

CITY OF BLAINE  
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
Monday, November 21, 2022

6:00PM  
Cloverleaf Farm Room A  
10801 Town Square Drive

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 6:00PM.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Richard Paul, and Jess Robertson.

**ABSENT:** None.

Quorum Present.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Deputy Police Chief Dan Pelkey; Community Outreach Coordinator Emily Douglas; Mental Health Coordinator Amanda Terwey; Finance Director Joe Huss; Deputy Finance Director Ali Bong; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Attorney Chris Nelson; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Introduction of New Police Department Staff, Community Outreach Coordinator and Mental Health Coordinator.

Deputy Police Chief Pelkey introduced Community Outreach Coordinator Emily Douglas and Mental Health Coordinator Amanda Terwey to the City Council. Ms. Douglas and Ms. Terwey spoke to the Council regarding how they would positively impact the community in their new positions.

Councilmember Jeppson explained she asked for data from Police Chief Podany as to the impact of these positions. She discussed the data she received and stated she was pleased to see how impactful these positions were both in the community and with the police officers.

Mayor Sanders welcomed Ms. Douglas and Ms. Terwey to the City of Blaine.

3.2 Meadowland Estates West Townhomes.

City Planner Sellman stated in May 2022 the Council approved a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Meadowland Estates West for 16 single-family lots and standards with two existing homes in a DF (Development Flex) zoning district. The CUP specifically allows for detached single family homes. The site has an existing Comprehensive Land Use Designation of LDR (Low Density Residential) which allows a density of 2.5 to 6 units an acre for single family development (townhomes and quad homes are not a permitted use in under this designation).

Ms. Sellman explained the developer is interested in redoing the plat to create a 28-unit, townhome/quad home attached housing development rather than the single family that the CUP was approved for. To change to a townhouse/quad home product, a comprehensive plan amendment is necessary. The change would be from LDR to LDR-MDR (Low Density Residential-Medium Density Residential) as this designation allows for townhomes/quad homes with a density of 2.5-12 units an acre. If the proposal was to move forward, a CUP amendment, comprehensive plan amendment and new preliminary plat approvals will be necessary. Based on previous feedback from the City Council, any project that requires a comprehensive plan amendment requires review by the City Council at a workshop meeting.

Nathan Raich, developer, explained the purpose of the change was because the site could not support 14 or 16 individual units giving the rising cost of construction materials. For this reason, he was requesting 28-unit townhome/quad homes. He anticipated this would be a better fit for the community.

Mayor Sanders agreed this would be a better fit for the community.

Councilmember Jeppson stated Mr. Raich knew more about the housing market than the Council. She appreciated the fact that the developer was able to make a shift that would provide a quality product at a reasonable price for Blaine residents.

Councilmember Robertson explained she did not have a problem with the change and noted she could support the increased density to provide a quality housing product that made sense. She recommended that the project be re-noticed to the neighbors to make them aware of the change.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if this townhome development would have an association. He discussed how the City has had problems with small townhome associations in the past being able to support themselves. Mr. Raich explained he managed the association for Creekside, which was 50 units and successfully turned this organization over to the townhome members. He noted he has a rental company how that would assist with managing this townhome association. He reiterated that the road would be public.

Councilmember Massoglia asked if the neighbors supported the project. Mr. Raich reported he was one of the neighbors and noted the other neighbor would be selling him land for the project and offered his support.

Councilmember Massoglia explained he preferred single-family but understood the need to change this development to townhomes.

Councilmember Newland questioned what the price point would be for the townhomes. Mr. Raich estimated the townhomes would sell for \$250,000.

Council consensus was to support the proposed changes for Meadowland West Townhomes.

### 3.3 Charitable Gambling Fund 2022 Budget Amendments and 2023 Budget New Requestors Evaluation.

Deputy Finance Director Bong stated the City Council last reviewed the 2023 proposed budget for the Charitable Gambling Fund during the August 8 workshop (WS 22-094). At that workshop Council requested improvements to the process which would increase clarity, transparency, and ease for requesting organizations and bring greater consistency to the solicitation letters. Council indicated support to fund organizations that have been awarded dollars in prior budget cycles at the same levels as prior years. It was noted there are three new requesting organizations: Boy Scout Troop 3509, Minnesota 100 Club, and Way of the Lord Food Shelf. Ms. Bong stated based on current reserve levels and estimated future revenues for the fund it is financially feasible to support all prior and new recipient requests for both the 2022 and 2023 budget. As such, staff is seeking Council guidance to prepare amendments to the 2022 budget and the resolution to adopt 2023 fund and budget which are scheduled for November 21 and December 5, 2022, respectively.

