WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
SEPTEMBER 17, 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: Patricia Youker, Greg Urban, Craig Johnson 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, Public Works Director Jesse Farrell, Finance Director Bob Sundberg, Fire Chief Ed Leier, City Attorney, Caroline Bell Beckman and Deputy City Clerk Peggy Aho.

Others present: Ryan Ries, Ramsey County.

1. Update on Vadnais Sports Dome Replacement
   Ryan Ries, Ramsey County Facilities & Sustainability Director, gave an overview of the preliminary plans for a new indoor turf facility to replace the former sports dome which collapsed in a spring blizzard in 2018. He said that the Ramsey County Board explored many options and that community input was loud and clear that there was a need for an indoor turf facility. In January 2019, the Ramsey County Board gave staff direction to proceed with building a permanent structure. In July, the County signed an agreement with a contract for design-build services. Ries reviewed the concept drawings. He said that the structure will be an engineered metal building (roof and walls) and the height will be about 45 feet to the peak. This is shorter than the old dome but would still accommodate most sports. The proposed footprint of the building will be reduced by about 20% and will add an additional 50 parking spaces. He said that the County is still refining the design and getting cost estimates with the goal of having the design and budget figured out by December/January so that construction may begin in the spring.

   Council Member Urban asked what percentage of the time was the old dome rented out for softball. Ries replied that he does not know, but that it will no longer accommodate softball.

   Planning/Community Development Director Wall said that the construction of the new structure will require a PUD Amendment.

2. Discussion of Proposed Ordinance No. 734 – Subdivision Ordinance Amendments
   Planning/Community Development Director Wall gave an overview of the proposed Ordinance 734: Actions for the Council include: 1) adopt Ordinance 734 concerning certain amendments to the Subdivision Chapter; and 2) approve a resolution for Summary Publication of the Ordinance. Wall noted that this amendment is before the Council as a
result of feedback from residents and the Council. The proposed amendments are intended to bring this chapter of the Code into a similar format as the zoning sections, update language to be consistent with State Statutes and streamline the review process for certain requests. He said that the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission reviewed the materials at their September meeting, and the Planning Commission discussed it at their July and August meetings and held a public hearing.

Wall said that the Planning Commission recommends that the Council approve the Ordinance Amendment as proposed, and that the Parks Trails and Recreation Commission had two minor changes.

He noted that if this item is acceptable to the Council, it will be considered for approval at tonight’s City Council meeting.

Council Member Urban said that it appears that the only thing changing is when it comes to changing lot lines or surveying errors and that he would like to see it go further. He said that if someone has an acre lot that could be two buildable lots, why run them through hearings if there is no reason to deny someone. Wall said that the main reason is to allow the public the opportunity to provide input.

Mayor Gunderson said she is all in favor of streamlining the process and Council Member Morse said he is too. The Council agreed to have this on the Council’s meeting agenda for approval.

3. **Proclamation Policy**

   City Administrator Watson noted that a few months back some Council Members inquired about the City’s policy on issuing Proclamations. Watson proposed the following criteria, if the Council is interested in developing a formal policy: a Proclamation would be considered if it supports the general operations of the City and its staff; supports a business or organization that is based or operates within the City, or supports a resident or general supporter of the City who has done great service to our community at large.

   Mayor Gunderson said that she thinks this is a good approach and that the City should have a guideline in place. Watson will work with the City Attorney to get a formal resolution drafted and bring it back to the Council for consideration.

4. **Discussion of the City’s Meter Reading Non-Attainable Fee**

   Public Works Director Farrell stated that the water meter replacement is about 99% complete. One item that has come to his attention is the non-readable meter fees and how they impact property owners. He said that despite the contractor’s aggressive correspondence campaign about the water meter replacements, there are 100 properties that haven’t had the replacements completed. Farrell noted that the upcoming billing will be the first time the fees will go into effect. The fees for non-readable meters will be
$45.00 for the first quarter and $275 for the second quarter. Farrell said he is looking for guidance on what the City wants to do regarding these charges.

Mayor Gunderson said that she is in favor of flexibility by the City if mistakes happened when trying to contact the residents. Council Member Urban said that he thinks there should be one last effort to contact folks. Council Member Johnson suggested sending a letter to those that have not had the new meters installed telling them that the fee will be $45 this quarter and $90 the next quarter. Farrell noted that setting the second quarter non-readable fee at $90 would require the City to adopt a new fee schedule. The discussed is currently adopted.

Farrell asked if staff should send out the third quarter bills with the $45 fee included for those that aren’t readable. Urban suggested leaving it as is and give staff flexibility to work with residents. Council Member Morse said that it seems like there is more that the City could do to reach out to the ones that have not had their meters replaced. Farrell said that he could send out a letter to the last 100 to say that he has discussed this with the Council and tell the residents that, if they contact the City to schedule the installation within 30 days, the City would waive the non-readable meter fee.

Farrell also asked for feedback from the Council regarding the small number of properties that do not wish to have the new meters installed because of health issues. Gunderson said this could be addressed when there are fewer meters that haven’t been replaced.

5. Staff Updates

City Administrator Watson noted that the Council should have received a copy of an email from Tim Finnerty from the Cable Commission with the Commission’s proposal ($4,300 per month) to the City for the remainder of the year. Watson said that he needs to talk with the City Attorney before responding. He said that he is looking for direction from the Council to work with the Attorney about the interpretation of the JPA and work with the Mayor and the Commission to finalize negotiations and then bring something back for Council consideration at the October 1st meeting.

Fire Chief Leier noted that some of the prairie grass areas around the statue and the back of the building need to be burned off and reseeded. The Fire Department will be doing a controlled burn sometime this year.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Watson, City Administrator