

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, May 10, 2018

6:30 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Acting Mayor Swanson at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Dave Clark (arrived at 6:45 p.m.), Andy Garvais, Julie Jeppson, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Wes Hovland and Jason King.

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; Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Jean Keely; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Crown Iron Building Design (Height) Discussion.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated the City has been working with Crown Iron Works to find them a location in Blaine for approximately two years. They have chosen a site along Naples just north of the 95th Avenue Park and Ride lot and ramp. Mortenson Construction is the owner and would build the building and lease it back to Crown. This facility would be their corporate headquarters and house all of their research and design professionals (engineers of varying backgrounds), sales staff and all executive and administrative functions for the company. The City Council reviewed this project in December of 2017 and indicated support for providing financial assistance in the form of TIF and available EDA funds.

Mr. Schafer explained recently a building design issue had been raised involving the height of a small portion of the building. Crown has determined that they need to install a piece of distilling equipment (a tower of sorts) attached or immediately adjacent to the rear of the building. The building tower that would enclose the equipment would top off at 100-feet above grade or approximately 70 feet above the elevation of the balance of the building. The floor area of the building is approximately 24-feet by 24-feet or the footprint of a standard two-stall garage. A CUP is required for a building above 50-feet. Because it is much taller than anything the City has dealt with, other than Infinite Campus, staff wanted the City Council to be aware of this before formal applications are made.

Brent Webb, Development Manager for Mortenson, discussed the four proposed building designs with the Council and requested comments or questions.

Travis Carpenter, Crown Iron Works, introduced himself to the Council and discussed the design and research work that would be completed at their new facility. He described the pilot processes that will be completed in the tower.

Councilmember Garvais asked if the testing being completed within the tower would be combustible.

Mr. Carpenter stated this work would not be combustible, but would be high temperature.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned if there would be a large amount of exhaust coming from this testing area.

Mr. Carpenter stated this would not be the case.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed tower model, possible materials including brick and glass, and what would be viewed from the surrounding neighborhood.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer explained the closest homes would be approximately 2/3 of a mile from the proposed facility. He reported Crown Iron Works had spoken to the FAA and noted blinking lights would have to be placed on the tower.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if Crown would be placing signage on the tower.

Mr. Carpenter stated Crown would not be placing signage on the tower.

Council consensus was to direct Crown Iron Works to continue pursuing their building design with a 100-foot tower.

3.2 Discussion on Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Restoration.

Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug provided the Council with a presentation on the Wetland Sanctuary history and wetland restoration plans. She explained this land had been donated to the City in lieu of park dedication. The restoration and management of this land was discussed, along with the creation of the wetland bank. She described how the wetland restoration rules and regulations had changed over the years. She commented on the cost of the restoration work and noted how much the City had made from its accumulated wetland credits. She discussed the partnerships and collaborations that have been created by the City for use of the wetland sanctuary. She noted the next steps that had to be taken by the City and asked for comments or questions.

Don Karas, 2423 121st Circle NE, asked if a buffer zone would be created behind his home.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres explained a buffer zone would not be created as the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) would consider this a major change to the current wetland plan. He provided further comment on the identified areas that had yet to be restored and trees that had yet to be removed.

Councilmember Jeppson asked where the City gate would be located.

Mr. Therres reported the gate would be located on City property.

Councilmember Garvais stated the City had designated this area as wetlands quite some time ago and was working to restore it. He indicated the only way to get the wetland credits the City was owed was to finish the plan that was in place. He explained he was in favor of completing the project and encouraged the residents abutting the wetland sanctuary to plant trees on their land to create a buffer.

Acting Mayor Swanson asked what direction staff was seeking from the Council.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres stated he wanted to know if the Council supported this project moving forward.

Further discussion ensued regarding the cost to complete the wetland restoration project.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she supported the project moving forward as proposed and as approved. However, she said she would also support the City working with the neighbors to purchase some trees to help create a buffer zone.

Councilmember Clark added this project has been a public relations disaster but believed the City owed the 60,000 residents to see this project to completion. He commented he was not comfortable with the gate plan as presented but wanted to see the remainder of the plan move forward.

Acting Mayor Swanson agreed the City had to complete the plan and said he could support some funding being set aside for buffering.

Councilmember Jeppson indicated she did not blame the neighborhood for sharing their disappointment with the City Council but explained none of the City's actions were kept from the public nor did the Council intentionally lie.

Council consensus was to recommend staff to proceed with the wetland restoration plan and direct staff to draft a resolution outlining that direction.

3.3 Pheasant Ridge Drive and City Entrance Monument Signs.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated at the March 8 workshop, concepts for the Pheasant Ridge Business Park monument sign were presented along with information regarding replacement and installation of new City monument signs. Since that meeting staff has received two revised options for the Pheasant Ridge Drive sign. Secondly, staff has inventoried the existing City monument signs and has prepared a map of where new signs could be located. The current City monument signs would be removed and, in some instances, replaced in their current location. Also included are four different City monument sign designs. Staff reviewed a proposed installation plan for new City monument signs and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Clark, Councilmember Garvais and Councilmember Jeppson supported Option A.

