

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, December 9, 2019

6:00 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tom Ryan, Councilmembers Andy Garvais, Julie Jeppson, Richard Paul, Jess Robertson, and Dick Swanson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Wes Hovland.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Dan Schluender; Water Resources Manager Rebecca Haug; Budget/Fiscal Analyst Ward Brown; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Communications Coordinator Ben Hayle; Human Resources Director Cassandra Tabor; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 TH65 Update – Speaker: Melissa Barnes, MnDOT North Area Manager.

The Council received a high-level update from Melissa Barnes with MnDOT on TH65 that included a planning and linkage statement review with the Council and types of community engagement completed were described along with several different corridor alternatives. It was noted there would be another public meeting on TH65 on Thursday, December 19.

Mayor Ryan requested J-turns not be included in the project plans for Blaine.

The Council thanked Ms. Barnes for the presentation.

3.2 Government Relations – Speaker: Ann Lenczewski.

The Council received a presentation from attorneys Ann Lenczewski and Cullen Sheehan regarding the lobbying services the City was receiving. Ms. Lenczewski described how her organization moved the City's initiatives at the State Capitol in a non-partisan manner. She reported TH65 and the training center were main priorities at this time. She commented further on the work she completes for the City of Blaine and asked for questions or comments.

Councilmember Garvais recommended there be a joint effort from all elected officials along TH65 to contact legislators regarding this project. He recommended Ms. Lenczewski continue to contact Blaine City Councilmembers to speak on behalf of the TH65 project.

Mayor Ryan commented on how lobbying efforts have changed over the past 34 years and thanked Ms. Lenczewski and Mr. Sheehan for their efforts.

Ms. Lenczewski thanked the City for their continued support and stated she looked forward to working with Blaine again in 2020.

3.3 Southern Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Restoration Plan.

Water Resources Manager Haug stated at the November 18, 2019 City Council meeting, Council authorized the execution of an agreement with Great River Greening to utilize grant dollars from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to restore the southern portion of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. Staff indicated that several plan options for the restoration work would be brought back to the council prior to any construction activity. Throughout the planning process, several restoration options were considered and reviewed. All options include the preservation of native tree canopy species such as oak, American basswood, and black cherry trees. The state grant dollars are based on an acreage amount restored. The proposed options focused on allowing the maximum amount of grant dollars to be used. Based on comments received by some of the residents during the October 24, 2019 open house and through the online comment period after the open house, additional buffer options have been created. These options include leaving a 50- or 100-foot buffer along treed property lines, along with a zero-foot buffer option. Additional requests made by residents include a 225-foot setback from the back of property lines along the northwest portion of 112th Circle NE. Staff commented further on the restoration plan and requested direction on how to proceed with the land swap and buffer.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for meeting with her and Councilmember Jeppson last week. She explained the residents she has spoken with supported the wetland restoration project, however, one of the main concerns for the more densely populated neighborhood abutting the wetland sanctuary was that a buffer be provided. She supported the scrub/dead trees being removed from the buffer. Public Works Director Haukaas stated a buffer could be considered just for this area and that a buffer not be provided for the neighborhoods with larger lots.

Councilmember Garvais indicated he could support this project as proposed.

Councilmember Jeppson supported there being a managed buffer and that it be 150 feet from the property line. She asked how staff could manage providing a buffer in this area given the fact the lot depths varied. Mr. Haukaas described how staff could manage the buffer location given the fact the lot depths varied in this area. He estimated the lot depths were around 80 feet at this time.

Councilmember Robertson requested significant trees, such as oaks be preserved. Ms. Haug stated all oak, cherry and basswood would be preserved. Mr. Haukaas reported the trees that are meant to be saved would be flagged.

Mayor Ryan stated he could support a larger buffer for this one neighborhood.

Councilmember Jeppson recommended a 100-foot managed buffer be put along the entire wetland sanctuary so as to not show preferential treatment for one neighborhood over another.

Councilmember Robertson stated a 50-foot buffer could be provided for the larger lots and a 100-foot buffer for the smaller lots.

Councilmember Swanson indicated he could support this recommendation.

Mayor Ryan asked who would be managing the site during the project. Ms. Haug stated she would be managing the project. Mr. Haukaas commented again on how important it would be to properly identify the trees on the site prior to any tree removal.

Mayor Ryan questioned if staff had the trail designed for this project. Ms. Haug indicated the trail was not yet designed.

