

**WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
JANUARY 3, 2023**

**OPEN MEETING**

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

The following members were present: Mayor Mike Krachmer and Council Members Erik Goebel, Steve Rogers, Kelly Jozwowski, and Katherine Doll Kanne. The following member was absent: None.

Also present were: City Administrator, Kevin Watson; Assistant City Administrator, Kaylin Clement; Planning/Community Development Director, Nolan Wall; City Engineer/Public Works Director, Jesse Farrell; Fire Chief, Chris Hearnden; City Attorney Caroline Beckman, and Bolton & Menk Consultant, Eric Seaberg.

**FUTURE CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS**

- Council Member Rogers brought up the HRA tax implemented by Ramsey County in 2022. He was wondering if there was a way to request these funds be utilized for the City, and/or have someone from the County come to a future workshop to explain it more in-depth. Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted Elevage applied for funding, but was denied, and solicitation happens in the fall (2022) and will likely be similar in 2023.
- Council Member Doll Kanne would like to revisit the Park Dedication Fee, comps in the area, etc. at a future meeting.
- Council Member Doll Kanne also wants to discuss County Road E redevelopment of particular parcels.

**2023 TWIN LAKE BOULEVARD UPDATE**

City Engineer/Public Works Director Jesse Farrell gave an overview of the Twin Lakes Boulevard (the shared corridor between Vadnais Heights and Little Canada) pavement's status – mid-20's currently, overall the City is mid-70's. Bolten & Menk Consultant Eric Seaberg was introduced and gave details on a recent grant opportunity to secure a trail addition in the amount of \$500k secured by Little Canada (Community Development Block Grant through Ramsey County). Since the split in cost between Little Canada and Vadnais Heights would be roughly \$400k each, we could be given the excess \$100k by Little Canada, and this new opportunity – a MnDOT grant, would cover the cost of the excess \$300k. We will know by mid-March if we've been awarded this MnDOT grant however to keep the project on track, bids would need to go out in late-February for the project. We won't know if it will be awarded to Vadnais Heights until March. The question posed during this discussion was if the City would like to continue moving forward with the Twin Lakes Boulevard trail addition without the \$300k funding difference Vadnais Heights is responsible for prior to the grant award.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked if Five Star Mobile Estates wants a trail addition, asked for it, and would use it. Also, how many people use the particular access to get in and out of the development in question. City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell said a traffic study has not been performed, but generally, access is split between the 3 access points. He also said the units are continually being replaced and upgraded following new ownership. Council Member Doll Kanne asked about the City of Vadnais Heights property near ASFA, and if we have explored opportunities for senior affordable housing in that location. She noted the city-owned senior affordable living in White Bear Lake (Pioneer House) may make sense in this area.

### **KOEHLER ROAD TRAIL PROJECT**

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell confirmed the successful grant award for a trail on the north side of Koehler Road from Centerville Road to Edgerton Street in the amount of \$557k. This was the City's third attempt to apply for this funding, and Ramsey County and the City would potentially split the remaining cost once the grant is exhausted. This would be slated for 2024 construction and the design work needs to start soon as federal funding has different regulations about distribution and timelines for awarded monies. SEH plans to bring a proposal for professional services to design this project at the next meeting. Council Member Doll Kanne

asked if there is an assessment of lost tree canopy as a result of the trail and any plans for replacement. City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell said a significant amount of landscaping is designated for this project, which could include replacements and mitigating any losses.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked if the trail that would continue north up Edgerton Street, was part of the grant application but design would be needed to discuss how far north and crosswalk treatment at Edgerton and Kohler. Council Member Doll Kanne asked if there was any exploration of the trail going south to Carol Drive. City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell agreed that is a good idea, but that trail direction has not been considered at this point. Kevin Watson mentioned scope creep.

#### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS AND APPEALS**

Planning/Community Development Director Wall explained during his time working for the City, this group has never met or there is not an electronic record of this group's meetings. Six neighboring communities were surveyed, Planning Commission are the liaisons for four, City Council for two. For the cities that the Planning Commission acts as this board, they are not making recommendations; however they are making the decision on those who appeal about a zoning grievance. City Attorney Beckman and Planning/Community Development Director Wall reiterated this role empowers the Planning Commission while protecting the City Council by formally giving this responsibility to the Planning Commission.

Council Member Goebel is in favor of having the Planning Commission carry out this duty, as does Council Member Doll Kanne and Mayor Krachmer. Planning/Community Development Director Wall suggested 30-90 days to bring up a grievance and asked what would Vadnais Heights like to give as a deadline as we do not currently have one. Council Member Jozwowski said to meet in the middle and say 60 days. All were in agreement. Notice requirements (or the lack thereof) will also be explored and what (if any) City Council review authority should/should not be implemented.

#### **COMMUNITY PARK PAVILION UPDATE**

City Administrator Watson asked for direction on an ongoing conversation. City budgeted \$275k for a new pavilion at Community Park and gave an overview of initial estimates that were under budget dramatically based on the soil mitigation needed to safely implement a structure. City Administrator Watson also explained the construction company originally awarded as part of the initial bid went out of business. Council Member Jozwowski asked if there are safety issues with the current pavilion. The answer is yes ... we do our best to maintain it as we can, but it has seen its lifespan. Direction was requested for a unique pavilion despite the lack of budget after soil mitigation, or a catalog item, or just erecting tents for things like Heritage Days. Council Member Goebel asked if there is any area of the park where soil mitigation is not needed, and City Administrator Watson explained the site where VHC sits is the only area without fill. Council Member Doll Kanne asked why Community Park was selected for the new pavilion and not Kohler Meadows. She asked if we are building a pavilion for Heritage Days, or is there a strong rental demand with the existing structure. Council Member Rogers asked where the additional funding would come from if that is the will of the Council. City Administrator Watson said a budget amendment would be required and fund balance (savings) would likely need to be utilized.

Council Member Doll Kanne said she is not opposed to spending more money, but not spending it for the design presented by Double Jack. Council Member Jozwowski said the design was very unique to Vadnais Heights and she was part of the meetings and listening sessions. Council Member Doll Kanne suggested sending it back to the Parks Commission to further examine catalog options, with the thought in mind that we could simply erect tents for Heritage Days 2023, and see if more information/costs can be determined. Council Member Goebel asked about the life expectancy, upkeep costs, etc. in the professional design option, versus a catalog. Council Member Rogers asked Council Member Doll Kanne to consider the branding of Community Park, Commons, etc. with a costly/specific to our city investment and the future use. Council Member Doll Kanne thinks Kohler still should be considered. Mayor Krachmer suggested looking into this as a 2025-2026 project to find funding, and in the meantime not completely dismiss the marquee attractions like neighboring cities have done. He said to send it back to the Parks Commission to reexamine architect vs. catalog and the cost/life differences.

## **GREENSTEP CITIES**

Council Member Rogers suggested considering the limited staff of Vadnais Heights, and maybe that means exploring other ways to have sustainability initiatives explored. Council Member Rogers thinks representatives from GreenStep Cities should come and present at a future workshop before the City joins. Council Member Doll Kanne said she doesn't need someone to talk to the City Council since it is a good program and we can get involved with a resolution now. Council Members Rogers and Goebel want to go through the process by having someone from GreenStep Cities present formally so the community is aware of what we are doing and what the goals are for potential involvement in this program.

## **OTHER STAFF ISSUES**

None

## **ADJOURN**

Motion by Goebel to adjourn at 7:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Kevin Watson, City Administrator