

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE  
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
Thursday, January 14, 2016

6:30 P.M.  
Council Chambers  
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 Mike Bourke, Dave Clark (arrived at 6:46 p.m.), Wes Hovland, Jason King and Dick Swanson.

**ABSENT:** Councilmembers Russ Herbst.

Quorum Present.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Clark Arneson; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Public Services Manager Bob Therres; Finance Director Joe Huss; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Chris Olson; City Engineer Jean Keely; Chief Building Official Dan Hauck; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; City Clerk Catherine Sorensen; and Recording Secretary Linda Dahlquist.

**NEW BUSINESS**

3.1 16-01, MNDOT Discussion on I35W Preliminary Design.

Jerome Adams, MNDOT Project Manager and Mark Lindeberg MNDOT Area Engineer presented detailed information on possible spot improvements that could be included in the MnPASS project and a cost estimate for each improvement.

Mr. Adams stated the base scope of the project is to add a lane in each direction from County Road C to Lexington Avenue for a MnPASS lane and pavement rehab with all concrete up to Sunset Avenue. He gave an overview of the spot improvements for north and south bound 35W to increase traffic flow until 2040. He noted the proposed improvements will bring the project cost to \$200 million.

Mayor Ryan asked about the bridges on 35W. Mr. Adams replied the bridges that need to be replaced are County Road I and two south bound bridges at County Road C. He noted the County Road C north bound bridges are due for re-decking in 2025 and he is recommending replacing these at the same time instead of waiting.

Councilmember Swanson asked if County Road I bridge is funded. Mr. Adams replied the project is underfunded and the proposed project is \$200 million dollars. He noted this is a priority project for MNDOT.

Councilmember Hovland commented 35W at 694 is majorly congested and traffic backs up. Mr. Adams replied the addition of the MnPASS lane and auxiliary lane should help to relieve that backup.

Councilmember Bourke asked if MNDOT has traffic counts. Mr. Adams replied MNDOT has a traffic forecast and proposed this model based on the traffic forecast.

Councilmember Swanson asked about the federal government's opinion with the model. Mr. Adams replied the federal representatives have been attending the advisory meetings and are supportive of the project.

Councilmember Swanson commented more lobbying is needed for more funding.

Councilmember Swanson asked what is happening to the County Road I interchange. Mr. Adams replied in 2017 Ramsey County will install a roundabout on the east side of County Road I at Rice Creek Boulevard and remove the north bound ramp onto 35W.

City Manager Arneson commented Ramsey County and the City of Arden Hills are releasing a master solicitation for a developer for the TCAP site within 30 days which will eventually affect traffic in this area.

Mr. Adams commented City Engineer Keely has all the detailed road maps then gave an overview on noise walls. He stated the people who benefit from the noise wall will be able to vote on it. He noted the wall goes from the manufactured homes park to the industrial park. He stated the wall is paid for by MNDOT. He commented that the property owner of the manufactured homes park voted against the noise wall in the past.

Councilmember Hovland asked if this rule will change in the future regarding voting for a sound wall. Mr. Adams replied it is federal regulation that only the property owner can vote and said the reason could be because homeowners are more likely to move away while landowners stay.

Mr. Adams gave an overview of the design aesthetics of the noise walls.

City Manager Arneson asked about next steps. Mr. Adams stated the environmental study will start in March. He stated he will be in contact with City Engineer Keely about the public hearing. He commented the project is projected for spring 2018.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the project could start without all the funding. Mr. Adams replied no.

### 3.2 16-02, Centennial School Parking/Field Expansions.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated staff met with Centennial School representatives to discuss their 2016 parking and field expansions for the north side of their site.

Dan Huffman, Centennial School, gave an overview of the proposed project which includes new practice and sub-varsity playing field (rubber turf); 80 stall parking lot west of the new field; 200 stall parking lot south of the new field; 45 stall parking lot on the northeast corner; parking area lighting; new parent drop-off/pick-up area; new curbing in three areas; and storm water improvements. He noted the school district plans to purchase several homes on the south side on 103<sup>rd</sup>. He stated the City will be considering this project through a standard CUP process which will include a public hearing. He noted the district plans to start work as soon as school is out in June.

Councilmember Swanson asked if the new parking will eliminate on street parking. Mr. Huffman replied that is the hope.

Councilmember Clark asked for enrollment counts at the high school. Mr. Huffman replied current enrollment is 2,100.

Mr. Huffman commented there are no plans to light the field.

### 3.3 16-03, Consider Amending Regulations for Swimming Pools.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated the City's ordinance regulates the construction and placement of back yard swimming pools and the placement of pool equipment (heaters/pumps/filters). He stated there have been advances in technology making the equipment quieter and more efficient. He stated other cities have given more flexibility in determining where the equipment can be located. He stated staff is recommending the proposed definition match the Minnesota State Pool Code and the Minnesota Building Code; removing the permit for a pool greater than 200 square feet or 24 inches in depth, and increase the permit threshold to 5,000 gallons and greater than 24 inches in depth; allow pool equipment in side yard with 10 foot setback; remove the 35 foot pool equipment from neighboring house; and propose pool standards to match the 2012 International Swimming Pool Code.

