Councilmember King suggested additional questions be included in the census in order to gather additional information from the public regarding parks, trails, or the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. He suggested the Council send questions to staff over the coming week in order for the Council to consider at their next workshop. He stated he would also like to learn if the senior center could be used by other groups when not in use by the seniors.

Councilmember Hovland questioned what the current hours of operation were for the senior center.

Mayor Ryan stated the hours of operation were 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and noted additional senior groups met in the space on Saturday.

Councilmember Hovland commented based on these hours, there was a potential for shared access to the space in the evening hours. Mr. Huss commented there was some shared use in the evening hours.

Councilmember King commented additional shared use in the evening hours may assist the Council in gaining additional support from the public.

Councilmember Garvais agreed with the understanding that the seniors would have sole use of the facility from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mayor Ryan commented cleaning of the facility and kitchen could become a concern to the seniors if allowed to be used by other groups.

Councilmember Jeppson said she supported the senior center offering shared space in the evening hours except for the kitchen area and suggested only meeting space be offered.

Councilmember Garvais indicated an additional fee or damage deposit could be charged for residents that wished to use the kitchen.

Councilmember King stated he was not a proponent of wasting money. He understood the City needed better senior space but said he would like to see this new space more community-focused going forward and not just for seniors. He suggested that additional consideration be made to shared community space in the evening hours and indicated if that occurred he would support using the Capital Improvement Funds as outlined in ordinance and that a census may not be necessary.

City Manager Arneson suggested a dual approach be taken for this item. He commented staff could proceed with formulating questions for the proposed census while also gaining feedback from Councilmembers Swanson and Clark on this matter on possible use of the Capital Improvement Funds without a census question.

Councilmember Jeppson stated the additional community space would provide a reprieve for the wear and tear on City Hall as many groups currently use the facility during the evening and weekend.

3.3 Pheasant Ridge Drive and City Monument Signage.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated a portion of Pheasant Ridge Drive and the intersection with Lexington Avenue is proposed to be reconstructed this summer. The project will include new curb and gutter, street resurfacing, utility improvements, sidewalk improvements, intersection reconfiguration, landscaping and lighting enhancements and a new entrance monument sign for the Pheasant Ridge Business Park. The consultant has provided four different sign concepts for review. Staff reviewed the concepts with the Council and noted staff recommends Sign Concept B but would suggest enhancing the sign further with stone elements. Staff commented further on the City's future sign plan and requested feedback from the Council on how to proceed.

Councilmember King stated he supported Sign Concept B but recommended the sign scale be increased.

Councilmember Garvais commented he would like to see lighting options for this sign. He proposed the City create a five-year plan for its monument signs.

Councilmember King asked if most cities installed monument signs along State, County and MSA roadways. Mr. Arneson stated this was the case.

Council consensus was to pursue Sign Concept B with lighting and requested staff report back to the Council with a location and financing plan.

3.4 Presentation on the 2017 Economic Development Report.

Mr. Thorvig presented the 2017 Economic Development Report to the Council. He discussed the growth the City has seen in recent years and stated Blaine was now the largest City in Anoka County. He commented on the redevelopment and new construction that occurred in 2017 along with the projects planned for the coming year. He anticipated close to 700 residential units could be constructed in 2018. He explained the unemployment rate in Blaine was 2.3% which was below both the State and County average. He noted the largest employers and retailers in the City and commented on the business visits that were conducted last year. The land activity and locally offered grant programs were described by staff.

Mayor Ryan commented on the needs from local companies for their workforce. He thanked staff for the thorough update.

OTHER BUSINESS

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer provided the Council with an update on Jimbo's Pizza.

Mr. Schafer commented Co-Parts was hoping to remove Budget/Avis Car Rental from their space. He noted a code amendment would need to be considered in order to relocate this use to 131st at Highway 65 in the B-3 zoning district. He discussed how City Code was currently written and noted the simple change that was required. The Council supported staff pursuing the Code amendment.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if the City would receive partial credit for the wetland credits or if more work had to be done in order to secure the wetland credits. Mr. Therres stated it was his understanding the work had to be finalized until any portion of the wetland credits would be released.

Mayor Ryan updated the Council on the corridor funding for TH65. He noted a study would be completed through MnDOT.

The Workshop was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.