

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
MAY 1, 2018**

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 6:00 p.m.

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

Also present were: Acting City Administrator Kathy Keefe, City Engineer Mark Graham, Planning/Community Development Director Nolan Wall, City Attorney Caroline Bell Beckman, and Fire Chief Ed Leier.

Others present were: Ann Lenczewski, Lobbyist, Jerry Moynagh, resident and Ling Becker, VHEDC Executive Director.

1. Request from Runbeck to Support HF 4003 and SF 3573 Bills

Acting City Administrator Keefe introduced the topic regarding Senator Chamberlin and Representative Runbeck's request that the City support HF 4003 and SF 3573 regarding impacted cities of the DNR Judgement and White Bear Lake. City's State Lobbyist, Ann Lenczewski, said that the City needs to decide if they will support the Runbeck/Chamberlain legislation. She said that the legislation has changed a little since the Council reviewed it in March. It is alive in both bodies of the Legislature. Mayor Fletcher said that he has a sense that at this late time during the legislative process, the bill is going to pass. The Council discussed whether to pass a resolution of support or simply submit a letter. Fletcher said that he believes the majority around the table would say that we are not a major factor in the usage of water from the lake and that we don't want water restrictions. Councilmember Urban said we should support both bills. Councilmember Gunderson said that she would support the bills. Lenczewski read the proposed bills. Urban asked when the appeal might be heard. Lenczewski said that she doesn't know and that it could take a number of years. Fletcher asked if the Council wants to pass a resolution of support or submit a letter. Gunderson said that she thinks the Council should submit a letter. Nyblom and Urban responded that they were okay with either. Fletcher said that if he is going to sign the letter he insists that it should include the fact that the City of Vadnais Heights feels it is being treated in an arbitrary manor because science shows that our wells are not major contributors to the problem. Keefe asked what the deadline is for a letter to be sent out. Lenczewski suggested emailing her with what the Council decides. This item was added to the May 1, 2018 Regular Council agenda.

2. 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update: Water Resources and Implementation Elements

Planning/Community Development Director Wall gave an overview of the last two elements of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan: Water Resources and Implementation Elements. He noted that these components were reviewed by the Planning Commission. He is hoping that the Planning Commission would be able to act on these on May 22 and then the Council could have a public hearing and take action on it at one of their meetings in June. He said that, once approved by the Council, the Plan will be sent out to local jurisdictions for their review. City Engineer Graham gave an overview of what was discussed at the Planning Commission meeting regarding storm sewer, water main and sanitary sewer systems.

Councilmember Nyblom questioned adopting its policy and standards with the climate change trends currently occurring. Graham said that the climate change trend has been that we tend to get more intense rainfalls over the past 10-20 years. The new design standards are called Atlas 14.

Nyblom suggested adding into the surface water plan that the City intends to reduce the amount of salt from what it currently uses. Graham said that for purposes of the Comprehensive Plan we wouldn't include this type of information. Mayor Fletcher suggested inserting a bullet point about reducing the City's salt use. Nyblom asked where policy on salt usage would be put if not in the Comprehensive Plan. Councilmember Urban asked if Nyblom thinks the City's salt usage is too high. Gunderson asked if there were any solutions proposed for lowering the salt usage. Nyblom responded no, everyone is aware of the problem, but nobody is talking about a way to reduce the use. Urban said that an alternative could be sand, but that then fills up the ditches and makes more of a mess for the City to clean-up. Urban said that he's not sure if the problem can be fixed it. Urban said he prefers to drive on roads without ice, which requires salt. Nyblom said that he believes it should be in the City's water plan. Fletcher suggested that a bullet point stating that the City plans to attempt to use less salt should be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

Wall proceeded to reviewing the remaining elements of the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that he has compiled all of the policies within each element and put a timeline to show whether it is long-term, short-term or on-going. This is not new information, but he would like comments relating to a timeline. He said that there will be a public hearing and then this will come back to the Council at a meeting in June. He said that there was an open house last week. He thinks the lack of attendance at the Open House, may have been because we have engaged everyone that wanted to provide comment.

Fletcher said he is not a fan of regulation on water usage. He said that long-term, if the City goes down the path of water regulation, does the plan anticipate any new emerging technology that will help with the monitoring of water usage. Graham responded that this cannot be done with the City's current water meter system. Fletcher said that as time

leads to more water issues throughout the world, the issue of usage at the city level will be brought up. Graham noted that the technology the City has in place today does not allow us to do what will be needed in the future. There are cities that have technology that monitor weekly and daily usage. The State may eventually want all cities to have this ability. Fletcher asked if the water system that staff will be proposing will allow the City to make some assumptions on water usage. Graham responded yes, and that if there was a water sprinkling ban on, the City would be able to see how much water a certain property has used. He said that the water meters of today and tomorrow have that ability. Fletcher asked if the cost for the wireless meters that transmit the water usage would be about \$1 million. Graham replied that the new meters would transfer data to the City and that a user could monitor it as well. Graham noted that the DNR is seeking better usage information about water usage such that it might be monthly or daily.

