

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, March 16, 2020

7:00 p.m.
Cloverleaf Farm Room
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Dick Swanson.

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; City Planner Lori Johnson; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; Communications Technician Roark Haver; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 COVID-19 Preparedness Discussion.

Mayor Ryan thanked staff for all of their efforts while preparing for COVID-19.

City Manager Wolfe stated things were changing on a daily basis in response to COVID-19. She explained a declaration of a local emergency would be approved by the Council this evening. She indicated the Council would be holding its Regular Council meeting in the Cloverleaf Farm Room in order to remain properly spaced per social distancing recommendations. She reported the Council would also be considering a leave policy in response to COVID-19. She explained Brooklyn Park was closing for the next three weeks and was encouraging employees to work from home. She reported the City of Blaine was not at this point but may be considering this in the near future. She commented a virtual EOC was up and running. She was pleased that residents were following social distancing recommendations.

Mayor Ryan discussed how parents with young children would be impacted by the social distancing requirements now that school was not in session.

Councilmember Hovland stated with the approval of the emergency declaration, he asked what would happen if things were to get worse. Ms. Wolfe stated no further action would be required except if an extension to the emergency declaration was necessary. She commented on the provisions that were in place if an emergency meeting had to be called. She noted staff was investigating how to hold meetings remotely.

Councilmember Robertson asked if Councilmembers would have to Skype into meetings from public locations. Ms. Wolfe stated in the case of an emergency situation these requirements would not be in place

so long as the public had access to and could view what was going on. City Attorney Sweeney commented the Mayor and City Manager could determine that an in person meeting was not practical and because of the pandemic the City Council could hold a special meeting remotely so long as the members could hear one another. He further described the actions the Council would have to take in order to hold a meeting remotely during the health pandemic. It was noted at least one member of the City Council, the City Attorney or City Manager had to be present at the regular meeting location to conduct roll call.

Mayor Ryan questioned if there were any concerns with the Police or Fire Departments at this time. ??? stated the department was trying to limit person to person contact and was trying to handle non-emergency calls via telephone. He reported Personal Protection Equipment has been distributed to all Police Officers and the Fire Departments were currently on lock down in order to stay healthy. He explained he had worked with all divisions within the City to encourage social distancing for the health of the entire community and to ensure there is a continuity of operations.

Councilmember Paul inquired how the City was reacting to the Governor's most recent recommendations. Ms. Wolfe reported staff was working to ensure the City had technology in place to allow for City meetings to be held remotely. She explained she met with a number of City Managers from Anoka County today and discussed how each city was responding to social distancing. She indicated the City of Blaine was not getting a lot of people in the building at this time.

Councilmember Hovland stated the City was entering the building permit season and questioned how this would be managed by the City. Ms. Wolfe commented the vast majority of permits could be addressed via telephone or online. City Planner Johnson reported in-home inspections have ceased for the next two weeks. She reported building permits can be issued through electronic means. She commented she was most concerned with people building a new home and were looking to close between now and early April.

4.0 Council Calendar Review

Ms. Wolfe reviewed the Council Calendar.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Tom Ryan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Catherine Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk
Submitted by Minute Maker Secretarial