

CITY OF BLAINE
ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Monday, June 7, 2021

6:00PM
Cloverleaf Farm Room A
10801 Town Square Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 6:02PM.

ROLL CALL

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

Adjunct Member Drew Brown.

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Lori Johnson; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Attorney Chris Nelson; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3.1 Legislative Update.

Cullen Sheehan, Lockridge Grindal Nauen, explained the legislature had an adjournment date of May 17, 2021 and noted a budget agreement was reached in terms of numbers which was \$51.2 billion. He reported the policy details have yet to be determined. He indicated this work should be wrapped up by June 30, 2021 noting discussions would begin at the special legislative session on June 14, 2021. He highlighted the significant spending increases which included supporting federal guidelines for PPP, K-12 education funding, transportation funding, labor and work force development, and housing related items. He noted the Capitol would reopen on June 10, 2021.

Angie Huss, Lockridge Grindal Nauen, discussed the Blaine specific issues being addressed by the legislature. She commented on the two pathways for success for a bonding bill for

Highway 65. She explained this project was still active but there has not been much movement. It was her hope federal funds could be used for the project. It was noted the law enforcement training facility bill had a hearing back in March but was unlikely the project would be included in a bonding bill this year.

Mayor Sanders thanked Ms. Huss and Mr. Sheehan for their detailed report then asked what the city's likelihood would be to receive funding for TH65 and the training facility. Ms. Huss believed it was unlikely the city would receive funding for the training facility. She explained she was really interested to see what would happen with transportation.

3.2 Introduction to the Coon Creek and Rice Creek Watershed Districts.

Water Resources Manager Haug stated watershed districts are local, special-purpose units of government that work to solve and prevent water-related problems. The boundaries of each district follow those of a natural watershed and consist of land in which all water flows to one outlet. The districts are usually named after that watershed. The role of the watershed district was discussed with the council. It was noted the city is divided by the Coon Creek and Rice Creek Watershed Districts and works collaboratively with both districts. Nicholas Tomczik, District Manager for Rice Creek Watershed District and Tim Kelly, District Manager for Coon Creek Watershed District presented an introduction of their respective districts and provided an overview about ways their watershed districts collaborate on projects and permitting.

Tim Kelly, District Manager for Coon Creek Watershed District, provided the council with a presentation on the structure and function of watershed districts. It was noted watershed districts were a special purpose unit of government and operate under six main statutes. These statutes were reviewed in detail with the council. A history of the watershed districts was provided along with state of Minnesota acts and watershed district requirements for municipalities. The water management issues in Blaine were described in further detail, along with how to address impaired waters, as well as rare and endangered species. He explained what separates the watershed district from other agencies and how it addressed the capability of the land and collaborates with the state and local cities. Further discussion ensued regarding the roles of the watershed district when it came to MS4 permits.

Nicholas Tomczik, District Manager for Rice Creek Watershed District, discussed the collaborative efforts between watershed districts and cities. He commented on several of the successes that have occurred between the watershed district and the city of Blaine. He described how wetlands are regulated locally and noted the city's wetland bank was a valuable tool. Further discussion ensued regarding the extensive review process that occurred for watershed permits. A map of the public drainage system was reviewed with the council and it was noted ditches move across municipalities.

Councilmember Hovland discussed the troubles the city has had with JD1, 53, and 62 ditches. He commented on the importance of keeping these waterways free and clear because Blaine was so flat and water needed to flow properly through the ditch system. He asked if a management plan was in place for cleaning the ditches. Mr. Tomczik reported the watershed district was going through all of its ditches systematically in order to properly maintain the system. Mr. Kelly commented on the complexity of water management as the rules become more prescriptive over time.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if watershed districts would be absorbed by BWSR or the Army Corps in the future. Mr. Kelly stated he did not think this would be a wise decision both functionally and operationally.

Mayor Sanders thanked the representatives for their detailed presentations.

