

## **UNAPPROVED**

**CITY OF BLAINE  
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
Thursday, January 19, 2017**

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; Finance Director Joe Huss; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Chris Olson; Economic Development Coordinator Erik Thorvig; Stormwater Manager Jim Hafner; City Engineer Jean Keely; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Senior Engineering Technician Al Thorp; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

#### **3.1 Rain Sensor on Residential Lawn Irrigation System.**

Stormwater Manager Hafner stated the City Council previously discussed the topic of rain sensors on irrigation systems as a measure of water conservation. Staff has polled a number of cities neighboring Blaine, around the Metro and some out-state communities. Twenty cities were contacted and 12 responded. He explained that at this time most cities do not have ordinances requiring irrigation controls or moisture sensors but most do have some type of water conservation program in place. Andover, Plymouth and Coon Rapids have leveraged some grants to initiate pilot programs. It was noted most cities do have a tiered watering ban.

Stormwater Manager Hafner reported most cities recognize the need for water conservation and are contemplating what steps they should take. Two common situations provide opportunities for change: 1) lack of control on irrigation systems which results in systems watering during or right after rain events; and 2) irrigation systems that are used when the ground is already saturated from recent rain events. Both scenarios unnecessarily waste water and both can be easily and cost effectively corrected.

Stormwater Manager Hafner stated rain sensors and moisture sensors are becoming more available in a wide range of cost and features. Simple rain sensors, costing around \$30, will sense rain and turn the system off. More elaborate systems costing \$200 to \$400 have Wi-Fi internet connections that read weather reports of approaching storms and prevent systems from turning on. Some of these also have moisture sensors that read the water content of the soil and don't allow the system to turn on until the ground needs additional

moisture. Some form of control required for new installations of commercial and residential irrigation systems will provide beneficial water conservation measures. As the city looks to renewing the Municipal Water Appropriations permit with the DNR, these are the types of water conservation controls the DNR will look at to measure the commitment of a municipality in conserving ground water. Staff requested the Council consider an ordinance requiring installation of irrigation controls to conserve water.

Mayor Ryan understood the importance of water conservation and supported the Council investigating an Ordinance further. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated staff would be inviting several rain sensor vendors to attend the upcoming Green Expo to assist in educating the public on these devices.

Councilmember King stated he lived in a neighborhood where all of the homes had \$40-\$50 rain sensors. He feared that the sensors installed were not sophisticated enough to function properly. He indicated supported the conservation of water, but did not believe builders should be required to install a \$100+ rain sensor. He suggested the City strongly recommend rain sensors but not make them a requirement.

Councilmember Hovland asked what type of cost would be incurred to install a rain sensor. Stormwater Manager Hafner commented the low-cost rain sensors were very simple to install.

Councilmember Garvais explained he also had a rain sensor in his yard and he did not believe that it worked properly. He feared a City rain sensor mandate would not meet the Council's desired water conservation objectives.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned if there were any fines or fees that could be charged to the City by not putting an Ordinance in place. Stormwater Manager Hafner was not aware of any fines.

Councilmember Swanson supported townhome associations having rain sensors. He anticipated this would lead to cost savings for the associations.

Councilmember Hovland agreed with this recommendation. He suggested rain sensors only be required on new construction and be recommended for all townhome associations.

Councilmember King supported this recommendation.

Councilmember Clark believed the best course of action would be to better educate the public on the advantages of rain sensors and water conservation. The City could encourage homeowners to consider purchasing rain sensors, but he did not support this being a requirement.

### 3.2 Traffic Study for Rice Creek Parkway.

Civil Engineer Keely stated City Council directed staff to hire a third-party consultant to study the operations of Rice Creek Parkway located southeast of the airport. Tom Sohrweide of SEH has prepared a traffic study for Council consideration. The study looked at the entire collector route from 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Traffic counts and vehicle speeds were monitored and reviewed. Staff reported traffic counts were within the limits for a collector street but vehicle speeds were elevated particularly during the weekday peak hours of 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The following recommendations were made in the study:

1. Consider the installation of an all-way stop at 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
2. Change the dashed yellow centerline to double yellow centerline north of median.

3. Install a white edge line on “no parking” side with and without median.
4. Install a yellow edge/center line adjacent to both sides of median.
5. Increase enforcement at the critical time periods.

Civil Engineer Keely asked the Council to provide direction on implementation of the study recommendations. If Council directs installation of an all-way stop at 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, a Council item will be prepared for future Council action.

Councilmember Hovland supported giving the traffic calming measures a try. He commented on the large number of commercial vehicles using this roadway. He urged the City to increase enforcement in this area to encourage commercial vehicles to seek an alternative route.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if these roadways had weight restrictions. Civil Engineer Keely reviewed the weight restrictions for the roadways.

Councilmember Swanson supported a stop sign at 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, along with further enforcement at critical time periods. He commented on the requirements the City had to follow when using MSA funds for a roadway. He suggested the neighborhood be informed that MSA funds were used on this roadway, and that the implications of this be fully explained.

Councilmember Garvais supported this roadway not being an MSA roadway in the future. He recommended the Police Department have more presence on this roadway during peak traffic times.

Councilmember Clark asked if the Council was being asked to take action on this item tonight. City Manager Arneson stated the Council did not have to take action, but could refer the item to the Traffic Commission.

Council consensus was to refer this matter to the Traffic Commission.

## **DEVELOPMENT UPDATE BY ERIK THORVIG**

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig provided the Council with an update on the development occurring in the community. He commented on the amount of single-family residential developments that have occurred in recent years and stated the City had very good numbers when compared to other communities in the metro area. He reviewed the top six permit values from 2016. The new businesses that grew or expanded in the previous year were listed. It was noted retail along Highway 65 corridor remained strong. Staff then reviewed the new development slated for 2017.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if District 16 was moving forward. Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig explained this project was moving forward. Prior to receiving permits from the City, the District would have to seek Council approval. He anticipated the request would come before the Planning Commission in March.

Councilmember Swanson questioned what was happening at the old Rainbow Foods site. Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated the owner was continuing to seek a developer. He stated staff would continue to work on this site.

Councilmember Jeppson requested further information on the bill that was introduced for 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue. City Manager Arneson discussed the bill in detail with the Council.

Mayor Ryan thanked staff for the thorough development update.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

City Clerk Sorensen requested the Council let her know when they would be available for Commission interviews.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

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Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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