

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, June 14, 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 Dave Clark, Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; 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 Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 National Sports Center Update.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated National Sports Center (NSC) staff was present to request consideration of two membrane structures on the north side of 105th Avenue. The structures would contain multi-purpose turf fields. If Council supports the buildings, two code amendments would be required to the RR (Regional Recreational) zoning district to allow for membrane roofed buildings and a free standing medical facility.

Neil Ladd, National Sports Center, explained the NSC has been going through a yearlong Comprehensive Master Planning process to address the future needs of the site for the next 30 years. He stated through this process new and upcoming sports and facilities were being evaluated. He commented a dome or bubble that was being considered to allow outdoor turf to be installed and covered for use during the winter months. He discussed the proposed location for the dome and requested feedback from the Council.

Todd Johnson, National Sports Center, commented last fall he and several staff members toured several other sports facilities. He indicated he was proud of the 60,000 square feet of indoor space the NSC had but stated additional space was needed.

Councilmember Hovland asked if this dome would be used only for indoor soccer or if there would be other uses. Mr. Johnson commented the dome would be a sports facility not used exclusively for soccer.

Councilmember Hovland questioned how many soccer fields would be lost in order to install the dome. Mr. Johnson reported one and one half fields would be lost but noted a full field could be used in the summer months.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed location of the dome and NSC parking needs.

Mayor Ryan questioned if the dome would be heated through the winter months. Mr. Johnson explained the dome would be insulated and heated. He provided further comment on how walls would be built in order to accommodate a baseball field.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the dome would be white and encouraged the NSC to identify another color that may better blend into the landscape. Mr. Johnson commented he could investigate this further and noted some domes have solar panels installed onto the dome for energy efficiency purposes.

Councilmember King requested the new space be made available to local teams.

Mayor Ryan encouraged the City Council to visit the new basketball/volleyball facility at the NSC. He stated he was very impressed with this new space.

Councilmember Jeppson commented she supported the long-term vision for the NSC and asked why some of the other projects within the 30-year plan are not being pursued first. Mr. Johnson explained there was a need for turf fields due to the weather in Minnesota. He reported the current fields are being overused and artificial turf fields can be used to allow the grass fields to rest and provide better playing fields.

Councilmember Garvais stated he liked the overall concept but encouraged the NSC to draft a plan for the long-term. He explained he wanted to better understand how the NSC would be approaching the legislature in order to reach their goals. Mr. Johnson stated he would be more than happy to meet with the Council to discuss the long-term vision for the NSC. He commented further on how the NSC was working to improve safety and the overall maintenance at the facility.

Councilmember Garvais indicated he would appreciate receiving an annual report from the NSC that addressed their goals and objectives. He stated he wanted to better understand how the NSC would be paying for the proposed site improvements. Mr. Johnson commented this was a great suggestion and would improve communication between the City and the NSC. He discussed how the value of the property has increased since the school and soccer team have been put in place.

Council consensus was to support the proposed ordinance amendments.

3.2 Cedar Point Apartments – 117th Avenue/Ulysses Street.

Mr. Schafer stated at the May 17 City Council meeting, the Council requested this development project be discussed at the June 14 Council workshop. The purpose of the discussion was to learn more about the developer's plans for modifying his project scope to address neighborhood and Council concerns regarding building height, project density and mix, and neighborhood traffic. It was noted the developer has indicated a willingness to make several project changes. The proposed changes were discussed with the Council in detail. Staff reported the developer was available to take comments or questions regarding the proposed development.

Peter Stalland, Cedar Point Apartments representative, reviewed the changes he had made to his site plan with the Council. He discussed how a portion of the development would be changed to a high-end lower density townhome project. He commented further on the exterior building materials that would be used on the townhomes and apartment building and reiterated this site was appropriate for an apartment building. Mr. Stalland stated this would be the nicest building he has ever constructed and provided a Google map of the area with a visual of the building imposed to provide the Council with further information on lines of sight from various directions.

Councilmember Clark asked to review elevations from the Kwik Trip side of the building.

Councilmember Jeppson requested further information on the traffic that would be generated by Kwik Trip compared to the traffic that would be generated by the proposed development. Mr. Schafer stated the adjacent commercial development would generate far more traffic than the proposed apartment and townhome developments. He commented further on how staff calculated traffic trips based on zoning uses. He reported 117th Avenue had roughly 5,000 cars per day and the road could handle 10,000 to 11,000 cars, which meant this road was not at full capacity.

Councilmember Hovland questioned when warrants would be met for a traffic signal. Mr. Schafer indicated the intersection of Ulysses Street and 117th Avenue was being brought forward for a traffic signal study and staff anticipated this intersection would meet warrants.

Councilmember Clark suggested staff share the traffic study data from the Lowe's/Walmart development project with the City Council and public.

Mayor Ryan asked if this item would go back to the Planning Commission for reconsideration. Mr. Schafer stated staff was of the opinion the changes were minor and therefore would not require another hearing and could be considered by Council at their next regular meeting.

Councilmember Jeppson requested further information from staff on the Metropolitan Council's involvement in the City's density requirements. Mr. Schafer described the Metropolitan Council's involvement with regional efforts to plan for future housing needs, which included low income and affordable housing units. He reported this piece of property was within the Metropolitan Council's goal for more housing units. He explained the proposed development was not proposed to be an affordable housing project.

Further discussion ensued regarding the Metropolitan Council and their appointment process.

Councilmember King stated he would like to provide some way for the neighborhood to be heard other than a City Council meeting. He suggested this development go back to the Planning Commission or a neighborhood meeting be held.