Council consensus was to support Option A for the monument sign at Pheasant Ridge Drive. Further discussion ensued regarding the monument sign replacement plan.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she believed a sign at 95th and Radisson Road would be ideal. She asked if the City could add something onto the Highway 65 sound wall to match the sound walls that would be constructed in Blaine by MnDOT along 35W.

Mr. Therres stated he would have to speak with MnDOT regarding this matter.

Councilmember Garvais requested further information regarding the City's billboard standards.

Mr. Schafer discussed the City's design standards for billboards. He explained the City was trying to eliminate billboards along Highway 65 and was only allowing them along Highway 10 and 35W.

Acting Mayor Swanson requested that after the next census all City population signs be updated.

City Manager Arneson commented the Metropolitan Council's population estimates would be available next week and could be used instead of waiting for census data.

Councilmember Clark said he supported the City placing the City's website on the City entrance signs versus the population given the fact it would continue to change.

3.4 Future Traffic Signal Installation.

City Engineer Keely stated traffic signals are tied to the City's overall Pavement Management program. While traffic signals are a small portion of this program, staff wanted to show the Council the current intersections that are programmed to be signalized. The City has identified ten future traffic signals being considered for installation when signal warrants are met or to be constructed with county led projects identified in their 5-year Capital Improvement Program. Nine of the ten signals are on County State Aid Highways and one is an intersection of two Municipal State Aid streets. The locations of the future traffic signals were reviewed with the Council along with the potential cost for each intersection.

Acting Mayor Swanson asked how much it would cost the City to complete these plans.

City Engineer Keely reported each traffic signal intersection would cost \$300,000 to \$1 million.

Councilmember Clark stated the intersection of 109th Avenue and Ulysses Street will be an area of concern and requested staff speak with the County regarding this intersection.

City Manager Arneson explained staff brought this item forward because a signal at Xylite and Radisson Road was going to be requested. He reported this was not an MSA route and would have to be funded fully by the City.

City Engineer Keely commented a study was being completed for this intersection.

Councilmember Jeppson stated her priorities were Radisson Road/Xylite Street and 117th Avenue/Ulysses Street and commented traffic in the area of Radisson/Xylite was of the most concern to her. She explained that priorities #4-8 were further down the list for her because the areas would continue to change over the coming years and construction would boom in the future.

Councilmember Garvais agreed Radisson/Xylite was the biggest concern. He anticipated priorities #4-8 would need to be considered by the Council in the near future as development continues to occur in the City. He questioned what the approval process was for County road signals.

City Engineer Keely commented on the joint powers cost participation process that was followed between the City and Anoka County for their projects.

City Manager Arneson discussed the signal being proposed for 125th Avenue/Lever Street and commented on the project timing. The Council supported the signal for 125th Avenue/Lever Street moving forward as proposed by staff.

Acting Mayor Swanson stated he believed Radisson/Xylite was the most important priority. He requested staff seek funding for this project.

Councilmember Clark commented that he believed 109th Avenue/Ulysses Street should be the highest priority but understood it would be difficult to receive County support.

Council consensus was to direct staff to return with a three- and five-year plan at the most for signal installation and intersection improvements in the City with funding plans, to move forward with 125th Avenue/Lever Street in conjunction with the planned Anoka County project, and move forward Radisson Road/Xylite Street when possible.

OTHER BUSINESS

2019 Budget Discussion

Finance Director Huss reviewed the proposed 2019 budget with the Council and noted the City had strong property tax growth for both residential and commercial/industrial properties. He explained this provided the City with the opportunity to continue to increase the levy while maintaining the same tax rate. He requested the Council consider what the target tax rate should be.

Acting Mayor Swanson supported the tax rate being the same as 2018. He requested the proceeds from the land sale be used to pay down debt on the City Hall.

117th Avenue and Ulysses Development

Councilmember Garvais stated he wished the Council had tabled consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Cedar Point Apartment project at 117th Avenue and Ulysses Street item versus being denied on May 3 and suggested this item be brought back to a workshop for further discussion.

Councilmember Clark stated he went into that meeting considering the direction the Council had given at the workshop meeting. He understood that the intersection of 117th Avenue and Ulysses Street was planned for improvements, however, he feared that bringing this back to a workshop would send the public the wrong message.

City Manager Arneson reported if the Council would like to reconsider this item a motion could be made at the May 17 Council meeting by a member of the prevailing party. He explained if this item was going to be reconsidered by the City Council, the neighborhood should be re-notified. He commented a motion to

rescind the previous motion may have to be made given the fact a motion to consider was not made at the May 3rd Council meeting.

Councilmember Garvais offered to make a motion to rescind or reconsider this matter in order to allow the Council to further discuss this potential development.

Councilmember Clark stated he could support bringing this item back but questioned what the Council was trying to resolve.

Councilmember Garvais explained he would like to address the issues raised by the neighbors and better understand the distance the buildings were from the adjacent neighbors. He would like to see if the developer would consider reducing the building to four stories or seeing how flexible they were to reducing the number of units.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer commented this development came down to the number of units and anticipated the building size would increase if it was reduced by one story. He stated he would reach out to the developer to see if he was able to amend his plans should Council wish to reconsider this item.

The Workshop was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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