Fletcher asked if the City currently charges more for high-end water users. Graham replied yes, that is one of our conservation methods, the more you use the more you pay. There is a base rate and then it ramps up based on volume used. Fletcher said that for those that will be here when the lawsuit gets settled, tools to help figure out how to impose restrictions will be critical to get buy-in from the community.

Urban said that with regards to the meters and getting information on a daily basis, could that be a privacy issue? Graham said that the City could monitor if a home is using more than it normally uses and then notify them. He said that he believes that whether a city wants to or not, that is the sort of reporting that will be expected of cities.

Gunderson asked if there may be any possibility of liability to a city if a city did not notify someone if the city noticed increased water usage.

Fletcher said that the reality is a sprinkling ban isn't going to work because people put out soaker hoses. If in the future more water regulation is required, it is going to take more technology than the City has in place. Graham said that the way the DNR used the statistics the City provided is different than how they've used it in the past. He also said that residents request water usage information. Graham said this is another reason to replace our water meter system and technology.

3. Public Hearing Guidelines

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that a workshop was held with the City's Attorney's Office and the Planning Commission. At that workshop, they discussed Chapter 6 of the Zoning Code which deals with administration and largely eliminated public hearings being held in front of the City Council. At the workshop, they discussed what the guidelines for public hearings should be and what the public should be made aware of at a public hearing. Wall noted that he had a conversation with the Planning Commission regarding establishing public hearing guidelines that the Commission Chair would read before opening a public hearing. He said that these are the guidelines the Planning Commission came up for the Council to discuss and decide if it

wants to put these guidelines in place. He also asked if the Council sees any value in this proposal and if it wishes to do this. He said that a lot of people have never come to a public hearing and they don't know what the guidelines / rules are. Sometimes there is emotion involved, and we want people to have information so that they feel comfortable with taking part at a public hearing. Wall said that this is for discussion at the Workshop and that it will then be on the Consent Agenda for Council to adopt or it can be another series of discussions and kicked back to the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Gunderson asked if the intent is that this would be read prior to a public hearing. Wall responded yes, and that the Commission Chair or Mayor would read it. Mayor Fletcher asked what the purpose is of the new language being read. Wall said that the purpose of this is to inform people that are unaware of what a public hearing entails and the process of a public hearing. It is something that the Planning Commission raised as a concern about having guidelines in place that ensure due process is followed. Fletcher questioned is this just proposed for land use public hearings or others as well. Wall responded that it would only be for land use public hearings. He said this is something that the Planning Commission thought would have value and that they would like the Council's thoughts. Fletcher said that the City will follow the leadership of the Planning Commission liaison. Councilmember Urban said that he doesn't think we have an issue. Councilmember Gunderson said that it seems redundant. Mayor Fletcher proposed that these be called the Public Hearing Guidelines for the Planning Commission and leave the Council off of it. Wall said he doesn't think you'd want a different process playing out at a City Council public hearing and or Planning Commission public hearing, and further said that he thinks only planned unit developments are the only time he could think that there would be two public hearings. Gunderson said it is good to have guidelines for something that is contentious but we need to be consistent, but by saying the guidelines could be amended by the Commission Chair or the Mayor would be good enough and that we wouldn't have to read it each time. Fletcher said that he doesn't see the need for this. City Attorney Bell Beckman said that if you like the general policy, okay, but that you might not feel obligated to read it unless something came up that required it to be read or if things look like they were getting out of hand. Fletcher proposed that these guidelines may be modified as necessary by the Commission Chair or Mayor.

Wall said that he has this item as a housekeeping item and then the Mayor's final point regarding some revised language. This is on the consent agenda and if it is the desire of the Council this will go back to the Commission with the revised language.

4. Cancel Workshop and Regular Council Meetings Scheduled for July 3, 2018

Acting City Administrator Keefe noted that the first meeting scheduled in July is set for the day before the July 4th holiday and staff are wondering if the Council would prefer to cancel the meeting on the 3rd of July. Mayor Fletcher said that it would be his preference to cancel the meeting. Councilmembers Gunderson and Urban agreed.

Fletcher asked if the Council needs to meet on June 5th. Keefe said she would have to ask Planning/Community Development Director Wall if he has items that need action by the Council in June. Wall said that there are many planning cases in the queue for this month that would not be impacted, they could be pushed out a couple weeks.

Fletcher asked if Councilmembers know of times they will not be able to attend a meeting this summer because of a planned time-off. Keefe suggested that if a Councilmember has a conflict with a Council meeting, they should email the Deputy City Clerk, Peggy Aho, with any foreseen conflicts.

Wall noted that the Comprehensive Plan public hearing is either going to be June 5 or June 19. We prefer June 5th. Gunderson said that August 7th is Night to Unite. Keefe noted that the August 7th meeting has been changed to Wednesday, August 8, and is on the Council's calendars.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.