

UNAPPROVED

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, April 5, 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 (arrived at 6:43 p.m.), Andy Garvais, Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Jason King, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Planning and Community Development Director Bryan Schafer; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; 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 Jean Keely; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Special Board of Review.

City Clerk Sorensen stated Council, Board of Review members, and Anoka County Assessing staff were meeting to discuss market data in preparation for the upcoming Board of Review meeting on April 16, 2018.

The members of the Board of Appeal introduced themselves to the City Council. Scott Miller, Maisa Olson, Randi Erickson, Pat Grengs, and Lynda Riley were in attendance.

Anoka County Assessor Alex Guggenberger provided the Council with a handout on market information for the upcoming Board of Appeal meeting. He described how market values were determined by the County and commented on the open book process. He noted Anoka County had three and a half assessors assigned to the City of Blaine. He commented on the residential parcel counts in Blaine and reported sale prices were up 5.5% in the City. He discussed the amount of new construction occurring in Blaine and noted apartment units were on the rise.

Ms. Riley asked if the County would have better comps this year. Anoka County Assessor Guggenberger described the comps that would be provided to the City of Blaine for their upcoming meeting.

Mr. Miller questioned if foreclosure sales were included in the County's appraisal system. Anoka County Assessor Guggenberger reported foreclosure sales were not included. Further discussion ensued regarding foreclosures and the trend for people becoming house poor.

Councilmember Hovland commented that wages are not keeping up with the cost of living, which could be a concern for Blaine residents.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned how many petitions the County received on an annual basis. Anoka County Assessor Guggenberger reported several years ago the County received 440 petitions. He explained this number varies on a yearly basis.

Ms. Erickson stated she wanted to see if it was possible for the City to use an independent appraiser to assist residents with housing valuations. She explained this may assist the City and County in resolving concerns prior to going to the State level.

Councilmember Clark requested staff pursue this type of proposal for 2019. He thanked the Board of Appeal members for their professional service to the City.

Council consensus was to request staff to research if an independent appraiser could be utilized by residents during the 2019 Board of Review process.

3.2 Redevelopment of 102nd and University Avenue.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated last summer the City Council reviewed three separate proposals for redevelopment of the site at 102nd and University. All three proposals included the removal of the three walk-up office buildings and the construction of some type of higher density housing to replace the offices and detached garages. All three submittals outlined the need for financial assistance in the \$850,000 to \$900,000 range. The three different housing options that were reviewed were 32 Unit for Sale Townhomes, 60 Market Rate Apartments and 118 Unit Senior Building.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated representatives from all three projects were present and made a presentation to the City Council. At the end of the discussion, the City Council preferred the 32-unit townhome project from Shade Tree Construction. Staff has been in communication with the developer over the past eight to nine months. He has prepared a new concept for site design and type of townhome model for the site. The developer, before he shoulders the expense of formal applications and plans, wants to be sure the City Council is still supportive of the project and the revised townhome model and that the City still recognizes the need to support the project financially.

Planning and Community Development Director Schafer reported currently the project, with the revised townhome models, is expected to generate 40 to 43 for sale townhomes. The actual unit count will depend on storm water requirements and final storm water design. The project would contain both single loaded and back to back style units in four to six-unit buildings. The expected sales price of the units would be \$250,000 to \$300,000 which is slightly higher than the County's estimated market values of the neighborhood just to the east of this development.

Councilmember Garvais asked if the development would have a fence in place between the development and the existing neighborhood. Mr. Schafer stated a fence would be installed.

Councilmember Swanson requested further information on how this project could be financed with TIF. Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig explained a new Redevelopment TIF District would be created and once the development was completed the developer would be paid \$850,000. The City would borrow

these funds from the EDA General Fund and the fund would be paid back over 25 years with interest from TIF funds.

Mayor Ryan stated he did not like the idea of the storm drainage being located adjacent to University Avenue. He suggested units be taken out in order for the storm drainage to be relocated. He questioned if it was necessary to have a 25-year TIF District. Mr. Thorvig stated this was the typical length for a Redevelopment TIF District. He noted the City could sunset the district early if the numbers came in favorable.

Councilmember Clark commented he believed the proposed plan would greatly enhance the University Avenue corridor. He stated the proposed development would take the City in the right direction and would mesh well with the adjacent neighborhood. He discussed how the site would be impacted by traffic if apartments were pursued versus the proposed townhomes.

Council consensus was to support staff's recommendation.

Commission Appointments

Councilmember Garvais commented on the Mayoral appointments and noted the Council had previously discussed this item at a worksession meeting. He reported the Mayor then made changes to the appointments and recommended approval at a City Council meeting. He expressed frustration that the new appointments were not discussed by the entire Council prior to the meeting. He stated there has been an unwritten rule that incumbents are allowed to keep their seat. He explained two of the Mayor appointments did not coincide with this unwritten rule.

Mayor Ryan reported the changes were requested and noted Tonya Lizakowski did not care which Board she was appointed to. He explained there were concerns that this was a political decision which was why she was not placed on the Senior Board. He discussed how closely Tonya watches the City Council and indicated she was not an acceptable candidate for any Board given her previous history with the City.

Councilmember Garvais indicated Tonya had not applied for the NRCB. He stated Christopher Van Rybroek was to be appointed and not Karen Varian. He questioned what discussion was held in order to make this determination.

