The meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Gunderson at 7:03 p.m.

Everyone present stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Heidi Gunderson, Council Members: Craig Johnson, Patricia Youker, Bob Morse and Greg Urban.

The following members were absent: None.

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

City Administrator Watson provided several announcements.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Johnson, seconded by Morse, it was

19-10-245  “RESOLVED that the October 1, 2019 Regular Meeting Agenda be approved as presented.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 17, 2019 Regular Workshop Meeting

Upon motion by Morse, seconded by Youker, it was

19-10-246  “RESOLVED, to approve the September 17, 2019 Regular Workshop Meeting Minutes, as presented.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.
B. Amended September 3, 2019 Regular Workshop Meeting

Upon motion by Johnson, seconded by Urban, it was

19-10-247 “RESOLVED, to approve the amended September 3, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

C. September 17, 2019 Regular Council Meeting

Upon motion by Morse, seconded by Youker, it was

19-10-248 “RESOLVED, to approve the September 17, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Youker, seconded by Johnson, it was

19-10-249 “RESOLVED, that the Consent Agenda Items #7A-7D for the October 1, 2019 meeting be approved as follows:

A. Approve Claims #78302 Through #78364 and Electronic Claims #1417 Through #1421 for Payment
B. Approve Certification of Delinquent Utility Accounts
C. Approve Certification of Delinquent Fire Billings
D. Consider Extension of Introductory Period – Fure.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Gunderson opened the floor to the public at 7:05 p.m. There being none. Gunderson closed it at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENTATION(S)

A. Housing Improvement Programs Presentation

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that this item comes before the Council as a result of the 2019-2020 Work Plan the Council adopted earlier this year. The goal of the City Council is to maintain or increase housing values through a Housing
Preservation Plan. The Council could consider subsidizing home improvements; analyzing existing programs via other agencies; considering proactive code enforcement; and analyzing existing property maintenance violations. Wall noted that the Council began discussing a rehabilitation plan in 2014 for single family homes.

Wall noted that it is the goal of the City, through its 2040 Comprehensive Plan, to: promote a balanced housing supply with housing available for people at all income levels; promote a variety of housing types for people in all stages of the life-cycle; build a community of well-maintained housing and neighborhoods, including ownership and rental housing; create housing that respects the natural environment of the community while striving to accommodate the need for a variety of housing types and costs; advocating for a high proportion of upper-cost, owner-occupied housing units on the remaining undeveloped or redeveloped low-medium density residential sites; partner with residents and organizations to provide housing assistance and cost-burden relieving opportunities; and work with regional governmental agencies to ensure efficient and cohesive design. Reviewed and updated the housing strategies/policies within the comp plan; reviewed and inventoried city-wide housing conditions, etc.

Wall said that maintained and updated housing stock matters because it keeps the City competitive with the draw of new homes in growing suburbs and the urban core renewal, it increases home values, increases residential tax base, promotes life-cycle housing, and encourages additional investment in neighborhoods. Wall reviewed the history of housing and housing values in the City. The City was largely developed between 1980 and 1989. Of the 5,621 housing units in the City, 4,636 were built post 1970.

Wall then reviewed existing residential improvement programs with the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Center for Energy and Environment and Ramsey County. He said that local communities offer a range of community programs including rebates, grant or low interest loans.

Wall said that the next steps would be to: study existing programs provided by other organizations; increase promotion and education opportunities for existing programs; identifying and analyzing potential funding sources for additional programs; reviewing and amending existing property maintenance regulations; discussing additional code enforcement efforts; and developing a Housing Preservation Policy Plan to implement.

Council Member Johnson said that he does not like the idea of forcing people to work on their homes, but certainly learning what Code is and what isn’t is good. He said he is not in favor of having a code enforcement officer but would be in favor of contracting with an outside entity. Wall said that the City really needs to look at its Code and see if staff need to work on Code and should it be more restrictive and that it should not be subjective.

Council Member Morse said we talked about stuff during the goal session planning and talked about categories of homes and that a lot of properties are rentals and some landlords may not maintain their homes like a homeowner might. Have we set any policy...
to identify what the regulations states and inject some common sense into it. He said that volunteer work crews may be able to help some seniors stay in their homes by working on updating them.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 2019 Annual MS4 Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP):
Jesse Farrell, Public Works Director, introduced Emily Erdahl, SEH, and the requirement of being an MS4. Erdahl gave an overview of the NPDES MSW 4 program background, status of compliance of the 2018 reporting year, 2018/2019 program highlights, and take a look forward on the permit process. Lastly, she will take comments or questions from the Council.

Erdahl noted that the MPCA has issued pre-draft permit language. This was not a formal draft language, they intend to reissue the permit in the fall of this year. However, they have received a lot of feedback and they are sorting through the feedback now and that is why the permit has not been issued this fall. She said that the draft language should be out in the near future.

Erdahl noted that the whole MS4 program part of the MPDS program which was established with the Clean Water Act. The program is a federal program but is administered by the MPCA. The City is a small MS4 and is required to have a SWPPP and within the SWPPP there are minimum control measures, best practices and goals. The MS4 stands for Municipal Storm Sewer System.

On June 27, 2019, the City submitted the report for 2018. There were no red flags and is important information to the MPCA. The City was audited in 2017 and it went very well. Inventory is required. The City should be prepared for another audit in the near future as audit cycle is completed.

