

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS**

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 7:02 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 Hearden, Fire Chief; Bob Sundberg, Finance Director; and Caroline Beckman, City Attorney.

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Administrator Watson provided several announcements.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

#23-04-051 “RESOLVED, that the April 4, 2023 Regular Meeting Agenda be approved as amended, removing Item 12D.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 21, 2023 Regular Workshop Meeting

Council Member Goebel noted that lines 24, 47, 49, and 146 should replace Rogers with Goebel.

Upon motion by Council Member Goebel, seconded by Council Member Rogers, it was

#23-04-052 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the March 21, 2023 Regular Workshop Meeting minutes as amended.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. March 21, 2023 Regular Council Meeting

Upon motion by Council Member Goebel, seconded by Council Member Jozwowski, it was

#23-04-053 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the March 21, 2023 Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Council Member Goebel, seconded by Council Member Jozwowski, it was

#23-04-054 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves Consent Agenda Items #7A through #7D for the April 4, 2023 meeting as presented as follows:

- A. Consider Approving Claims #83390 Through #83432 and Electronic Claims #1867 Through #1870 for Payment
- B. Consider Adopting Renewal of Agency Delegated Contracting Agreement with MnDOT
- C. Consider Approving Home Improvement Loan Program
- D. Consider Accepting City Engineer/Public Works Director, Jesse Farrell’s Resignation.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Krachmer opened the meeting to the public at 7:08 p.m.

There being no one who wished to speak, Mayor Krachmer closed the meeting to the public at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Proclamation: National Volunteer Week (April 16-22)

City Administrator Watson read the proclamation in full declaring April 16-22, 2023 as National Volunteer Week.

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

#23-04-055 “RESOLVED, that the Council proclaim April 16-22, 2023 as National Volunteer Week.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. Vadnais Heights Lions Club Food Shelf Update from Lion Paul Schirer

City Administrator Watson introduced Paul Schirer of the Lions Club.

Paul Schirer, representing the Vadnais Heights Lions Club, provided a presentation on the food shelf located at the Commons. He explained the partnership between the Lions Club, Lions Club Foundation, and City which benefits the local community. He also provided details on demographics and utilization of the food shelf.

Council Member Rogers thanked Mr. Schirer for his volunteer services in the community.

C. Recycling Overview

Assistant City Administrator Clement provided the annual update on the City’s 2022 refuse, recycling, and organics program in Vadnais Heights. She also noted the upcoming community cleanup day which will be held on April 22, 2023 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., continued organics drop-off program, and upcoming launch of the food scraps pickup.

Council Member Doll Kanne referenced months with negative balances and asked if the market has recovered. Mr. Watson explained that if there is a profit, that is shared, but if there is a negative balance that does not impact the City, it simply means there are no profits to split during that month.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Skid Steer Purchase

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell said the Council is being asked to consider the purchase of a John Deere 325G Compact Track Loader from Midwest Machinery for the sum of \$67,904.45. He explained how the equipment will make road patching more efficient and noted that the equipment will be able to be used for multiple tasks.

Council Member Rogers asked when the patching would begin and when the patching would be anticipated to be complete with the addition of the new equipment. Mr. Farrell stated that he was unable to provide those timeframes. He stated that they are currently addressing the worst areas. He hoped that the additional equipment would allow for

more efficient patching as well as increased durability. He stated that the City will also be utilizing a contractor to augment City staff efforts to increase productivity.

Council Member Goebel stated that he supports this purchase and the lease terms which provides new equipment each year as that saves on ongoing maintenance costs. He commented that this will be a good use of resources.

Mayor Krachmer congratulated staff noting that this is a great plan to address the issues with the roads.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked if this purchase was included in the 2023 budget. Mr. Farrell replied that this item was not included in the budget. He stated that staff will work with finance as the year goes on and may need to shift other items in the budget. He commented that this is the worst pothole season the City has experienced and this solution was developed in response.

