

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
APRIL 16, 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: Craig Johnson, Greg Urban, Patricia Youker 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, Finance Director Bob Sundberg, Fire Chief Ed Leier, Public Works Director Jesse Farrell, City Attorney Caroline Bell Beckman, and Deputy City Clerk Peggy Aho.

Others present were: Evan Cordes and Martin Jokinen, Planning Commission Members,

1. Planning Commission Work Plan:

Planning/Community Development Director Wall introduced the new chair and vice chair of the Planning Commission, Evan Cordes and Martin Jokinen. Wall said that it makes sense to look at goals and develop a work plan to reflect them. He also said that the proposed Work Plan does not require additional expenditures outside of the current budget. Wall reviewed the proposed 2019 Work Plan.

Mayor Gunderson said that she loves the idea of having an annual meeting with the Council and Planning Commission. Wall noted that the while the Plan may be ambitious and dependent on time, it is meant only to be done as time allows and will not require additional or longer Planning Commission meetings.

Wall said that he will bring an update back to the Council later this year on what has been accomplished.

2. Garceau Corner Task Force Scope:

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that he has met with the Task Force Facilitator, City Administrator Watson and others and refined the scope for the Task Force. They are currently working to schedule the first meeting date. Wall reviewed the proposed scope of the five meetings.

Wall said that staff will get feedback from the Task Force on the scope. Task Force members will be given a packet of information to guide development scenarios for discussion in the future. During subsequent meetings, they will be digging into the property's history and background, and financial information. City staff will provide policy background on how we got to where we are.

3. Prosecution Services Updates:

City Attorney Beckman introduced James Erickson, Jr. and Melissa Loonan from EBBQ, who then presented on prosecution services provided that EBBQ provides to the City. They noted that EBBQ prosecutes traffic violations and gross misdemeanors (assaults, harassment, etc.) and also prosecutes ordinance violations.

4. Update on Agreement with Refuse Haulers:

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik gave an overview of the negotiations with VHG. He reviewed VHG's proposed pricing which was a significant jump over current pricing and noted that the City made a counter offer. There are three components to the services provided by VHG: recycling, refuse and disposal. VHG submitted a new proposal, 2% increase each year until the final year which would have a 3% increase over current rates. Staff feel that the current proposal is appropriate.

Council asked that staff send a letter to the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Refuse Board regarding the rebate that is expiring. Sandvik said staff could draft a letter saying that the City doesn't support the rebate going away. The Council agreed that a letter should be written. Sandvik said that he will draft one and bring it to a future Workshop for the Council's review.

Sandvik noted that staff are looking for support from the Council that staff finalize negotiations and bring back a contract for approval. Council asked that staff move forward to finalize the negotiations.

5. Other Staff Items:

Public Works Director Farrell gave a presentation on the City's sanitary sewer system to inform the Council on the system because he will be asking to spend considerable funds on the City's system. In 1970, the Clean Water Act was passed and created rules on protecting our lakes and rivers. In the 80's and early 90's, St. Paul, for example, began focusing on separating their sewers. Farrell noted that the City has sanitary and storm water sewer systems. Farrell's presentation showed how tree roots can start to penetrate the sanitary sewer as it ages. Farrell discussed having the City's system televised to see the condition of the lines. He said that the Metropolitan Council will be lining their interceptors in Vadnais Heights sometime over the next 5 years. This will cause some disruption.

City Administrator Watson noted that the City has been approached by the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation which holds the debt on the Garceau Lane Veterans house as well as the City. The City gave the land to the Veterans housing project with the caveat that we would get paid \$75,000 in a few years and that there would be a preference for veteran housing. Journey Homes is no longer around and Greater Metropolitan Housing said they will take over the project and complete the project. They are asking the City to waive the \$75,000 price tag for the land and Watson is looking for

feedback from the Council on this request. Council Member Urban asked if the property currently pays taxes. Watson replied yes.

Planning/Development Director Wall noted Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation is proposing to fix up the homes and sell them. Watson said that it is possible that if the City doesn't waive the \$75,000 payment, the project may go into foreclosure and then the City may not see any of the money because it's third in line for payment on the debt.

Wall also noted that Journey Home projects are in various stages in other communities and are in default of the Development Agreement. Wall said that the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation is proposing to take over the Development Agreement.

The Council discussed whether to negotiate with Greater Metropolitan Housing on getting the improvements completed (sidewalks and street lights) and perhaps some or all of the \$75,000 back. Mayor Gunderson asked if there is any reason why the City couldn't counter and that she thinks the City should try to negotiate something better for the City. The Council asked staff to move forward with negotiations.

6. Future City Council Requests: None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Watson, City Administrator