Councilmember Bourke asked if a 5 foot setback would be feasible. Mayor Ryan gave an overview of a situation where a homeowner has their pool equipment 6 feet from the property line.

Councilmember King asked if there is a setback for air conditioners. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer replied there is no setback for air conditioners.

Councilmember Hovland asked if the setbacks are the same in the older and newer neighborhoods in the City. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer replied setbacks are the same.

Chief Building Official Hauck stated air intake openings need to be 10 feet away from exhausts. He noted that pool covers are not allowed to take the place of a fence. He noted locking or power covers are allowed.

Council consensus was for staff to bring forward a code amendment for no side yard pool equipment and 10-foot setback.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### Lever Street Utilities Discussion.

Councilmember Clark said he understands the desire of the property owners north of Main Street that want to develop sooner rather than later, and that the extension of Lever Street north is critical to their development goals. He also stated that he is opposed to the City initiating the project without a commitment from those property owners that there is sufficient acreage north of Main Street that is ready to develop that the City has a reasonable chance of getting a return on the taxpayer's investment. Short of the property owners circulating a petition, which is the preferred route, Councilmember Clark offered an alternative path as a compromise.

Councilmember Bourke commented the City should not be involved with the property owners to the north. He stated the City should plat and do the work. He stated he wants to make sure the development is in

compliance and noted the developer is currently noncompliant because he does not have the necessary easement to complete the road.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated the development agreement states that before the next phase of single family begins the developer has to have easement in place. He stated Paxmar is prepared to do Lever Street but needs to have enough lots sold to cover the cost.

Councilmember Bourke stated he is uncomfortable with the developer not having the easement. He stated Paxmar showed the Council the concept plan which was approved but did not include a timeline. He noted that the concept is not correct because the easement it is not in-place.

Councilmember Clark commented the City may need to use immanent domain to obtain the easement. He noted that he feels he is being pressured to build the road in 2016.

Councilmember Hovland stated there are people to the north that want to be able to develop and cannot do so without utilities. He noted it is up to the people to the north to decide to connect to the utilities. He stated the easement is needed to put the road in to move traffic through the area. He stated this project needs to be done sooner or later. He stated the question is should the City pay to install the sewer and water in the road and be reimbursed by Paxmar.

Councilmember Clark commented the City would have to invest \$750,000 taxpayers' dollars to finish the sewer and water utilities in the road. He noted there is no return on investment guaranty.

Mayor Ryan stated Paxmar does not want the City to build the road. He stated the residents to the north could petition for the utilities if they wanted them and have not done so.

Councilmember King asked if the intersection at Lever Street will be lighted. City Manager Arneson stated not at this time.

Councilmember King commented the developer currently has three plats approved. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer replied the development to the south is selling quicker. He stated the developer would know by May if he is going to develop the road yet this year.

Councilmember King stated there are two separate projects and if the residents north want the utilities they should let it be known by petition. He noted that Paxmar is holding all the cards.

Councilmember Swanson agreed the people north need to let it be known they want the road built. He stated if the City does the work and Paxmar challenges it, the City will not be able to be reimbursed the costs.

Mayor Ryan commented he would agree to complete the road if the residents petition for it to be done.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer gave an overview of the plans of surrounding properties.

City Manager Arneson commented the road could be completed without the easement by moving Lever Street on the north side.

Councilmember Clark stated if Paxmar is holding up the residents from developing the residents need to let the City know. He noted if the people north do not come forward, Paxmar can do the work on their own schedule.

Councilmember Swanson stated nobody will pay a premium price until the land to the south is developed. He noted he is willing to subsidize the development if the need is known.

Councilmember Hovland commented developers will not make offers until sewer and water is installed.

Councilmember Swanson asked how long it would take to install sewer and water. City Engineer Keely stated three to five months before a contractor is working and then the work would take an additional two to three months.

City Manager Arneson commented Paxmar did the plans and the City would have to buy the plans from the consultant because Paxmar will want to be compensated. He noted that Paxmar does not want the City to do the work.

Councilmember Clark stated the go/no go date for any project is May 1, 2016. He stated hearings can be held to gauge the level of interest in the development, make a decision for either the City to move forward or Paxmar to move forward, or negotiate with Paxmar to do the work and the City finance the work. He stated without due diligence he will not vote to force the road.

Councilmember King stated he wants to hear from the residents on if they want the road done.

City Manager Arneson summarized Council wants staff to meet with Paxmar about a public project to get the Council to a go/no go decision by May 1, 2016. He summarized staff should bring forward a process to a workshop to get input from residents from Lexington Avenue to Sunset Avenue on the Lever Street sewer and water utilities.

Councilmember Bourke stated he does not want a half completed development.

Councilmember Clark summarized staff will develop a public process, but not initiate the process, until Council has agreement on the definition of a yes vote to move forward.

City Manager Arneson commented if the Council wants the project done in 2016 certain things need to be done.

Councilmember Bourke stated he wants the easement confirmed to complete the road. He stated he would like a set target date.

Councilmember Hovland commented two people at the public hearing did not understand the assessment ordinance and that it should be clarified for residents as we move forward.

The Workshop adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Catherine Sorensen, City Clerk

*Submitted by TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*