Councilmember Robertson recommended only invasive species be removed from the managed buffer. Ms. Haug discussed how it would take more time to maintain the wetland sanctuary if a managed buffer was in place.

Mayor Ryan stated it would be difficult for the City Council to please everyone on this project and he believed a 50-foot buffer would be adequate.

Councilmember Jeppson believed that a 50-foot buffer was too small. She recommended the minimum size for the managed buffer be 150 feet.

Councilmember Robertson indicated she would like to see how a 150-foot buffer looked on the map for the wetland sanctuary.

Council consensus was to direct staff to have a managed buffer in the areas where homes have less than 150 feet of land from the property line to the wetland sanctuary and for staff to bring this item back to the Council for further discussion.

3.4 2020 Proposed Capital Equipment Fund Budget.

Finance Director Huss stated Council first reviewed the proposed 2020 Capital Fund Budget at the September 16, 2019 Workshop and then again at the Workshop of October 14, 2019. At the October workshop, a revised draft budget totaling \$2,518,000 was presented for City Council review and consideration. Council discussion centered on potentially restoring the funding for a new SBM fire truck (a tender). The consensus among councilmembers at the meeting was to postpone consideration of adding or removing fire equipment until an understanding of where Blaine's two partners (Mounds View and Spring Lake Park) stood regarding 2020 budgeted purchases. Additionally, there was discussion regarding removing \$120,000 of GIS requests for initiatives that were more appropriately spent out of the General Fund. Staff reviewed the proposed amendments within the proposed capital budget in further detail with the Council and requested comments or questions.

The Council supported the new senior bus being funded by the Senior Center donation fund.

Council consensus was to direct staff to bring the 2020 proposed Capital Equipment Fund Budget back for approval on December 16.

3.5 Proposed 2020 Facilities Management Fund Budget.

Finance Director Huss stated Council had their first opportunity to review the proposed 2020 facilities fund budget at the November 18, 2019 workshop. Council had some questions regarding staffing and facilities management. Staff clarified those issues for council at the December 2, 2019 workshop and, in addressing

council's concerns, reduced the expenditure budget by \$50,840. Budget statements are being prepared pursuant to council direction from the December 2 workshop and will be handed out at the December 9 workshop. To review with council, the facilities managed under this fund include city hall and attached garages, public works and the public works cold storage facility, the police training facility and the Mary Ann Young Center. With the adjustments, operating expenditures in the 2020 proposed facilities budget are up 3.5% with the most notable change from 2019 being the additional space to be maintained in the new Mary Ann Young Center. Internal fees have likewise increased, but, again, most of the increase is due to the increased space to be maintained at the MAYC.

Mr. Huss stated proposed capital spending totals \$155,550 and includes \$50,000 for additional video security at the public works building as well as \$15,000 for masonry work at the public works cold storage facility. At city hall there is \$13,500 appropriated for exterior caulking work as well as \$26,400 for scheduled replacement of HVAC components. Also, in the proposed budget is \$50,000 for sealcoating the public and police parking lots at city hall. While the 2020 budget maintains an adequate fund reserve heading into 2021, there are a number of deferred capital expenses that will need to be addressed over the remaining four years of the five-year plan. Staff will be seeking council's direction to reprioritize the plan so as to maintain the fund's financial viability.

Council consensus was to direct staff to bring the 2020 proposed Facilities Management Fund Budget back for approval on December 16.

3.6 2020 Council Appointments.

City Clerk Sorensen stated each Board/Commission term and appointment process is outlined in different sections of City Code, with the exception of the Natural Resources Conservation Board which is outlined by Resolution. Staff is suggesting removing the process outline from Code/Resolution and instead creating a Council policy that could be easily amended should Council wish to make changes to the appointment process again in the future. Potential language that would allow for a resident to serve at large in the event a candidate from a particular ward is not identified is as follows:

In the event a candidate cannot be identified from any ward a resident from outside that ward can be appointed to serve at large for one 2-year term upon consensus of the majority of City Council.

Ms. Sorensen reported potential language for term limits is as follows:

A Board Member/Commissioner can serve no more than three 2-year terms unless agreed upon by a consensus of the majority of the City Council.

Councilmember Swanson stated he could agree to a candidate being appointed from outside a district, but explained he would like to see a super majority vote required rather than a majority vote to make that happen.

Mayor Ryan reviewed the proposed 2020 Council liaison appointments.

Councilmember Garvais recommended staff request the school districts provide the City Council with an update or presentation in 2020.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

Tom Ryan, Mayor

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