Mayor Krachmer stated that the decision to consider this purchase has been discussed by staff and is a reasonable opportunity to do a better job. Mr. Farrell stated that at the next workshop, they will discuss public works equipment. He noted that last year they ordered a plow, prior to the development of the budget, which has still not been delivered.

Council Member Doll Kanne agreed that she would like to plan ahead for equipment of that nature to provide sufficient time for delivery.

Council Member Goebel referenced the estimated delivery time for this equipment of September 2023 noting that it would seem it would not be used for this season. Mr. Farrell replied that public works would still be able to patch at that time, but confirmed that it would not be used for spring/summer patching.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked for details on the municipal lease program. Mr. Farrell provided additional details on that process.

Upon motion by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member Doll Kanne, it was

#23-04-056 “RESOLVED, to approve the purchase of a John Deere 325G Compact Track Loader from Midwest Machinery for the sum of \$67,904.45, as presented.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B. 2024 Sanitary Sewer Access Path Design Proposal

City Engineer/Director of Public Works Farrell stated the Council is being asked to authorize entering into an agreement with S.E.H. to complete the Sanitary Sewer Lining

and Access Project design and construction administration services on an hourly basis with a maximum fee of \$132,500. He provided more details on the purpose of the project, project scope, and benefit that would be provided.

Council Member Rogers asked the worst-case scenario if nothing is done. Mr. Farrell replied that would be an environmental emergency with property damage.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked if the City would be liable for property damage in that type of scenario. City Attorney Beckman provided additional details on when the City could be liable versus when the City would have immunity.

City Administrator Watson asked staff to provide details on budgetary impacts of the project as well as impacts to utility fees. Mr. Farrell stated that utility enterprise reserves have been built up in anticipation of projects. He commented that this would be a huge project that would have a significant impact on those funds and those funds would be built back up using utility fee payments.

Finance Director Sundberg stated that the reserve is a healthy fund and using some of those funds will be a good thing. He noted that once completed, the fund would be built back up in anticipation of other projects.

Upon motion by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member Jozwowski, it was

#23-04-057 “RESOLVED, to authorize entering into an agreement with S.E.H. to complete the Sanitary Sewer Lining and Access Project design and construction administration services on an hourly basis with a maximum fee of \$132,500, as presented.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

A. No Mow May Resolution

City Administrator Watson explained that similar to 2022, the City will support No Mow May on private property through the month of May. He explained the City will not cite any violators of the City’s 10-inch height requirement for tall grass and weeds during the month of May.

Council Member Doll Kanne stated that she distributed proposed revisions to the Council for consideration, noting that it would be called Slow Mow Summer rather than No Mow May. She commented that while there are good intentions in the No Mow May initiative,

it does not always work the way it is intended depending on the growing season. She provided additional details on her proposed revisions.

Mayor Krachmer commented that this is an encouragement to support pollinators, but participation is not required.

Council Member Goebel stated that his concern with changing the name to Slow Mow Summer would be that some people may believe they can continue not to mow throughout the summer, which is not the intended message. He noted that he has received concerns from residents.

Council Member Doll Kanne stated that she would be open to calling it Slow Mow May.

Council Member Goebel stated that some people do not like the appearance of long grass and code enforcement should occur. He asked staff for details on enforcement. Fire Chief Hearden explained that staff reviews the properties that have registered for No Mow May about one week into June. He stated that for those properties that have not mowed, a notice would be provided with adequate time for the resident to bring the property into compliance. He stated that if compliance is not done, the City would contract for a service to mow the property and that property would be assessed for the service.

Council Member Goebel stated that he would like to find a balance between support for pollinators and ensuring that people are not abusing the process.

Council Member Doll Kanne suggested additional efforts in education. She noted that when people pickup their yard sign, the expectation can be clearly communicated when the yard must be mowed.

Council Member Goebel asked if properties must register to participate. Mr. Hearden replied that properties do not have to register. He stated that when staff receives complaints, they do follow up to determine if the property is participating or whether they are simply not mowing.

