

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, January 10, 2022

6:00PM
Council Chambers
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 6:05PM.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders (excused himself from the meeting at 7:00PM), Councilmembers Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Chris Massoglia, Richard Paul, and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Jason Smith.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Police Officer Travis Hale; Police Officer Trent Bachman; Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger; Finance Director Joe Huss; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Attorney Chris Nelson; and Communications Manager Ben Hayle.

3.1 Council Requested Items for Discussion.

None.

3.2 2022 Transportation Project Overview City/County.

City Engineer Schluender explained staff invited a representative from Anoka County to this meeting in order to provide the council with an overview on the proposed 2022 transportation projects that would be completed in the City.

Joe MacPherson, Transportation Division Manager and County Engineer for Anoka County, thanked the council for their time. He discussed the projects that would be completed by the County that were located within Blaine in 2022. He noted this includes a roadway segment along Highway 14 at 125th Avenue. He reviewed how this area would be improved, which

included improvements to the county ditch. He reported Zest would be receiving full access and all underground conduit would be installed for a future signal system. The county wide overlay program was discussed, along with the improvement planned for Lexington Avenue.

Councilmember Massoglia encouraged the county to consider sidewalks for the north side of 125th Avenue. Mr. MacPherson stated pedestrian ramps would be built at the main intersections for future connections. He indicated the city could require future developers to complete sidewalks or trails.

Councilmember Paul discussed how important pedestrian safety was along 125th Avenue given the high speed of traffic. Mr. Schluender explained most of the neighborhoods to the north have sidewalks within their neighborhoods and there was a trail on the south side which created a regional feel.

Councilmember Robertson asked if roundabouts made more sense than more traffic lights, at Harpers or Cloud Drive. Mr. MacPherson stated this was considered. He noted the county has not built a two lane or four lane roundabout yet. He reported this was being considered at Sunset because the traffic volumes were quite high along this roadway. He indicated the roundabout would also assist with slowing traffic.

Councilmember Robertson recommended the county consider installing a pedestrian crosswalk across Lexington Avenue in order to allow people to reach Loch Ness Park.

Councilmember Massoglia commented on how difficult it was to pass through the intersection at TH65 and 109th Avenue. He questioned when the county would consider an overpass for this intersection. Mr. MacPherson reported this was quite a long way out. He discussed the traffic volumes that would have to occur in order to create a grade separation.

Mayor Sanders asked what the county can tell the city about the expansion of 109th Avenue. Mr. MacPherson commented on the plans for 109th Avenue noting plans would be sent to staff for review.

Mayor Sanders thanked Mr. MacPherson for his presentation.

Mr. Schluender discussed the city led projects that would be completed in 2022 which included Davenport Street and 87th Avenue area, Xebec Street and 98th Avenue, 129th Avenue, Radisson Road and 116th Avenue, Radisson Road and Cloud Drive. Staff commented on the neighborhood meetings that have already been held and noted staff would be holding additional meetings with neighborhoods for several of these projects.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if the speed humps on Baltimore and Davenport would remain in place. Mr. Schluender reported staff would be proposing that the speed humps not go back in and staff would see what kind of push back they receive from the neighbors.

Further discussion ensued regarding the stormwater drainage for this neighborhood.

Councilmember Massoglia asked if the city would be installing more of the flashing yellow left turn lights along Radisson Road. Mr. Schluender reported the blinking yellow left turn lights were evaluated and installed by the county. Public Works Director Haukaas reported sight lines were very important when considering flashing yellows.

Councilmember Robertson indicated her road was slated to be replaced in the coming years. She estimated she would be responsible for paying \$20,000+ for her assessment over 15 years. She asked if she could let her neighbors know about this upcoming project and expense. Mr. Schluender reported this project was a proposal at this point and was not finalized. Mr. Haukaas explained the street projects were based on street ratings and indicated the streets would be rated again prior to these projects moving forward and adjustments could be made.