Councilmember Swanson stated Mayor Ryan made a decision.

Mayor Ryan stated his appointments have never been contested in the past 30 years.

City Clerk Sorensen discussed a term error that occurred in Ward 3 for the NRCB. She noted a correction would be made next year to assure this does not occur again in the future.

Councilmember Garvais asked why Christopher Van Rybroek was not appointed by the Mayor when this had been agreed upon by the Council.

Mayor Ryan stated he could recommend anyone he wants.

Councilmember Jeppson commented she likes Karen Varian and indicated she would have had no problem with the appointment if it had been brought to her ahead of time. She expressed frustration with the reaction she received from the Mayor and Councilmember Swanson when she asked a question regarding the

appointments. She was of the opinion the reaction was unprofessional. She noted she received a call from Karen Varian after the last Council meeting questioning why she was not wanted on any board. She indicated this was a total lie. She reiterated that her question was simply, "what's going on?" and had nothing to do with Karen as a person. She stated she understood it was within the Mayor's rights to change the appointments, but requested he inform the Council ahead of time if done again in the future.

Mayor Ryan stated he was in favor of Board and Commission members having a term limit.

Councilmember King indicated he understood these were Mayoral appointments. He stated he was upset that changes were made after the Council had come to a consensus on the positions. He explained he disagreed with several of the appointments and therefore he would like the Council to vote on the items separately with a roll call vote. He also requested the Council discuss the NRCB and Senior Advisory Board membership in order to reduce these groups down to seven members.

Mayor Ryan supported the Council discussing the size of these groups further.

The Workshop was adjourned to the City Council meeting at 7:30 p.m.

The Workshop meeting reconvened at 9:15 p.m.

3.3 105th Avenue Landscaping.

City Engineer Keely stated in 2017, the City Council contracted with WSB to create a landscape plan for the 105th Avenue reconstruction project. Council requested the plan be brought back to them for review and discussion at a future Council Workshop meeting. In developing the design of the landscape plan, staff first met internally with Public Works, Planning, and Engineering Departments to discuss landscaping, lighting, irrigation, and future responsibility of short/long term maintenance. The location and plant types were based on the other maintenance activities that will occur along the corridor, i.e. plowing/salting.

Ms. Keely reported staff also met with National Sports Center staff to review the proposed landscaping on 105th Avenue. NSC was given the opportunity to add any elements to the plan, at their cost, that would tie the two sides of their facility and the roadway together to give the entire area a continuous cohesive campus feel and look. At this time, the NSC is not ready to add elements, but wanted to know if future elements might be added, specifically within the roundabouts. During this meeting there was also discussion concerning the NSC's process of renaming all of the fields within their campus. They are still working on this and will coordinate with the City once a naming system is decided. The 105th Avenue project will place temporary field directional signage based on the NSC's current naming system and continue to work with the NSC once they have their new system in place. The estimated cost based on this landscape plan is \$244,000. It was noted the landscaping, along with the costs for lighting and irrigation for the landscaping is within the 105th Avenue project budget. Annual maintenance costs for 105th Avenue were estimated to be \$12,000 per year after the first three years.

Councilmember Swanson asked if the NSC would be considered for maintenance on the corridor after the first three years. Planning and Community Development Director Schafer stated this would be allowed.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if flag poles were being considered within the roundabouts. Ms. Keely commented this was being discussed with the NSC along with lighting within the roundabouts for safety purposes. Mr. Schafer stated the NSC was not in a position to make decisions on the landscaping plan at this time, but would be getting back to the City in the future.

Councilmember Hovland commented he followed a semi through the roundabout and expressed concern with semis ability to safely maneuver through the circles. Ms. Keely reported the roundabouts would be the same east bound and west bound once the roadway was complete.

Councilmember Clark requested further information on the pedestrian plan for this area of 105th Avenue. He stated he feared for the safety of pedestrians along this corridor. Ms. Keely reviewed the location of the crosswalks along 105th Avenue. Mr. Schafer stated there was no way to entirely block off the roadway from pedestrians. He pointed out the location of the designated crosswalks and noted this roundabout was not as compressed as Club West Parkway. He reported fencing may have to be added in the future.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she lives in Club West and she did not anticipate people would be crossing 105th at the roundabout.

Councilmember Clark expressed concern with how the proposed trees and grasses within the landscaping plan would impact drivers sight lines and pedestrian safety. He requested the landscaping plan not deter from the safety that the City was trying to achieve along the new corridor. Ms. Keely stated the NSC was hoping to improve the pedestrian situation by providing additional parking on the north side.

Mayor Ryan stated the City could request the NSC create better connectivity within their internal trails. He explained he was pleased the NSC was increasing the size of their parking lots.

Councilmember King stated he had similar concerns with the landscaping plan as Councilmember Clark.

Councilmember Clark suggested shorter plantings be put in between trees in order to keep pedestrians out of the median area.

Further discussion ensued regarding beautification grants.

Council consensus was to move forward with the proposal. Council directed staff to review whether the City could apply for grants to assist with the landscaping along 105th Avenue.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Council requested staff schedule a worksession meeting topic to review the appointment process for Commission members along with the number of members on each Board.

The Workshop meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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