Councilmember Robertson discussed the Eagle Scout request being made to work in collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Board to complete a project that would benefit the community.

Councilmember Hovland reported Eagle Scout projects were an accumulation of work that tests scouts through community projects that involved raising funds, organizing the project and making sure everything was properly put in place and supported the Eagle Scout charitable fund request.

Councilmember Robertson discussed the charitable fund request from the Minnesota 100 Club. She commented on the great work this organization does to support first responders in Minnesota. The Council supported the request from the Minnesota 100 Club.

Councilmember Hovland stated the Council had discussed in the past, only allowing charitable gambling funds to be passed along to Blaine organizations. Finance Director Huss explained Blaine organizations were a priority for the City, but noted it was the Council's decision if they wished to help an organization that was outside of Blaine and helped people in the community. Ms. Bong reported there were potential recipients in Blaine and throughout Anoka County that would be supported by the Minnesota 100 Club.

Councilmember Massoglia discussed how it would benefit Blaine as an organization to support the Minnesota 100 Club, which was law enforcement friendly, especially given how difficult it was to attract and hire law enforcement and other first responders at this time. He wanted it to be known that Blaine supports its law enforcement and first responders. He explained the City had reserve funds for this request.

Councilmember Newland indicated he supported Councilmember Hovland's statement that the majority of the charitable gambling funds should remain in Blaine. However, he believed the Minnesota 100 Club was doing great work in the community for law enforcement and supported the \$5,000 request.

Ms. Bong reported the next request was from the Way of the Lord Food Shelf.

Councilmember Massoglia explained this request was from his church, which was located in his ward. He noted this food shelf has been in operation since 2009 and was looking to expand services for the residents of Blaine.

A representative from Way of the Lord Food Shelf reported she has seen a dramatic increase in the needs in the community, for children, seniors, and immigrants. She reviewed the amount of food the food shelf provides to the community. She noted she has a very grateful and thankful population that are served by a large group of volunteers. She explained the requested funds would assist with a building expansion for the food shelf.

Mayor Sanders and Councilmember Jeppson fully supported the food shelf request.

Councilmember Paul stated he appreciated the great work the food shelf was doing on behalf of the community. He supported the City donating \$50,000 to this food shelf in 2023.

Councilmember Robertson commented on how proud she was of the great work this food shelf was doing on behalf of the community to help her neighbors and friends.

Council consensus was to support the Eagle Scout, Way of the Lord Food Shelf, and the Minnesota 100 Club charitable gambling requests.

### 3.4 American Rescue Plan (ARP) Spending Plan.

Mr. Huss stated Council has had several workshop discussions regarding ARP funding and uses, the most recent being at the Council workshop on May 16, 2022. Staff and Council reviewed the potential use of ARP funds for: utilities infrastructure; National Sports Center (NSC) assistance; business assistance grants; and allocation to Highway 65 improvements. Council provided feedback and direction regarding the allocation of ARP funds to these categories. It was noted that total potential expenditures for the identified projects and programs for which ARP could be used exceeded the amount of ARP funding allocated to the City. As such, the discussion focused on prioritizing funding allocations for specific projects. Staff reviewed the proposed spending plan and requested direction on how to proceed. Based on direction, Council will be asked to formally adopt an ARP Spending Plan at the December 5 Council meeting.

Councilmember Newland thanked staff for all their work on this plan and said he was supportive of all the proposed expenditures.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he supported the infrastructure prioritization. He questioned if just one project should be completed versus splitting the ARP funds between several projects. Mr. Huss indicated the proposed projects were all Council approved. He noted the reason for splitting the funds between water and sewer were to assist with addressing reserve balances in the water and sewer funds. City Engineer Schluender reported these projects were included in the 2023 CIP.

Councilmember Paul asked if ARP funds could be used to reduce street assessments. Mr. Huss explained this was not an allowed use.

Council consensus was to support the ARP Spending Plan.

### Other Business:

City Manager Wolfe explained Councilmember Jeppson would be making a motion to close City offices on December 23.

Mayor Sanders discussed the items that would be addressed under Development Business on the Council agenda and the proposed procedural motions and opportunities for public comment

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:16PM.

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Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk