

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, January 10, 2019

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, Richard Paul, Jess Robertson, 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 Engineer Dan Schluender; Fire Chief Charlie Smith; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

Mayor Ryan requested the Council address the Charitable Gambling Item first.

3.3 Charitable Gambling Funds Request – Civil Air Patrol.

Mayor Ryan reported the Civil Air Patrol was requesting charitable gambling funds.

Jay Gustafson, Civil Air Patrol, provided the Council with an overview of his organization and requested charitable gambling funds from the City.

Cadette Cally Jacobsen introduced herself to the Council stating she was a student at Spring Lake Park High School and noted she has been with the Civil Air Patrol for the past four years.

Cadette Evan McNair introduced himself to the Council and explained he was in charge of all of the Civil Air Cadettes. He described the opportunities that have been afforded to him through the Civil Air Patrol and encouraged the Council to designate charitable gambling funds to the organization.

Mayor Ryan stated he has had the privilege of working with the Civil Air Patrol for the past 20 years and has watched them train. He discussed the great work being done by these students and reported there were over 100 cadettes at this time.

City Manager Arneson reported if the Council supported this item going forward staff would amend the charitable gambling budget to include the requested \$2,500 donation to the Civil Air Patrol.

Councilmember Hovland asked what percentage of cadettes go on to serve in the military. Cadette McNair stated he did not have a percentage but commented there have been a number of cadettes that have gone on to West Point and the Air Force Academy, along with active duty service and reserves. Further discussion ensued regarding the types of events the Civil Air Patrol responds to in the community.

Mr. Gustafson encouraged the City Council to stop by the airport on a Tuesday evening to visit with the Civil Air Patrol cadettes.

Councilmember Hovland questioned how the requested funds would be used by the Civil Air Patrol. Mr. Gustafson commented this organization, while affiliated with the Air Force, was privately based and relied solely on donations and fundraising and would be used for training.

Council consensus was to amend the charitable gambling budget to include a \$2,500 donation to the Civil Air Patrol.

3.1 ISO Review.

Fire Chief Smith provided the Council with an update on the City's ISO review. He explained he has been focused on improving the ISO rating within the City of Blaine and the entire Fire District. He discussed the factors that were evaluated for the ISO rating and stated he was pleased to report the City's ISO rating had improved to Class 3. He further reviewed the scores for the City of Blaine with the Council and commented on how the new ISO classification would benefit Blaine residents and business owners with regard to their insurance rates. He reported the City of Blaine would see a 12.5% decrease in its insurance rates with LMCIT for insurance on its buildings, which was a significant savings. He thanked the Council for investing in the Fire Department and for purchasing new ladder trucks then discussed how he and the Department would continue to improve the Fire District's ISO efforts.

Mayor Ryan commented on the importance of a fire training area and stated this item was being brought to the State Legislature for bonding consideration. Chief Smith discussed how the City's ISO rating was impacted by the loss of this facility and stressed the need for a replacement facility that could be used jointly throughout the County.

Mayor Ryan thanked Chief Smith for his thorough presentation. He thanked Fire Chief Smith for his great efforts on behalf of the City and the entire Fire District.

3.2 Discuss EDA Owned Land Adjacent to Former KMart.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated since 2005 the Blaine EDA has been active in acquiring blighted property around the former K-Mart building on 89th Avenue in an effort to redevelop the area. A map was shared showing the two areas where property is owned by the EDA. The EDA owns 2.15 acres along University Avenue and 2.88 acres along 89th Avenue. The EDA has been holding the land in hopes of it being part of a larger redevelopment of the K-Mart property. The former K-Mart site is going through a substantial internal and external remodel and will have Auto-Zone and Xperience Fitness as tenants. Another 20,000 s.f. of space is also available for lease. Because it is anticipated that the building will be occupied for a long period of time and not redeveloped, staff needs direction regarding the future use of the EDA owned land.

Councilmember Swanson stated he did not support additional commercial development on the properties surrounding the former KMart site. In addition, he did not approve of small townhome developments either.

Councilmember Hovland commented that high density apartments and or rental units were not appropriate for this property either but indicated he could support townhomes. He commented on how access to University Avenue had been changed by Anoka County for this commercial area of the City.

Councilmember Garvais stated he did not like any of the options and asked how long the City had owned these two properties. Mr. Thorvig reported the City purchased the former Frank's Nursery site in 2005 and the other property in 2008.

Councilmember Garvais supported the City waiting on both of these properties.

Mayor Ryan stated he would like to see the City get its money back if these properties were sold. Mr. Thorvig stated this may be difficult if sold for residential versus commercial purposes.

Mayor Ryan commented he could support townhomes on these properties but noted he did not want to see any further commercial development in this area. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer indicated the best options for these properties was to either hold them or consider some form of single-family detached townhome units.

Councilmember Garvais stated he would like to see staff return with new ideas for these properties.

Councilmember Robertson reported both of these properties were less than ideal and noted public perception regarding these sites was poor.

Councilmember Jeppson stated the City had done the right thing by purchasing these properties for redevelopment and supported the City waiting on both of these parcels for the time being as she did not want to see the City rush into anything.

Mr. Thorvig asked if the Council would support staff hiring a consultant or architect to develop a concept plan for these parcels. Councilmember Hovland stated this may be worth the City's money.

Councilmember Swanson questioned what was happening with the former Toys R Us building. Mr. Thorvig reported the same broker was representing the Rainbow Foods and Toys R Us buildings and stated Rainbow was not getting a lot of activity but noted Toys R Us was because the building is in better shape.

Further discussion ensued regarding the homes surrounding the KMart site.

Council consensus was to wait on both parcels at this time.

3.4 City Manager Recruitment Process Update.

Finance Director Huss stated in mid-December 2018, staff solicited five Executive Recruitment firms to submit proposals to assist the City in its effort to recruit and select a new City Manager. The five firms are:

- DDA Human Resources
- HueLife
- Mercer Group

- SGR
- Springsted/Waters

Mr. Huss explained an advertisement requesting proposals was also placed on the League of Minnesota Cities website. Proposals are due Friday, January 11. In order to keep the process moving and keep open the possibility of hiring a new City Manager by the end of June, staff will be reviewing the proposals the week of January 14 and, at the January 17, 2019 workshop, will submit a list of recommended finalists for the City Council to interview, if that is the Council's desire. Staff suggests the Council consider conducting the interviews at a Special Workshop during the final two weeks of January.

Mayor Ryan asked if the City had used any of these firms in the past. Mr. Huss reported the City had worked with SGR and Springsted/Waters. He commented further on the timeline for hiring a consulting firm.

Councilmember Swanson stated he did not believe the City Council had to hold interviews for the finalists and supported staff interviewing and selecting a consulting firm. Councilmember Garvais agreed.

Mayor Ryan questioned how much the consulting firm would cost the City. Mr. Huss reported the cost would be less than \$30,000.

Council direction was for staff to review the proposals received by the deadline and make a recommendation to Council for consideration on February 7th.

3.5 Appointment of Liaisons to Various Boards and Commissions and Board/Commission Interview Process.

Mr. Arneson reviewed a list of Council liaison designations from 2018. He explained Council postponed these appointments at their January 3 business meeting in order to provide an opportunity for further review; consideration has been scheduled for the January 17 Council meeting. In addition, Council discussed the interview process for City Boards and Commissions at the last workshop and requested the opportunity to screen applications prior to holding interviews versus interviewing all applicants. Discussion was also held on potential term limits. Applications were distributed at the workshop with the goal of candidate selection and interview date(s).

Mayor Ryan noted the Mayor Pro-Tem in 2018 was former Councilmember Jason King and said the Mayor Pro-Tem for 2019 should be from Ward 1 and suggested Councilmember Hovland. The Council supported this recommendation.

Councilmember Robertson stated she would be happy to serve on the Fogerty Arena Board of Directors. In addition, she noted she was appointed by MnDOT to the Public Advisory Committee for Highway 65 Corridor Coalition.

Councilmember Swanson indicated he would like to stop serving as the Twin Cities Gateway representative. He noted he would continue his service on the Cable Commission for one more year. He reported the 35W Coalition may be ending this year.

Councilmember Jeppson commented she would be willing to serve as the City's representative to the Twin Cities Gateway Board.

Mayor Ryan asked if the Council saw any reason to formally appoint a representative to the Natural Resources Conservation Board. The Council supported not designating any representation to this group as their meetings are available online as well as minutes.

Councilmember Robertson stated she would also be interested in serving on the Senior Citizen Advisory Council.

