

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

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: Greg Urban, Patricia Youker, Steve Rogers and Erik Goebel. 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; Fire Chief Chris Hearden; City Attorney, Erich Hartmann; and Deputy Clerk, Peggy Aho.

1. Discussion with Ramsey County regarding Crime in Parks

Kristopher Lencowski, Director, of Parks Operations, Ramsey County, Jeff Ramacher, Undersheriff Ramsey County, and Jeremy Bolen Knutson, Deputy Sheriff, Water Patrol Unit, Ramsey County, presented to the Council. Mayor Gunderson welcomed the Ramsey County representatives. They spoke about what they are seeing and potential ways to partner on initiatives.

City Administrator Watson said that the discussion is in response to a request from Council Member Urban. Watson noted that he had sent out data on the park system to the Council for discussion.

Undersheriff Ramacher provided a general overview of crime trends and noted that there has been a very significant uptick in crime, mostly in theft and not just in Vadnais Heights, it's happening all over the country.

Urban raised a question about putting cameras in the Park's parking lots. Mayor Gunderson asked if the County has a comprehensive plan for getting cameras installed in all the parks to try to crack down on crime. Lencowski responded not at the Commissioner level but in the department they are looking at rewriting their ordinances which leads to updating signage and then crime evaluation. He said this is on the horizon and is a natural progression.

Urban asked if EBBQ could give an update on what cases have come to their office and what the final disposition is. City Attorney Hartmann said he will let Attorney Beckman know what kind of update the City is interested in receiving.

Urban said he thinks it would be a good idea for the City to invest in cameras in at least one park. He asked if any of the County departments have the ability to be a partner with the City to fund a larger project. Kramer said that they would probably be interested in being a partner with perhaps maintaining any system, but that he thinks the City would have to be the one to purchase a camera system.

Lencowski listed other strategies, lighting, park service coordinator, education, etc. Ramacher said there are programs that are available that may give people rebates or grants or that might work as a camera registry system.

Gunderson said that perhaps the Council can discuss purchasing cameras during the Goals Session. She said it would be helpful to have more information on costs, who would monitor them, and on-going maintenance. City Administrator Watson said that it may be worth pursuing at the County level to see if they could take on the initiative, and that he is not sure the City could fully fund it.

2. Discussion of Meal Stipend

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik noted that Council Member Youker had brought up the idea of providing a meal stipend for Fire Department staff when working holidays. Sandvik said that in the past the Relief Association offered it and that now the City pays any fire fighter working on a holiday at 1 ½ times pay. Youker said her idea isn't for an additional stipend just an idea to bring in a meal for those working, especially on major holidays. Sandvik said if this is something the City Council would like to explore, he needs direction and a list of holidays they might want to offer the incentive.

3. Identify a Date for the Goal Setting Session

The Goals Setting Session has been scheduled for March 22nd at 3:00 p.m. at City Council.

4. Other Staff Ideas

5. Future City Council Requests

Council Member Urban noted that at a future workshop he would like to have a discussion about future ditch projects. City Engineer Farrell said that this will be brought at the next workshop.

6. Other

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell said that the estimate for water tower logos is roughly \$15,000 for the first and \$10,000 for the second. Larger logos impact the cost on the scale of roughly \$5,000.