

UNAPPROVED

**CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Thursday, August 2, 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 Andy Garvais, Julie Jeppson, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Dave Clark, Wes Hovland and Jason King.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Clark Arneson; 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 Dan Schluender; Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug; City Attorney Andy Pratt; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; Communication Technician Roark Haver and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Anoka County Highway Department Presentation on Proposed Reconstruction of 125th Avenue from Lexington Avenue to Opal Street.

Public Works Director Haukaas stated at the City Council workshop on May 8th, staff prepared a memo detailing a proposed partnering project with Anoka County to reconstruct the portion of 125th Avenue from Lexington Avenue to Opal Street. Anoka County has prepared a map depicting the preliminary layout of the proposed project, see attached. The project would reconstruct the pavement and extend the concrete median from Lexington Avenue to Lever Street. From Lever Street, the median would taper out past the turn lanes and the pavement would be milled and overlaid to Opal Street. The project also includes all turn lanes and a signal at Lever Street. The County would look to have the City participate in the cost of the signal, consistent with their cost participation policy. The proposed project schedule would be to construct the summer of 2019 and complete by fall of 2019. The project schedule would coincide with the completion of the new Anoka Hennepin elementary school also scheduled to open in the fall of 2019. He reported Anoka County was present to outline the details of the project including the preliminary plan, project schedule, and to answer any questions related to the development of the project.

Ben Robeck, Anoka County, commented on the project being planned for 125th Avenue and discussed the project timeline. He explained the goal would be to have the project complete and ready for use by September of 2019. It was noted federal dollars would be used to assist in completing this roadway improvement project. He explained there would be an open house for the project on Thursday, August 23rd at the Blaine City Hall.

Councilmember Garvais asked why the County was not proposing a four-lane roadway. Mr. Robeck explained the County has completed traffic modeling through 2040 and the proposed improvements would meet the anticipated traffic counts.

Councilmember Garvais encouraged the County to consider keeping a second lane for a little while after Lexington Avenue in order to assist with managing the traffic flow during peak driving times. In addition, he requested the County make contact with all homeowners that would have their access to 125th Avenue impacted.

Mayor Ryan thanked the Anoka County representatives for their presentation.

3.2 Pioneer Park Wetland Bank Proposal.

Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug stated Pioneer Park is designated as a Special Use Park and defined as parkland obtained and maintained for its environmental resource. The first 40-acre parcel was purchased in 1962, a second 40-acre parcel was purchased in 1972 and in 2000, a 20-acre parcel was purchased. The western half of the acreage is wetland and the eastern half is mostly wooded upland with some pockets of wetland. In 2005, a boardwalk was constructed across the wetland to connect the neighborhood on the northwest side of the park. There is an extensive paved trail system along with some wood chip trails and bridge across the drainage ditch.

Ms. Haug explained since the discovery of several rare and endangered species in 1997, the City has been managing vegetation at Pioneer Park to control the invasion and spread of invasive species. Funding has been through the City and other funding sources such as grants from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The City has spent approximately \$467,000 including the \$47,000 in grants on managing the park. The City was approached by Jason Husveth, Critical Connections Ecological Services, Inc., to discuss a collaborative concept for a wetland bank that would include a portion of Pioneer Park and the property to the west of the park which is under a purchase agreement by Mr. Husveth. Further discussion ensued regarding the cost to maintain the wetland property, along with the value of the wetland credits. Staff recommended the City enter into an agreement with Critical Connections to put together a draft concept plan to further address the feasibility of a wetland bank at Pioneer Park.

Councilmember Swanson asked how much the feasibility report would cost the City. Ms. Haug reported Critical Connections will draft the report at no cost to the City. She commented further on the expense the City would have to incur to maintain the wetland property over time.

Councilmember Garvais commented he would like to see how the trail system would be impacted by a potential wetland bank. In addition, he wanted to be assured that the City's water systems were protected.

Councilmember Jeppson requested further information on the maintenance that would take place on the wetland property. Ms. Haug described the type of work, burns and herbicide treatments that would occur in order to properly maintain the wetland property.

Councilmember Swanson questioned who would own these wetland credits. Ms. Haug explained she envisioned these wetland credits would be owned by the City.

Mayor Ryan recommended the City Council visit this property at some point in the near future.

Council consensus was to move forward with Critical Connections for draft prospectus and to direct staff to schedule a field trip to view area once prospectus is complete.

3.3 Discuss Potential Purchase of 1409 105th Avenue NE.

Economic Development Coordinator Thorvig stated the property at 1409 105th Avenue is currently for sale. For the past year the current owner was attempting a redevelopment project which would have included the subject property, along with the vacant lot to the north and the property at 1491 105th Avenue (Mark's Welding). The project likely would have required EDA assistance for demolition and acquisition. Unfortunately, the owner was not able to put a project together and therefore has listed the property for sale. The current asking price is \$350,000. Anoka County tax records value the property at \$172,400 and the property was purchased on December 22, 2015 for \$228,500. It was noted staff has not negotiated a sale price however feel it would be between the previous sale price and current asking price. Staff requested direction from the Council on how to proceed.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if the City would rezone these properties if purchased. Mr. Thorvig stated this could be done in order to be consistent with the surrounding parcels.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she believed it made sense to look at purchasing both properties.

Councilmember Swanson agreed.

Council consensus was to move forward with site purchase and to direct staff to pursue possible purchase of northern parcel as well.

3.4 Split of Park Dedication Fees.

Action on this item was postponed to a future worksession meeting.

3.5 Update on the City of Blaine Emerald Ash Borer Management Program.

Action on this item was postponed to a future worksession meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres provided the Council with an update on the TH65 corridor study. He explained the study would take 18 months to complete. The cost for the study was estimated to be \$800,000 and staff anticipated MnDOT would be asking the City to contribute \$100,000. Staff stated they believed this was a fair cost given the amount of time that would be needed to study the frontage roads in Blaine.

City Manager Arneson commented on the lane extensions that were occurring along TH65.

City Manager Arneson provided the Council with a Night to Unite update noting this event would be held on Tuesday, August 7th.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

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