3.3 National Sports Center Maintenance Building Demolition Request.

Community Development Director Thorvig stated the National Sports Center (NSC) currently operates a campus maintenance facility within two buildings on 105th Avenue, just west of Invictus Brewing. The facility houses all maintenance operations for the golf course and NSC grounds. The buildings pre-date the NSC and were constructed sometime in the 1960s and are in poor condition. The NSC requested \$5.163 million in the 2020 bonding bill from the State Legislature to construct a new maintenance facility, however only \$3M was received. The NSC is moving forward with plans to construct a new 25,955 square foot maintenance facility with parking on the south end of the Super Rink, attached to the existing ice arena. The project will utilize all of the funds provided leaving no money for demolition of the existing facility. The NSC was creative with the design of the building in order to construct it with the \$3M available. The new maintenance facility is scheduled to be completed in February 2022.

Mr. Thorvig reported the NSC received two bids for demolition with the lowest bid being \$25,384. Given the current financial hardship the NSC has experienced due to COVID impacts and the lack of funding provided by the state, NSC and city staff have discussed whether the EDA could finance the demolition costs. The maintenance facility is adjacent to the 105th Avenue redevelopment area where the EDA has been active in acquiring property and will be completing a future plan for the overall area later in 2021. This plan will include portions of land owned by the NSC and Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) where future development could occur. Removal of the maintenance facility is important in beautifying the general appearance of the corridor and image of Blaine to the millions of annual visitors to the NSC.

Mr. Thorvig explained the land where the maintenance facility is located has fewer encumbrances and could develop in a variety of ways such as additional fields for the NSC, a public/private recreational facility (YMCA, etc.), or private development. Staff would suggest

that if money is provided to assist in demolition, an agreement be negotiated between the EDA and NSC stating that if the property is ever sold or generates revenue for the NSC, the EDA be reimbursed for the demolition costs. The money could be forgivable if the land is developed for NSC use such as fields, etc. If there is consensus for the EDA/City Council to provide money for the demolition, it would require a formal EDA action at which point an agreement would be presented for approval. Staff commented further on the proposed project and asked if the council was interested in having the EDA finance the demolition of the existing maintenance building.

Todd Johnson, Executive Director for the NSC, stated two and a half months ago he was uncertain if the USA Cup would be hosted this year. He noted the two other large youth soccer tournaments in the country had already been canceled for this year. However he was pleased to report Blaine would be hosting the largest youth soccer tournament (725 teams) in the world in 2021. He commented on how important the NSC's partnership was with the city and stated he appreciated the city council considering his request to assist with covering the expense for the maintenance building demolition. He discussed how his staff had worked to reduce costs on the new maintenance building by attaching it to the Super Rink.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she supported the EDA putting forth the funds to remove the blighted maintenance building. She congratulated the NSC for their efforts to host the USA Cup again this year.

Mayor Sanders commented he appreciated the efforts of the NSC and their ingenuity to move this project forward with the funds provided from the state. He indicated he supported the EDA helping with the cost of the demolition. He discussed how the council was working to redevelop this area of Blaine.

Councilmember Robertson asked if a grant could be created through ARP funds to cover the demolition expense. Finance Director Huss stated this may be an option.

Councilmember Robertson reported she understood the value add of the NSC to the city. Blaine then noted she supported the EDA covering the expense of the demolition if ARP funds could not be used. She indicated she appreciated the partnership the city had with the NSC and looked forward to the future redevelopment of this site.

Councilmember Hovland stated he also supported the EDA covering the expense of the existing maintenance building demolition.

Mr. Johnson thanked the council for their support.

Council consensus was to support providing assistance for the maintenance building demolition.

3.4 COVID-19 Impacts/Other/ARP Funds.

City Manager Wolfe stated she had nothing additional to report at this time.

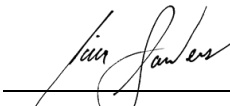
City Clerk Sorensen reported the Parks Advisory Board recently had a resignation and requested direction from council on how to fill this vacancy.

Councilmember Robertson supported staff advertising the position along with contacting past applicants for transparency purposes.

Councilmember Smith, Councilmember Paul and Councilmember Jeppson agreed.

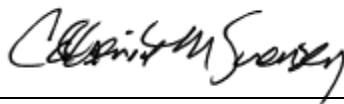
Council directed staff to both advertise and contact past applicants for interest in order to fill the Park Advisory Board vacancy.

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:23PM.



Tim Sanders, Mayor

ATTEST:



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