

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
JANUARY 17, 2023**

The meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Krachmer at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Mike Krachmer and Council Members Steve Rogers, Erik Goebel, Kelly Jozwowski, and Katherine Doll Kanne.

The following Council members were absent: None.

Also present were: Kevin Watson, City Administrator; Kaylin Clement, Assistant City Administrator; Jesse Farrell, City Engineer/Public Works Director; Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director; Chris Hearnden, Fire Chief; Bob Sundberg, Finance Director; Peggy Aho, Deputy Clerk; and Caroline Beckman, City Attorney.

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Administrator Watson provided several announcements.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Rogers, it was

#23-01-010 “RESOLVED that the January 17, 2023 Regular Meeting Agenda be approved as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 3, 2023 Regular Workshop Meeting

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Rogers, it was

#23-01-011 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the January 3, 2023 Regular Workshop Meeting minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. January 3, 2023 Regular Council Meeting

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Jozwowski, it was

#23-01-012 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the January 3, 2023 Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Doll Kanne, it was

#23-01-013 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves Consent Agenda Items #7A through #7F for the January 17, 2023 meeting as amended as follows:

A. Consider Approving Claims #83069 Through #83133 and Electronic Claims #1841 Through #1846 for Payment

1. US Bank payment in the amount of \$5,669.37

B. Consider Appointment of Part-Time Introductory Firefighters, Conrad Cordova, Jordan Sadowski and Evan Young to Part-Time Regular Firefighter Status

C. Consider Accepting Deputy Clerk, Peggy Aho’s Resignation

D. Consider Setting Mayor and Council Members’ Pay

E. Consider Setting the 2023 Meeting Calendar

F. Consider Approving Submittal of the 2023 Pay Equity Report.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Krachmer opened the meeting to the public at 7:06 p.m.

The following people spoke:

Craig Johnson, 472 Springhill Road, asked the Council to consider tabling any action regarding the Gold Leaf program until someone that is currently participating in the program could attend a Council meeting to give an overview of the program.

Patty Bradway, 431 Springhill Road, spoke about the Green Steps program and also about an email she had recently received from the City regarding vendors at the Makers Market during Heritage Days. She said that the letter stated that political based booths no longer qualify to be a vendor. She asked why the change to not allow informational booths at the event.

Judy Lissick, 4276 Greenhaven Ct, spoke about the Gold Leaf and Green Steps programs.

Craig Conrad, 4305 Jay Circle, made a couple comments about the environmental movement. Said he would like to see the Council watch over our community, make sure we keep the public safe, maintain our streets and lower taxes.

Barbara Clark, 73 Marin Way, spoke about the urgency of being climate resilient.

There being no one that else that wished to speak, Krachmer closed the meeting to the public at 7:20 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

A. County Road E Corridor Action Plan

Planning/Community Development Director Wall introduced Joy Erickson and Gretchen Nicholls. Wall noted that the County Road E Corridor Action Plan was a pilot program funded by Ramsey County and required matching contributions from the three cities involved: Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake and White Bear Lake. Wall said staff will be asking for preliminary direction from the Council about next steps.

Gretchen Nicholls, LISC Twin Cities consultant, worked on a community engagement process to envision what might be possible for the corridor to make it a more vital and coordinated corridor. Nicholls reviewed the goals, and action plan recommendations for near-term and mid to longer term strategies.

Joy Erickson, Edina Realty and White Bear Lake Chamber of Commerce and County Road E Community Advisory Group Member, gave an overview of her experience in the corridor. Erickson gave an overview of the project including goals and objectives, community engagement, etc.

Council Member Rogers said this process was well run and that he is excited about what could be.

Council Member Kanne echoed what Rogers said, and said she is excited about making it a more walkable corridor which may mean re-envisioning the intersection at Hwy 61 and County Road E so that people could feel like they can walk across it.

Nicholls said that the next steps are to move forward with the other two cities. She will be presenting to Gem Lake on February 21 and has already presented to White Bear Lake.

Council Member Goebel asked about the properties along the corridor that were included in the studies which are almost all privately owned and how do we use this study to influence the private property owners in developing the properties.

Nicholls replied that a developer likes when a city figures out what they want. This process is used to show developers what a city envisions.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consider Accepting the Proposal from SEH, Inc. for Design and Bidding Services for the proposed Koehler Road Trail Project

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell introduced the item before the Council. He noted that staff have been in discussions about the trail for many years. Staff and past City Councils have received feedback regarding the community's wish for a trail along that corridor. Farrell noted that the City created a Koehler Road Trail Task Force to discuss a plan. Staff were directed to apply for grants and after three tries, the City is eligible for up to a \$500,000 grant. Now the City and County will enter into a cooperative agreement and the County is willing to split costs not covered by the grant. Estimate about \$200,000 for each entities share.

The City has asked SEH to design the project.

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Kanne, it was

#23-01-014 "RESOLVED, that the Council authorizes the City Administrator to sign the proposal from SEH, Inc. for design and bidding services for the proposed Koehler Road Trail Improvements on an hourly basis with a maximum fee of \$199,700, which includes reimbursable expenses."

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. Gold Leaf Pilot Program Resolution for Participation

Assistant City Administrator Clement introduced the item which was discussed at the January 3rd Workshop where staff were directed to begin the process of entering the Gold Leaf Pilot Program. Clement said that the Council needs to decide if they approve today's resolution and, if so, staff will begin working on a plan. She said she can have someone from Green Step at a future meeting.

Council Member Kanne noted that this is a pilot program and specifically for this program there is no one to get feedback from on how it has worked. She said that she did research the program while she was running for Council.

Council Member Rogers said it is important to him that we need know and how we are going to achieve goals of the program, and that the City has the resources to do it and also be cognizant of staff time. Rogers said that we need to make sure the residents know what we are going to do, how we are going to achieve it, how we will meet the timeline, and what the result of the program is.

