

**WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
APRIL 2, 2019**

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

The following members were present: Mayor Heidi Gunderson, Council Members: Craig Johnson, Greg Urban, Patricia Youker and Bob Morse. The following member was absent: None.

Also present were: City Administrator Kevin Watson, Assistant City Administrator Tim Sandvik, Planning/Community Development Director Nolan Wall, Finance Director Bob Sundberg, Fire Chief Ed Leier, Public Works Director Jesse Farrell, City Attorney Caroline Bell Beckman, Deputy City Clerk Peggy Aho and Recreation Supervisor Katie Everett.

Others present were: None.

**1. Organics Collection:**

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik said that some City residents have expressed an interest in organics composting. He reviewed options that may be available to the residents. He said that Ramsey County leads the effort on this type of recycling. Sandvik said that organics make up 25% of waste stream. The State has set a mandate to increase recycling and reduce refuse disposal by 2030.

He said that there are a few different ways of doing organics collection: curbside collections, a single stream technology (not quite there yet), and organic collection sites. He said that some of communities have entered into agreements with haulers for curbside pick-up and a city would typically subsidize the haulers. He noted that Ramsey County is posing this idea right now and there is a chance they would cover the costs of a collection site in the City.

Mayor Gunderson asked how many people do this. She thinks most people would use their own compost sites. Sandvik said that by volume, it has drastically increased, but he doesn't have any numbers for the amount of participants.

City Administrator Watson asked how long the City would be committed to up keeping the infrastructure of a site if the County were to build one in the City. Sandvik said that the City would need to enter into an agreement for a certain amount of time with the County. There would be certain qualifications that would need to be met such as the City providing a lit area, fenced area, etc.

Council Member Morse suggested using Polco to ask the citizens about organics recycling. Gunderson and Council Member Johnson suggested looking at locating the

pick-up site in the back of the parking lot to the South of City Hall. Morse said that he likes the idea of offering this type of service.

Direction to staff was to put the question before the citizens using Polco.

**2. Update on Lift Station Improvements:**

Public Works Director Farrell noted that the lift station in the City has had some issues. He said that just prior to him starting at the City, the Council had authorized the replacement of two pumps that were at the end of their life. In the process of getting one ordered and installed we had one pump running and that one failed which created an emergency. If staff and contractors hadn't replied immediately we would have had sewage in people's basements. Farrell reviewed photos of the lift station area during the emergency.

Farrell discussed the need to have a clear work zone, and a safe area, etc. He said that staff recommend engaging the residents in the process of redoing the lift station. Farrell showed other lift station designs.

Mayor Gunderson asked if there is a street light that could be used to install task lighting. Farrell responded that there is a pole in the area and there is decorative lighting in the area. He said that there is a value to having SEH look at the design because they have professionals on staff that have designed dozens of these lift stations. Farrell noted that he thinks the City should consider putting in a new stainless steel controls box to consolidate the equipment that is at the site.

Has sent out a letter to a dozen of the area houses, he could expand it the notification area if the Council wishes him to. Council Member Urban said he doesn't see any value in hiring SEH for \$24,000 for something that we might be able to do in-house. He thinks that the City could get design build quotes from people in the business that do this every day. Council Member Morse said that this would be his concern also.

Urban said he thinks there is value in putting some sort of surface improvement but does not see a value with hiring SEH. He said he doesn't see why we would change the road on a road that doesn't see much traffic. Farrell said that he has observed a lot of speeding in that area and that the shape of the neighborhood makes it a troublesome spot. City Administrator Watson said that the City does get quite a few calls about speeding traffic in that area. Urban said we need to define what we are going to do here, change traffic or fix the lift station. Farrell replied primarily the lift station operations.

Safety issues were discussed by staff and the Council.

Watson said that SEH's proposed cost is a not-to-exceed amount and we collect sewer funds to make these types of improvements. Urban said we need to spend those funds

wisely and he doesn't see that hiring SEH is wise and, further, that he can't support this agreement. He said that if staff can define the scope better and change the amount being proposed, he might be able to support that. Gunderson said then that Urban's issue with staff's recommendation isn't to spend the funds to improve the site, his issue is with SEH and the cost of their proposal. Gunderson said that she would be curious what Farrell could see as a way to not utilize certain parts of the proposed scope and shave off some of the costs.

Council Member Johnson said he would like to know more about the type of improvements the City just did and how the site may be improved from a safety perspective. This is going to be a costly job, and the neighbors aren't going to like it. His main concern is safety.

Watson suggested that staff circle back and come back with a better idea of what the City's needs are and SEH is proposing and the approach to working with the neighboring properties. Urban said that staff really have to push this on a function thing with the residents. Watson said that staff suggest that this item be pulled from the Council agenda and staff will circle back with updated information. Gunderson agrees with both Johnson and Urban.

**3. Update on Negotiations with VHG:**

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik gave an update on the negotiations with VHG (Waste Management and Republic). He noted that the current contract ends in July 2019. Sandvik gave an overview of the current agreement and a quick overview of the status of the negotiations. Sandvik noted that he has sent out a response to VHG's proposal last week.

**4. Other Staff Items:**

City Administrator Watson talked about the Garceau Corner Task Force and how the plan is to draw names from a bucket to determine which residents will be on the Task Force. Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed a map showing the areas of the City where the residents interested in being on the Task Force live. Mayor Gunderson thanked staff for their work on putting together the Task Force.

Watson noted that the Goals Session with Council Members and Departments Heads has been scheduled for April 22 from 4 to 8 p.m. Watson handed out copies of the last strategic plan done by the City and a copy of Phil Kern's report he did for Columbia Heights.

Watson said that the City has gone live on Polco, with its first question, "Which movie should be played at Movie in the Park?" The link to Polco to answer the question will be promoted at the Waffle Breakfast and the Northeast Metro Expo occurring this weekend. Watson said that it will also be promoted on social media.

Public Works Director Farrell noted two CIP items. One is to replace the 2004 Chevy truck/with plow, with a Ford F350 with a plow, and replace the 1999 Chev 3500 truck with a F450 with a dump body. He said that staff are purchasing a new roller and an EZ tilt trailer.

Mayor Gunderson asked if July 2, 2019 is a scheduled Council meeting date and if so, if the Council can have action to cancel it at a future meeting. Watson said that he would look into this.

**5. Future City Council Requests: None.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kevin Watson, City Administrator