Councilmember Hovland supported this recommendation. He questioned how many townhomes were being proposed for this development. Mr. Stalland stated he anticipated 30 townhomes would fit on this site.

Councilmember Clark commented he also supported this item coming back for public comment such as the Planning Commission or neighborhood meeting.

Councilmember Garvais stated he preferred this request move forward to a neighborhood meeting.

Mayor Ryan agreed this would be the best manner in which to move this development forward.

The Council recommended a neighborhood meeting be held on June 28 at 6:30 p.m. and asked who would be notified of the meeting. Mr. Schafer recommended the City notify property owners living within 1,000 feet.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned if the market could support the proposed high rental rates. Mr. Schafer stated the City does not concern itself with rental rates but rather the feasibility of projects and establishment of rental rates was determined by the applicant.

Council consensus was to direct staff to hold a neighborhood meeting for the Cedar Point Apartments.

3.3 Town Square Townhomes.

Mr. Schafer stated George Sherman built the single (12-unit) townhome building in 2003-2004 that was part of a larger 68-unit approval, noting none of the other buildings were constructed. Centra Homes (most recently active in The Lakes development) has reached an agreement with George Sherman to complete the townhome project based on an amended approval granted to Sherman by the City Council in 2007. The CUP amendment in 2007 granted the ability to build 26 single loaded townhomes. Sherman decided not to proceed after the Council granted that approval, which has now expired.

Mr. Schafer explained Centra Homes has submitted a new concept that builds off that approval in terms of layout and product type and has submitted a 28-unit row townhome concept that is very similar to the Sherman approval. The project would consist of five new single loaded buildings with the garages in the back as approved in 2007. Centra Homes has met with the existing homeowner's association (HOA) to determine if the two projects could be joined into one HOA. The existing residents/members voted no to combining the two associations. In order to bring the project forward more specific engineered plans would need to be prepared by Centra Homes and applications submitted for another CUP amendment request. It was noted a plat to subdivide the townhomes lots would also be required.

Councilmember Jeppson asked who owns the land. Mr. Schafer stated Mr. Sherman still owned the land.

Councilmember Clark questioned what staff was asking of the Council at this time. Mr. Schafer explained this item was brought before the Council because it has been seven years since the item was considered and to see if the Council had any negative feedback.

Councilmember Clark inquired if the townhome associations could be merged at some point in the future. Mr. Schafer indicated he believed this would be possible.

Councilmember Garvais supported the townhome associations joining as this would make the groups stronger.

David Patburg, Centra Homes, introduced himself to the Council and thanked them for their time. He reported Centra Homes had met with the current association to see if they would be interesting in joining their associations but had voted against the proposal. He explained he cannot force this issue because the previously agreed upon timeline has expired, adding 2/3 of the members would have to agree in order to amend the bylaws. Further discussion ensued regarding the history of the existing townhome association and how they had persevered through the economic downturn.

Councilmember Clark supported this development moving forward as it would be nice for the surrounding units to have this completed and would leave it to the developer to address any homeowner association issues.

Council consensus was to support this request moving forward.

3.4 Legal Services – Request for Proposals.

City Manager Arneson stated the current three-year legal services contracts with Eckberg & Lammers (civil) and Berglund & Berglund (criminal prosecution) will expire on August 31. It was noted staff has prepared an RFP and is requesting Council consensus to proceed with the RFP process.

Councilmember Clark supported this item moving forward and supported going through an RFP process.

Councilmember King recommended the legal contracts be for five years and not three.

Council consensus was to direct staff to move forward with the RFP process for the City's legal services with five-year contracts.

3.5 2019 General Fund Budget Development Workshop.

Finance Director Huss stated the 2019 Budget preparation process began with a very brief overview of the City's tax base and tax levy potential presented to Council at the May 10 Workshop. Council direction was mixed as whether to begin budget development under the assumption that the total of all City and EDA levies would be set at an amount such that the combined tax rate for all City and EDA levies would not exceed the 2018 overall combined tax rate of 36.842% or the 2016-17 overall combined rate of 35.983%. As reported at the Workshop, current estimates indicate the capacity to increase overall levies by between \$1.5 million (if the 2016-17 rate is the target rate) and \$2.1 million (if the 2018 rate is the target rate). Throughout the budget process, especially as the 2019 General Fund process unfolds, Council will have the ability to reprioritize both the total levy amount and the levy allocation to fit Council priorities.

Mr. Huss explained pursuant to the schedule presented to Council on May 10, staff would present for Council's review the departmental requests that are currently under Finance Department review. The budget requests will initially be reviewed by Finance staff before moving on to the City Manager. The review will be based on the service assumptions and priority-based budgeting methods that have been developed over the last several years. Thus, staff is reviewing division level responsibilities, the identification of programs and activities needed to carry out these responsibilities, and the estimated cost of the resources required to achieve the programs' goals. On July 19, staff will present for Council review and discussion an overview of the 2019 General Fund Budget that incorporates initial departmental requests and City Manager priorities.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned if there was a way to streamline some of the labor intensive permitting processes. Mr. Huss explained new software programs were being investigated. He commented further on the amount of time that was involved for staff to complete the rental housing permitting process and noted this was a Council initiated program.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if the department heads requests were vetted by the Finance Department or other City personnel. Mr. Huss explained all requests were well vetted by the Finance Department and City Manager.

Mr. Arneson reported the Police Department would be requesting another position yet this year who would focus on emergency management and event coordination in response to the many events the City is seeing, including the newly announced PGA tournament in 2019. He indicated the Council would be discussing this item further at the July 12 workshop meeting.

Councilmember Swanson stated he did not want to see a reduction in the amount of funding set aside for roads and parks. The Council was in agreement.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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