

UNAPPROVED

**CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, June 15, 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 6:36 p.m.), Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, and Julie Jeppson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Jason King and Dick Swanson.

Quorum Present.

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

3.1 Emerald Ash Borer Discussion.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres stated earlier this year Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was discovered in Blaine and since that first discovery we are finding it in several areas throughout the City. Finding EAB in Blaine is not a surprise as it was located in Shoreview back in 2008/2009 and it was just a matter of time before it showed up in Blaine.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres explained that since 2009, the City has started proactively removing Ash trees from public boulevards to get a head start on EAB. Until this year these were trees that were not infected and we obtain resident consent before removal. Those who want to keep their boulevard Ash are being told that they will have to inject the Ash tree. The City offers to replace the boulevard trees with a variety of species. About half of the residents opt to have the boulevard tree replaced. The City's policy is to now remove infested boulevard trees immediately without resident's consent but still offer to replace the boulevard trees.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres reported there are effective treatments to prevent Ash trees from getting EAB. Ash trees can be injected with chemicals that guarantee protection. The treatments must be done every two to three years and runs \$9-\$12 per inch of diameter, or about \$200 for an average sized tree. He estimated that there are thousands of boulevard Ash trees in the City and staff is looking for some feedback from the City Council on some questions we are starting to receive from residents.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres indicated staff will be increasing our tree removal and replacement budgets as the rate of tree removals will increase over the next couple of years. As more communities are discovering EAB it looks like there might be some State funding in the future. Staff requested feedback on what type of EAB programs the City should consider for our residents.

Mayor Ryan stated he did not object to a low interest loan program to assist homeowners in covering tree treatment or removal expenses.

Councilmember Hovland questioned who was responsible for monitoring when trees needed future treatments. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres stated this would be the responsibility of the private property owner.

Councilmember Hovland indicated he was leaning more towards tree replacement versus treatment for boulevard trees.

Councilmember Garvais stated he supported the City negotiating a preferred contractor rate for private tree removal and tree replacement for trees in the boulevard. He asked if the City had an idea of how many trees would have to be replaced. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres estimated the City still had thousands of trees to replace in City parks and boulevards.

Councilmember Jeppson supported the City having a preferred vendor list in order to assist homeowners in having a list of qualified tree removal contractors.

Councilmember Garvais inquired how much the City was spending each year on tree replacement each year. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres reported the City was currently spending \$20,000 on tree replacement and was doing the work in-house.

Councilmember Garvais supported the City increasing this amount for 2018 going forward.

Councilmember Clark supported a loan program that could be assessed back to property owners but did not support subsidizing tree removal on private property or allowing City employees to remove trees on private property. He recommended that hazardous trees be addressed by the City in order to determine which party was responsible for tree removal.

Councilmember Garvais stated in order to replace all of the City's Ash trees in 10 years the City would need more than \$40,000 per year.

Councilmember Clark requested staff review the City's replacement plan and report back to the Council at a future meeting. He asked for additional information on how EAB was progressing in the City as well. Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres stated he would do more research and would report back to the Council.

Further discussion ensued regarding the removal and disposal of Ash trees.

Council consensus was for the City to assist with tree removal on private property through assessments with private contractors only with staff working to negotiate preferred contractor rates for tree removal or treatment. In addition, the Council did not support subsidies for private tree removal.

3.2 Review of Therapeutic Massage Ordinance.

Safety Services Manager/Police Chief Olson stated staff has been reviewing the current therapeutic massage ordinance and after much research and collaboration is recommending amendments that staff believes will both continue recognizing and supporting industry standards of massage therapy and the business enterprises in our City while ensuring public safety. He then discussed the proposed changes to the Ordinance in detail with the Council and requested comments or questions.

Councilmember Jeppson believed the points addressed by Chief Olson were reasonable. She stated she supported allowing chair massages at special or corporate events, along with in-home services.

Councilmember Garvais agreed. City Clerk Sorensen explained the Ordinance could be rewritten to allow chair massage at special or corporate wellness events.

Councilmember Hovland supported this language being rewritten as well and said while he understood the intent wanted to see more flexibility in this area.

Councilmember Clark explained he understood the intent as well and asked if staff could work new language into the Ordinance. Safety Services Manager/Police Chief Olson stated he believed this could occur.

Council consensus was to allow offsite chair massage therapy at corporate events and requested staff clarify language surrounding the use of intoxicating alcohol onsite then bring a proposed ordinance forward for Council consideration after meeting with the enterprises.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilmember Hovland requested staff send letters to residents along Hastings Street reminding them of the availability of the zero-interest loan program.

Councilmember Garvais stated he would like to discuss the options available for Hastings Street prior to sending out letters. City Manager Arneson understood the residents were meeting with an attorney and would like to hold a meeting with the City.

Councilmember Clark suggested staff report back to the Council at the next EDA meeting with an idea on what type of budget would be needed to cover a potential loan program.

Councilmember Garvais stated he wanted to be assured that no additional loans were offered until all of the issues on Hastings Street were addressed.

Further discussion ensued regarding the history of Hastings Street.

Council consensus was to send letters to residents along Hastings Street reminding them of the availability of the zero-interest loan program.

Councilmember Clark commented on potential safety concerns for Blaine residents with there being so many contractors in neighborhoods after the recent storm.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.