Council Member Johnson said that Erdahl had mentioned that if the City was to remove a street there may be additional storm water work needed. He asked Erdahl to explain what that might mean. Erdahl noted that any the redevelopment would be a defined term, if you don’t get into the subgrade you may be exempt from additional storm water work, however, if there is utility replacement as part of a project, then the City may need to treat .55 inches.

Johnson said that Erdahl also mentioned elicit discharge and would this be residents or businesses. Erdahl said that cities are required to identify sites of illicit discharges and that often times they are businesses not residential.

Mayor Gunderson said that Erdahl talked about the timeline to the permit process and it appears that it’s going into next year. She said that it seems like a long process and asked if the City should be talking about budgeting monies of potential needs to meet permit requirements in 2021. Erdahl said that she thinks things would need to be done in 2020, but unfortunately not a lot of information is being shared at this time.
Mayor Gunderson opened the Public Hearing at 7:58 p.m. There being none, Gunderson closed the Public Hearing at 7:58 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

A. **Consider Approval of Variances at 4001 McMenemy Street:**
Planning/Community Development Director Wall introduced the item which is being recommended to the Council by the Planning Commission based on findings of fact. Wall noted that the applicant is requesting variances from the applicable front and side yard setback standards in order to construct a 484 SF garage addition onto the front of an existing single-family dwelling in the R-1 District.

Wall noted that the property contains an existing single-family residential dwelling with an attached garage constructed in 1980. Upon review of the survey and plans for the proposed addition, staff determined the proposed addition was not compliant with the R-1 District’s applicable front and side yard setback standards and the necessary variances were required to facilitate approval of the proposed project. Wall stated that the Planning Commission is unanimously recommending approval of the requests.

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Morse, it was

19-10-250 “RESOLVED, that the City Council approves the various requests as proposed in Case 19-017 based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed garage addition to the existing single-family residential dwelling is a reasonable use of the subject property and compliant with the Comprehensive Plan;
2. The block in question has existing dwellings with inconsistent front yard setbacks and the proposed addition to the existing dwelling on the subject property will be set-back further than the immediately adjacent dwellings from McMenemy Street;
3. Construction of the proposed addition consistent with the existing encroachment into the required side yard setback area is reasonable;
4. The existing condition of the subject property and the existing front yard setbacks on the block present unique circumstances that create practical difficulties for the proposed addition to comply with the applicable setback standards; and
5. The proposed garage addition will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

And also RESOLVED that the City Council approves the variance requests as proposed in Case 19-017 with the following conditions:
1. The applicant shall submit a Building Permit for review and approval by the Engineering and Community Development Departments, prior to commencement of any construction activities on the subject property; and
2. The applicant shall commence construction activities within one year from the date the variances are granted by the City Council, and the approval granted shall be null and voided unless an extension is granted by the City Council in compliance with the applicable City Code requirements and procedures.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. Consider approval of a Policy on Issuing Proclamations:
City Administrator Watson stated that he has worked with the City Attorney to develop language that would work as a policy for the City to issue proclamations. He reviewed the recommendation language which states that it would be appropriate for the Council to issue a proclamation if the effort supports the general operation of the City and/or its staff; supports local businesses based in Vadnais Heights; supports organizations that are based in or operate in Vadnais Heights; or supports residents or individuals whose personal achievements are noteworthy and/or supports the mission of the City.

Upon motion by Youker, seconded by Johnson, it was

19-10-251 “RESOLVED, that the City Council will consider proclamations that recognize City events, persons, or entities that support public health, safety, and welfare in the City, or that support local events, organizations and public services of its citizens.”

Ayes – 5  Nays - 0

The resolution was adopted.

C. Consider a Contract with North Suburban Access Corporation:
City Administrator Watson reviewed the action before the Council to contract for webcasting services with North Suburban Access Corporation. He noted that the City recently entered into a new franchise agreement with Comcast. In addition to that transition, the City will need to cablecast and webcast itself to maintain service levels to the City residents. Staff believe, after researching different options, that staff are capable of managing the cable casting and the bill boarding. This will require new hardware that staff are currently receiving quotes for. In addition to the new equipment, staff are recommending contracting with NSAC for webcasting services. This is essentially the service that allows residents to live stream and replay old Council meetings online through their system.

Upon motion by Johnson, seconded by Urban, it was
“RESOLVED, that the City Council authorize the City Administrator to sign the proposed contract with North Suburban Access Corporation to provide services related to broadcasting Channel 16, as recommended.”

Ayes – 5  Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. Consider Setting Tuesday, October 15, 2019 Workshop and Agenda:
City Administrator Watson noted that the next Council Workshop will be held on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 and the agenda may include an update from staff on the Commons; a presentation by Dr. Karmierczak and Tim Wald regarding the White Bear Lake School’s referendum; and continued discussion of the 2020 budget.

COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Director Farrell reported that staff are doing hydrant flushing north of County Road F and the week of October 7th they will be doing south of County Road F. If you notice discoloration, run your water in the lowest level until it runs clear. Farrell also asked that residents make sure that the gutters near their homes are clear of leaves and debris.

Council Member Johnson noted that he attended a SWOT analysis of the Garceau Project this week. The Task Force will continue to narrow down the options at their October 16th meeting.

Mayor Gunderson noted that she had attended a NYFS Board meeting and said that the Board’s Taste of Northeast is being held on October 10th at the Commons. Tickets are still available.

There being no further business, Council Member Johnson made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.