Councilmember Swanson recommended that the liaison to the Fogerty Arena Board of Directors change every three years.

Mayor Ryan summarized the following appointments as Council liaison designations for 2019 and noted formal appointments would be made at the January 17th Council meeting:

Mayor Pro Tem Councilmember Hovland
Blaine EDA President Mayor Ryan
Blaine EDA Vice President Councilmember Hovland
Senior Citizen Advisory Council Mayor Ryan, Councilmembers Swanson and Robertson
Special Board of Review –Councilmembers Swanson Ward 1, Jeppson Ward 2, and Paul Ward 3
Anoka County – Blaine Airport Advisory Committee Councilmember Garvais and City Manager
Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council Mayor Ryan, Police Chief Podany
Fogerty Arena Board of Directors Councilmember Robertson
North Metro Telecommunications Commission Councilmembers Swanson, Garvais alternate
Coon Creek Watershed Board Councilmembers Jeppson and Hovland
Rice Creek Watershed Board Councilmember Paul
35W Corridor Coalition City Manager and Councilmember Swanson, Garvais alternate
Twin Cities Gateway Councilmember Jeppson
Anoka County Fire Protection Mayor Ryan
North Trunk Highway 65 Corridor Coalition Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Robertson
Anoka/Hennepin Community Education Advisory Council Councilmember Jeppson
National Sports Center Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Hovland as alternate
North Metro Mayors Association Mayor Ryan

Councilmember Hovland requested staff provide the City Council with a list of various boards and commission meeting times and days.

Mayor Ryan commented he would like the City to set term limits for Board/Commission members limiting residents to serve no more than three terms for these positions.

Councilmember Hovland requested that extensions for Board/Commission members be allowed under certain circumstances.

Council consensus was to consider the liaison appointments at the January 17th City Council meeting. Council will review Board/Commission applications with interview dates to be determined. A future discussion will be held regarding term limits for all Board/Commission members.

3.6 Council Meeting Days/Times.

City Clerk Sorensen stated with new Councilmembers starting in January, staff thought it may be appropriate for Council to review the current meeting day and times in the event any changes are desired. As meeting day and time are outlined by ordinance a code amendment would be required and should Council wish to

make any changes staff wanted to ensure sufficient time for the code amendment and to communicate any changes with the public prior to the first business meeting of the year.

Councilmember Swanson supported worksession meetings starting at 6:00 p.m. with regular meetings still beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Councilmember Jeppson indicated she would like to change the meeting day away from Thursday. Ms. Sorensen stated it would be more difficult to move Council meetings to Tuesday as all City Boards and Commissions were scheduled to meet on Tuesdays but suggested Mondays or Wednesdays as a possibility.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if the Council could support moving their meetings to Monday night.

Councilmember Swanson stated if meetings were changed to Monday nights this would allow the City of Blaine to participate in Metro Cities meeting events.

Further discussion ensued regarding changing the City Council meeting nights to Monday.

Council consensus was to hold workshop meetings at 6:00 p.m. and to keep the regular Council meeting time 7:30 p.m. with Council meeting days changed to Mondays. This change would likely occur in March after first and second reading of the ordinance and publication was completed.

3.7 Quarterly Retreat Dates.

Mr. Arneson requested the Council discuss dates for quarterly Council retreats/goal setting sessions. He reported staff believed these types of sessions would be very important for the Council going forward.

Councilmember Garvais supported the Council setting dates for quarterly retreats.

Councilmember Hovland commented he supported the Council holding a teambuilding session with spouses in order for the Council to get to know each other on a social level.

Council consensus was to direct staff to present potential retreat dates at an upcoming meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilmember Hovland requested an update from staff on review of tax reduction potential for property owners on private roads. Mr. Arneson reported staff was working on this and would update the Council at a future meeting.

Councilmember Hovland commented on panhandling issues occurring in the City. He stated he wanted to see this issue addressed and would like to see the people panhandling offered information on services available and taken away from busy intersections. Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Podany commented on the actions that could and could not be taken by officers with respect to panhandlers and referred to the policy adopted in 2018 that addressed these concerns. He stated if requested he could bring this item to the Council for further review at a future workshop meeting.

Councilmember Jeppson reported the Council had already addressed this matter at a workshop meeting and adopted a policy for panhandling and did not believe the Council had to address this matter further.

The Workshop was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

Tom Ryan, Mayor

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