Mayor Sanders suggested an in depth discussion be held regarding the pavement management plan at a future council retreat. Mr. Haukaas reported a future discussion was not planned because the city was at its bandwidth at this time.

Councilmember Paul requested comment on the area by Northtown. Mr. Haukaas explained adjustments would be made in future years and noted these plans were not solidified.

3.3 Road Extensions and Policy Discussions.

Mr. Schluender stated staff has identified several roadway extension or unpaved roads that are key to the city's transportation network. The following roadway corridors have been identified on the city's network as future connections or extensions. The current practice is for the city to wait for development to construct the street improvements with their project(s). Several of the identified road extensions will be difficult for development to construct as they are larger roadways with limited development potential surrounding them. The City has developed to the point where many of these will benefit the larger areas surrounding them or the city transportation network as a whole. He said staff would like to discuss specific corridors including Lakes Parkway Extension - Existing Lakes Parkway to Lexington Avenue, Zest Street Extension - Future Lakes Parkway to 125th Avenue, 131st Avenue - Existing 131st Avenue to Legacy Creek Parkway, Naples Street Extension - Existing Naples Street to 109th Avenue, and 105th Avenue Extension - Naples Street to Pheasant Ridge Drive.

Mr. Schluender explained staff is seeking council feedback to determine if there is a desire to take the lead in construction of these improvements ahead of development and to potentially stimulate development.

Councilmember Jeppson stated based on last week's meeting, she appreciated the information that was provided regarding ARPA funds and suggested these dollars be used for city infrastructure that could spur future development. She supported water and sewer being connected from Lakes Parkway to Lexington Avenue. She hoped that the "parkway" feel would continue through the connection.

Mayor Sanders agreed stating he would like developers to see this as a continuation of The Lakes development.

Councilmember Robertson commented she also believed this made sense. She wanted to see this connection a continuation of the existing parkway with landscaped medians. Mr. Haukaas indicated the water was extended across Lakes Parkway noting sewer extensions would be needed. He reported if the city were to complete this extension it would be the city taking the lead on future development and the city would have to come up with a new assessment policy for the west extension road.

Councilmember Hovland stated he liked the idea of extending Lakes Parkway. He indicated this would give the city the opportunity to control how the area develops. He understood the city would be spending a lot of money up front. He noted the city would have to be careful with how and when to use the ARPA funds. He supported the city working on a new assessment policy.

Mayor Sanders excused himself from the meeting at 7:00PM.

Councilmember Jeppson stated the Naples Street and 105th Avenue extensions were further down the list of importance for her than Lakes Parkway and Zest Street extensions.

Councilmember Massoglia asked what the estimates would be for the cost difference between the city installing the roads versus the developer installing the roads. Mr. Schluender commented on the cost difference and noted a cost share option could be considered.

Councilmember Massoglia inquired if the costs could be assessed to a future developer. Mr. Schluender stated this has been done in the past for water and sewer lines, where connection fees are charged to future developers. He reported the cost for streets cannot be deferred.

Councilmember Massoglia questioned if the city were to install the roadway connections would this provide the city a bargaining chip as to the type of developments that were

pursued. Mr. Schluender commented this would be a tool the city could use. Community Development Director Thorvig stated it would be challenging for the city to wait for development but may work if the city was working in coordination with a developer. He anticipated the Lakes Parkway extension would be easier to develop than the Zest Street extension.

Councilmember Paul commented on the Zest Street and 131st Avenue extensions. He's concerned the residents in these areas were not ready for a project. Mr. Schluender reported the county was proposing to complete 125th this summer. He anticipated the city's project would take longer to pull together and complete. He discussed the parcels that would be needed in order to complete a project along 131st Avenue.

Councilmember Hovland asked if bonding would be required to complete these extensions. Finance Director Huss stated staff would have to further investigate if the water and sewer lines could be deferred. He noted the city did not have other resources available except to bond for these projects. He indicated staff would have to meet with its financial consultant and bond counsel to discuss this further.

Councilmember Robertson stated she only supported Lakes Parkway being extended.

