

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
FEBRUARY 1, 2017**

The workshop meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Fletcher at 5:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Bob Fletcher, Councilmembers: Terry Nyblom, Craig Johnson, Heidi Gunderson, and Greg Urban.

The following members were absent: None.

Also present were: Administrator Kevin Watson, Assistant City Administrator Kathy Keefe, City Engineer Mark Graham, Finance Director Bob Sundberg, Fire Chief Ed Leier, Planning/Community Development Director Nolan Wall, Attorney Caroline Bell Beckman, and Deputy Clerk Beckie Gumatz.

1. Discussion with State Senator Jason Isaacson & State Representative Jamie Becker-Finn

- Senator Isaacson spoke about the bills that he is authoring or co-authoring this session.
- Isaacson noted that he believes there will be a bonding bill this year.
- Isaacson stated that 100% of businesses that have contacted him regarding the Rice Street Bridge/I-694 interchange has been in favor of re-doing the bridge.
- Fletcher stated that he does not believe there is a traffic problem at Rice Street and I-694. Isaacson disagreed.
- Fletcher and Isaacson both voiced opposition to roundabouts.
- Nyblom mentioned that the Vadnais Heights Lions Club does charitable gambling at the Vadnais Inn. If the site is lost, that charitable gambling revenue that is spent in the community will also be lost.
- There was further discussion regarding the proposed Rice Street improvements.
- It was also noted that roundabouts are not pedestrian and bike friendly.
- Fletcher would like to see any land acquisition acquired by the county or the state at the fair market value of the business, and then sold back to the city at the value after it was taken.
- Nyblom asked if the Metropolitan Council will ever become an elected body. Isaacson responded that there are several bills that could change the way they are appointed or make it an elected body.
- Johnson would like to see funding to complete a trail around Vadnais Lake.
- There was further discussion regarding Vadnais Lake and making it more user-friendly for residents.
- Representative Becker-Finn spoke about the bills that she has authored or co-authored thus far.
- She serves on the Public Safety, Veteran Affairs, and Environment committees.
- Vadnais Heights' priorities for the next year were discussed; including land development projects and charitable gambling issues.

2. Comprehensive Plan Update Procedure

- Wall explained that state statute requires communities in the seven-county metro area to update their comprehensive plans every ten years.
- The city's plan has to be updated and sent to the Metropolitan Council for approval by December 31, 2018.

- Staff has solicited proposals from three firms to assist with the process: Bolton & Menk, SHC Consulting, and Landform.
- Staff would like to utilize a consultant to help with the more technical components of the process.
- There is \$40,000 included in the 2017 budget for consulting planning services.
- Gunderson asked who worked on the last update. Watson responded that it was a mix of in-house staff and planning consultants.
- Urban asked how much the city spent on the last update. Sundberg indicated it was double or triple what is being estimated now.
- Johnson would like to conduct interviews.
- Urban and Johnson will interview the two lowest bidders along with Wall and a member of the Planning Commission.

3. Other Staff Items

- Watson noted the city has received a request from a group that would like to host a senior softball tournament in Vadnais Heights. They are asking the city to waive the field rental fees for 2017. Watson is in favor of granting this request. The City Council concurred.
- Watson also outlined a letter regarding the closest-unit dispatch agreement that the city is not currently participating in. It will be put on the city's website.
- There has also been a request from VHEDC to have their 2016 catering fee waived for an event held at the Commons. The City Council had decided to begin waiving this 12% catering fee in 2017.
- Nyblom would like to hire an auditor to verify WBLAHA's compliance with the city code charitable gambling donation requirements.
- Watson does not recommend hiring an auditor.
- Urban asked if the city audits one organization, do we have to audit them all. Then it becomes more expensive.
- Gunderson had concerns with opening up the city to a lawsuit.
- Fletcher would like the item of whether or not to hire an outside auditor brought to the next City Council meeting.

Adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Prepared for and approved by:

Attest:

Kevin Watson, City Administrator

Bob Fletcher, Mayor