

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, January 4, 2021

6:00PM

Virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 6:00PM. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this hybrid meeting was held virtually.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Wes Hovland, Julie Jeppson, Chris Massoglia, Richard Paul, Jess Robertson, and Jason Smith.

ABSENT: None.

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 Chris Nelson; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Establishing the 2021 Legislative Priorities.

City Manager Wolfe stated in the agreement recently signed with Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN), it was noted that the City and LGN commit to “developing a work plan for the 2021 Minnesota Legislative Session, which will articulate the City’s legislative priorities” and “outline the City’s expectations for LGN with regard to providing updates and progress reports to the City.” LGN provided the city with a draft 2021 Legislative Priorities document. Staff and Mayor Sanders have discussed a number of goals, tasks and activities for each priority. This will be a living document that will be updated as needed and directed by City Council. Specifically, much detail has been added to the Highway 65 priority. Staff commented further on the items that would be worked on further to amend the legislative priorities work plan and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Paul thanked staff for their work on the legislative work plan. He requested Public Works Director Haukaas address the next steps for Highway 65. Mr. Haukaas explained staff would be bringing the TH65 plan back to the Council at a future workshop meeting in order to address the next steps. He noted a joint powers agreement (JPA) would be created in 2021 with Anoka County to begin the environmental review for the TH65 corridor.

Councilmember Robertson asked why a JPA had to be pursued with Anoka County for additional environmental work when a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study had already been completed. Mr. Haukaas discussed the purpose of the PEL study noting this had narrowed the project down to three alternatives. He reported a final environmental study was still required. He explained the PEL study assisted

in narrowing down the options or alternatives for the project. He indicated the City had to enter into a JPA with Anoka County because the legislature gave funding to Anoka County for 109th Avenue.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for putting together a detailed legislative priority document. She believed this would assist the Council in tracking the work that was done by the lobbyists over the coming year.

Mayor Sanders agreed that this would be a valuable document to have in place for the coming legislative session.

Councilmember Hovland discussed the funding for the frontage road system on the west side. He asked if there had been any changes to this plan and suggested the proposed frontage road plan be brought forward for new Councilmembers to review. Mr. Haukaas stated moving forward the City has started interacting with property owners to discuss the frontage road plan. He reported further information would be coming to the Council regarding the frontage plan in the near future.

Councilmember Jeppson explained over the past year Councilmembers have been speaking with Anoka County about adjusting JPA percentages. She questioned if there would be any issues in the percentages paid for the TH65 project between the City and County. Mr. Haukaas stated the City creates JPAs on a project by project basis with the County. He commented on the County road template cost share and noted the TH65 project would be a completely different project. He noted the City would be driving this project and understood the County was more than willing to allow the City to take the lead on this project.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she would like the cost sharing for the TH65 project to be clearly defined for this project when it gets underway.

Anne Lenczewski, LGN, welcomed Mayor Sanders to the City Council. She stated she appreciated the City having a checklist in place for the upcoming legislative session. She looked forward to seeing how these items would be prioritized by the Council. She discussed the upcoming conference call that would be held for Highway 65. She noted she has met with all local representatives to discuss the plans for TH65 and to ensure this was a top priority for 2021. She reported she would like to better understand what segments or portions of TH65 should be focused on for 2021.

Cullen Sheehan, LGN, stated the 2021 session would be unique because the members would not be meeting in person. However, he explained he would be doing his best in order to have some successes.

Angie Huss, LGN, indicated she was looking forward to working with the City of Blaine on these priorities.

Councilmember Robertson discussed Item 3 (Supporting Local Control) on the priority list and discussed the importance of the City maintaining a level of control.

Mayor Sanders stated he was looking forward to working with LGN in order to have positive results for the City of Blaine in 2021.

3.2 Appointment of Liaisons to Various Boards and Commissions.

City Clerk Sorensen stated Council is asked to discuss the liaison appointments prior to formal consideration in the regular meeting later this evening. She reviewed the designations from 2020 in further detail and requested the Council discuss the 2021 appointments.