Council Member Goebel said that by signing up for the Gold Leaf Program we are simply expressing that we care about sustainability, resiliency, and efficiency. If we do one of the 44 things we may find benefit from them.

Upon motion by Kanne, seconded by Jozwowski, it was

#23-01-015 “RESOLVED, that the Council hereby authorizes Vadnais Heights to participate in the pilot Gold Leaf program of the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program that offers a free, voluntary continuous improvement local climate action framework and that the Council further appoints the City Administrator or his designee to serve as the City’s pilot Gold Leaf program coordinator.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

C. Consider Appointing Abdo to Provide Auditing Services and Hildi Inc. to Provide an Actuarial Valuation

Finance Director Sundberg noted that the State requires the City to annually conduct an audit. The City has been working with Abdo for quite a few years. Every two years, an actuary evaluation is also required.

Upon motion by Rogers, seconded by Goebel, it was

#23-01-016 “RESOLVED, that the Council hereby appoints ABDO to provide auditing services and Hildi, Inc. to provide actuarial evaluation services for 2023.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

D. Consultant Annual Agreement with SEH, Inc. and Approval of 2023 Hourly Billing Rates

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell noted that the City has been working with SEH for many years, which is located in the City. He introduced SEH staff Scott Haupt and Heather Cunningham. Farrell noted that with the approval of the agreement there is also a 3.5% increase to their hourly rate.

Upon motion by Jozwowski, seconded by Goebel, it was

#23-01-017 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the Annual Agreement with SEH, Inc. and approval of the 2023 Hourly Billing Rates.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

E. Twin Lakes Cooperative and Maintenance Agreement:

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell said that this item is the next step in a number of steps as the City moves forward on the Twin Lakes project. He said that before the Council for consideration is a resolution accepting Cooperative and Maintenance Agreements with Little Canada. He said that the City did get approval to share in the grant that Little Canada has received.

Council Member Kanne asked if this is written in a way that we are not obligated to do the trail if we don't qualify for a grant. Farrell responded, yes, but there is some work that we would need to do before grant approval, such as tree removal prior to receipt of a grant.

Upon motion by Rogers, seconded by Goebel, it was

#23-01-018 “RESOLVED, that the Council adopts the prepared Resolution accepting the Twin Lake Boulevard Cooperative and Maintenance Agreement with Little Canada.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

F. Twin Lake Boulevard – No Parking Restrictions

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell noted that Twin Lake Boulevard is a state-aid highway street which means that the City can use state-aid funds for it, and a road of that size cannot safely accommodate on street parking so staff are recommending that the City establish parking restrictions.

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Jozwowski, it was

#23-01-019 “RESOLVED, that the Council adopts the prepared Resolution establishing parking restrictions on Twin Lake Boulevard in accordance with Minnesota State-Aid regulations.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

G. 2025 Proposed County Road D Improvements Project

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell noted that this is a project that would be done in 2025 on County Road D, and the City shares that facility with the cities of Little Canada and Maplewood. Farrell said that in 2020, Ramsey County, Little Canada and Vadnais Heights had a shared project where they took County Road D from a rural

section and fully reconstructed it. Each City made investments to the water and utility services and added a trail.

In 2020, the County and City did the first portion of this road and they are not planning on doing a feasibility report and Bolton & Menk have been hired by the County to do the study.

Upon motion by Rogers, seconded by Goebel, it was

#23-01-020 “RESOLVED, that the Council authorizes the City Administrator to sign the proposal from Bolton & Menk, Inc. for preparation of a Feasibility Report for the 2025 County Road D Improvement Project.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

- H. 2023 Street Improvement Project – Setting the Assessment Rates, Accepting the Feasibility Report, and Setting the Public Hearing and Assessment Hearing for Improvement 2023-1 on February 21, 2023 and Ordering the Plans and Specifications
City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell explained the item before the Council. He introduced Scott Haupt and Heather Cunningham, SEH, who gave a presentation on the 2023 Street Improvement Project.

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Jozwowski, it was

#23-01-021 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves a resolution setting the assessment rates, accepting the Feasibility Report, and setting the Public Hearing and Assessment Hearing for Improvement 2023-1 on February 21, 2023 and ordering the Plans and Specifications.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

- I. Goat Grazing Plan – Vadnais Heights City Hall Wooded Wetland – Approve Proposal

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell introduced the Goat Grazing Plan that staff have been working on with VLAWMO. He noted that the cost of this project would be split with VLAWMO.

Upon motion by Rogers, seconded by Goebel, it was

#23-01-022 “RESOLVED, that the Council authorizes the City Administrator to sign the proposal from The Munch Bunch, LLC for buckthorn removal services with a maximum fee of \$9,250, which will be split evenly with VLAWMO.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that the Planning Commission meets next week and one item that the Commission will be considering is an Ordinance amending City Code.

Fire Chief Hearden thanked all the residents that have cleared snow from around City fire hydrants. He also noted that the Health and Public Safety Commission meets next week and they will be setting their meeting agendas for 2023.

Assistant City Administrator Clement noted that the Parks, Rec and Trails Commission will be meeting on January 23.

City Administrator Watson stated that the City is fortunate to have Jesse Farrell as its City Engineer/Public Works Director.

Council Member Rogers thanked the volunteers and residents and seniors that attended the senior luncheon in January. Rogers noted that the City Council did not receive a raise with the action taken tonight on setting their pay, the action only set the compensation level for 2023.

Council Member Doll Kanne said that she attended the winter shindig and that it was a fun event.

Council Member Jozwowski thanked the residents that spoke before the Council at the meeting this evening and those that applied to be on City commissions.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Watson, City Administrator