Councilmember Paul questioned if funds could be put away for these projects. Mr. Huss stated the city would need to have an approved project in order to bond for these projects, but noted other funding sources could be explored.

Mr. Haukaas thanked the council for their feedback and noted they would begin working on an assessment policy and would put these extensions into the city's pavement management plan.

3.4 School Zone Safety.

Mr. Schluender stated there have been several accidents this year at or near schools in Blaine involving pedestrians and vehicles. At the council workshop on December 13 council requested that staff prepare an item to discuss school zone safety at and around the schools to see if any improvements can be implemented. Staff reported over the past few years student access to schools has been migrating away from a mostly bus/walker (+/- 85%) and parent drop off/pickup (+/-15%) model. This migration was accelerated based on the last two years of the schools dealing with the variety of learning forums that are being used and more recently a lack of bus drivers. In discussions with one school district the student access model now looks more like bus/walker (+/-15%) and parent drop off/pickup (+/- 85%). This has created an issue with most of the school campuses and the street networks surrounding the schools as neither were designed for that volume of vehicular traffic. Staff has identified several campuses (Johnsville Elementary, Madison Elementary, Northpoint Elementary and

Roosevelt Middle School) that the city should review and discuss what this looks like and some of the impacts it is creating.

Mr. Schluender discussed several actions that staff was looking to implement. Public Works has ordered a number of portable signs with heavy rubber bases to place in designated crosswalks near the schools that say "School - State Law- Stop for Pedestrians in Crosswalk". The plan is to place these out each year in late August prior to the school year beginning as a visual reminder to drivers. They will then be picked up in October before the first snowfall. These are meant to supplement the typical school zone signage. Temporary signage like this keeps the reminder "fresh" each year. The Police Department has increased its education and enforcement activities in and around these and several other school campuses. Most of their activity has been focused on distracted driving and speeding in school zones. The Engineering Department has started an audit of the existing public streets/sidewalk/trails around several of the school campuses to determine if the proper signage and striping are in place and properly located. It was noted staff would be reaching out to these four schools to make them aware of the city's concerns.

Councilmember Hovland asked if schools in other cities were experiencing similar concerns. Mr. Schluender anticipated this was the case.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if the school districts bussing distance policy should be reconsidered. He suggested the schools look to create larger drop off areas given the shift that has occurred.

Councilmember Jeppson thanked staff for looking into this further. She reported she looked forward to hearing ideas from staff and the school district in order to make change happen and to improve school zone safety.

Councilmember Robertson stated she has received calls from angry parents who want to protect their kids. She anticipated that no matter how many signs are put up, there were still people who just did not care. She indicated she did not want the city getting too far into the schools business, but rather wanted the school to address the safety concerns that have been created on their campuses. However, she explained she strongly appreciated all of the efforts from staff and the police department. Mr. Schluender agreed noting the city was only offering suggestions to the school district at this time.

Councilmember Hovland suggested signage establishing the school zones be posted because this would help the police department enforce speed. He stated he would like to hear from the officers regarding the speeding that was occurring in the school zones.

Officer Hale explained speeding was occurring and how people did not always realize that they were entering a school zone then discussed how traffic backups are managed. He

agreed it would be beneficial for staff and the police department to work with the school district to address the city's concerns. He indicated his only concern would be that the schools would continue to challenge the city's ideas.

Councilmember Paul expressed concern with the lack of walking routes to some of the schools. Mr. Schluender reported this was a concern for some of the schools.

3.5 Establishment of Additional Park Use Regulations.

Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Krieger stated staff has been discussing the need for possible additions of park use regulations around other activities currently not covered by city code, such as archery, golfing, camping, fires and waste/litter. It was noted staff reviewed code languages from other communities in order to better understand how to regulate these concerns. Staff explained some sort of language was necessary in order to allow the police department to address staff's concerns. Examples of the additional regulations were reviewed in further detail with the council and staff requested feedback from the council on how to proceed.