Mayor Sanders explained several changes were needed to the appointments due to the new members of the City Council.

Councilmember Paul questioned when the board and commission positions would be considered. Ms. Sorensen stated the commission and board interviews would be held later in 2021.

Councilmember Robertson stated she would like to keep the appointments she has for 2021.

Councilmember Hovland indicated he would be willing to serve as the Mayor Pro-Tem and the EDA Vice President.

Mayor Sanders, Councilmember Hovland and Councilmember Robertson volunteered to serve as members of the Senior Citizen Advisory Council. It was noted former Mayor Ryan was interested in continuing to serve on the Senior Citizen Advisory Council.

Mayor Sanders reported Tom Ryan would remain the representative for the Anoka County-Blaine Airport Commission and Ms. Wolfe would serve as an alternate.

Councilmember Smith offered to serve as a second alternate on the Anoka County-Blaine Airport Commission.

Mayor Sanders stated he would be serving as the City's Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Board liaison with Police Chief Podany.

Councilmember Robertson explained she would be willing to serve as the Fogerty Board representative.

Councilmember Jeppson volunteered to serve as the representative for the North Metro Telecommunications Cable group.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he was also willing to serve as the representative with this group.

Mayor Sanders recommended Councilmember Jeppson serve as the City's representative for the cable group and suggested Councilmember Massoglia serve as the alternate.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she was willing to continue her service with Twin Cities Gateway.

Mayor Sanders stated he would serve as the representative for the Anoka County Fire Protection Council.

Councilmember Robertson and Councilmember Paul volunteered to serve as alternates for the Anoka County Fire Protection Council.

Mayor Sanders offered to serve on the TH65 Corridor Coalition and Councilmember Robertson would serve as the alternate.

Mayor Sanders explained he was willing to serve on the National Sports Center Foundation and Councilmember Smith volunteered to serve as an alternate.

Councilmember Hovland requested staff bring forward the responsibilities for each liaison position for the Council to review for informational purposes.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she was appointed to the Transportation Advisory Board and recommended one or two alternates from the City Council be appointed to this Board as well to ensure proper representation from the City of Blaine. She explained the bylaws allow for Councilmember Jeppson to appoint an alternate. Councilmember Robertson indicated she would be willing to serve as the alternate.

Council requested staff to send an updated spreadsheet that includes both boards, commissions and Council liaison appointments with meetings times and dates.

3.3 Development Process Overview.

Community Development Director Thorvig provided the Council with an introduction/reintroduction presentation on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Planning and Zoning Overview and Development Review Process. The importance of the Comprehensive Plan as a guiding, long-term plan was discussed. It was noted Blaine was a growing community which meant the Comprehensive Plan would have to change and be amended over time. The estimated growth through 2040 was reviewed with the Council. The difference between land use and zoning was described.

City Planner Johnson discussed the City's zoning ordinance. She reported the zoning ordinance was the City's law book and assisted with making development decisions on a daily basis. She reported the City has 27 different zoning districts. She discussed the types of applications the Council reviews which included conditional use permits, variances, rezonings, subdivisions, and plats.

Mr. Thorvig explained staff was available as a resource to assist the Council through the review process for development, planning and zoning issues.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if recent census information would factor into Blaine's future population. Mr. Thorvig explained the 2020 census information would be taken into consideration for Blaine's future population numbers. He reported the Metropolitan Council produces annual population estimates based on new housing starts. He reported the City's population at this time was over 67,000. He anticipated the City would reach 80,000 once fully built out.

Councilmember Robertson asked if it was normal for a City to have 27 different zoning districts. Ms. Johnson reported this was fairly typical for cities then commented further on how efficient the City was with its zoning districts.

3.4 COVID-19 Impacts/Other.

Ms. Wolfe updated the Council on MAYC activities noting fitness and other classes were being planned and would commence once executive orders were lifted. She explained another food drive would be held on Thursday, January 28, 2021.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:

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