Councilmember Hovland questioned when the last time the park use regulations were reviewed. Mr. Krieger stated he did not recall this being done in the past 15 years.

Councilmember Hovland supported the city being flexible and accommodating, while also being able to enforce the rules that were in place. He stated he did not support camping in city parks, but indicated he could support fire rings in certain areas within the parks. He supported the council creating language to address staff's concerns, while also considering a driving range in order to accommodate the golfers in the community.

Councilmember Robertson commented she did not like rules because she was concerned they would not be followed. She indicated she would be able to support code language because it would give the police department the tools they needed to enforce and address staff's concerns. Mr. Krieger stated he understood these concerns, but noted additional code language would assist the police department with addressing people who were continually abusing city parks. Safety Services Manager/Police Chief Podany commented on the minimum language he would need in place to better support his officers.

Councilmember Hovland asked if any of these concerns have been discussed with the park board. Mr. Krieger stated staff brought their concerns to the council prior to discussing these matters with the park board.

Councilmember Hovland commented he would like the park board to review the park use policy to see how some of the concerns could be accommodated in designated areas, such as having a park that has a fire pit that could be used with a permit. He believed this warranted

more discussion in order to find a balance between providing activities and giving the police department the proper tools to enforce concerns.

Councilmember Paul discussed the park use regulations that were already in place, noting this document was very good. He supported the park board reviewing this document. He supported the officers having the proper tools in place to address the concerns that have been raised by staff.

Councilmember Jeppson commented she would not support any ordinance that would disallow camping. She recommended that before this matter goes to the park board that the fire department be involved to provide input on having fire pits in city parks.

Councilmember Hovland concurred with this recommendation. He suggested that the city consider making an area where camping was permitted, versus allowing camping in all city parks.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if camping has been a concern in the city. Police Chief Podany noted there have been concerns on Laddie Lake that required public works cleanup.

Councilmember Robertson recommended this not be brought to the park board for further consideration at this time because again, she did not want the council making more rules that would be difficult for the city to enforce.

Councilmember Jeppson commented if staff believed the concerns were egregious enough that it warranted an ordinance, then staff should report back to the council with an ordinance.

Councilmember Hovland agreed with this recommendation.

Mr. Krieger thanked the council for their feedback.

3.6 Archery Ranges.

Police Chief Podany stated staff met recently as part of overall city code review and focused on archery ranges. After discussion staff is recommending amending the ordinance and removing Sec. 50-115(b) that would clarify archery range permits will no longer be issued. There currently are no approved ranges in the city and because any type of arrow used would travel too far to safely be able to issue a permit, staff recommends removing ranges code. An indoor range would be allowed with no permitting and an outdoor practice-only range could be allowed with no permitting as long as the arrow is not point tipped (safety tips/rubber) and used for practice only with an appropriate target/backstop - this amendment would only affect arrows defined under the deadly weapon definition. Staff recalls very few requests over the years for this type of activity so there does not seem to be much of a demand for a

range and this proposed amendment would clean up the code. Staff reviewed the code amendment in detail with the council and requested feedback.

City Manager Wolfe reported the current city code language was confusing to staff and police officers which was why this item was brought to the council for consideration.

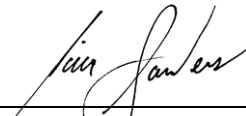
Councilmember Hovland reported Arden Hills and Coon Rapids both have archery ranges. He asked if Blaine could have an archery range attached to the gun club. He indicated he had concerns with allowing residents to have archery ranges in their backyards. He commented the only other area in Blaine that may be able to accommodate an archery range would be the National Sports Center.

Ms. Wolfe commented at this time she was recommending the language that states the city manager may issues permits be omitted from the ordinance.

Councilmember Jeppson supported this recommendation.

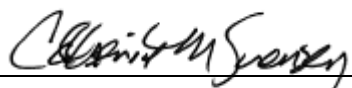
Council consensus was to direct staff to bring this change forward.

The Workshop was adjourned at 8:45PM.



Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:



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