Council Member Goebel stated that he would prefer Slow Mow May rather than Slow Mow Summer.

Council Member Rogers stated that last year the Council supported No Mow May without much knowledge of the intent. He stated that he has done more research on the intent to support pollinators and has learned about more pollinators. He explained that the pollinators have evolved because of the lack of native plants and stated that pollinators would benefit more by planting of additional native plants rather than people not mowing their grass. He stated that he too would be hesitant about Slow Mow Summer, but could support Slow Mow May.

Council Member Doll Kanne stated that perhaps the concept of native plant sales and pollinator education is discussed by the Council in a future workshop.

Mayor Krachmer agreed and believed the Council would have opportunities to promote sustainable practices through other initiatives.

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

#23-04-058 “RESOLVED, that the Council adopt Resolution Supporting a Temporary Exception to Section 22-2 of City Code, Public Nuisance, in Support of ‘Slow Mow May.’”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The motion was adopted.

B. National Opioid Settlement Agreement

City Administrator Watson said the Council is being asked to authorize him to sign the settlement agreement with Teva and Allergan pharmaceutical manufacturers as well as the Walgreens, Walmart and CVS pharmacies. He stated that the allocation the City would receive is not yet known and explained how the City would use those funds.

Fire Chief Hearnden explained how the first responders have used those funds to respond to individuals in crisis, as well as protect those responding and providing assistance.

Council Member Goebel asked if the City could use this money to provide assistance with organizations in the community that provide treatment to individuals. Mr. Watson replied that he could follow up to determine if the funds could be used in that manner.

Mayor Krachmer stated that there would also be public education opportunities.

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

#23-04-059 “RESOLVED, that the Council authorize the City Administrator to sign the settlement agreement with Teva and Allergan pharmaceutical manufacturers as well as the Walgreens, Walmart and CVS pharmacies, as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The motion was adopted.

C. Gambling Premise Permit for Vadnais Heights Lions Club at Clover Inn at 705 E County Road F

City Administrator Watson presented the application for a Minnesota Lawful Gambling Premises Permit LG214 and Lease Form LG215 to allow Vadnais Heights Lions Club to conduct lawful gambling at Old Clover Inn located at 705 East County Road F, commencing on April 5, 2023. He explained this would be contingent upon approval by the Minnesota Gambling Control Board and the previous gambling entity is no longer operating at that location. Mr. Watson noted a background check was performed by the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office and showed no violations.

Upon motion by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member Goebel, it was

#23-04-060 “RESOLVED, that the Council approve application for a Minnesota Lawful Gambling Premises Permit LG214 and Lease Form LG215 to allow Vadnais Heights Lions Club to conduct lawful gambling at Old Clover Inn located at 705 East County Road F, commencing on April 5, 2023, and contingent upon approval by the Minnesota Gambling Control Board and the previous gambling entity is no longer operating at that location, as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The motion was adopted.

D. PULLED - Gambling Premise Permit for Merrick Community Services at Sak's Sports Bar at 1460 E County Road E

E. Kohler Meadows Tennis Court Reconstruction and Budget Amendment

City Administrator Watson said the Council is being asked to amend the 2023 Park Dedication Budget and accept the bid from Bituminous Roadways in the amount of \$166,500, plus an additional \$10,000 for wind screens, for the reconstruction of the Kohler Meadows Park tennis courts. He noted that a budget amendment would be needed as the bids were higher than the budgeted cost.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked when the park dedication funds for the Elevage development would be available in the fund balance. Planning/Community Development Director Wall replied that those funds would be available once the building permit is issued and explained that process. He anticipated that those funds would be available within the next six to nine months.

Council Member Goebel asked for more information on the wind screens and whether planting trees would be another option. Mr. Watson provided details on the proposed wind screens that would be attached to the fencing. He commented that there is interest for that

type of screening from the users of the court. He stated that trees were not reviewed as an alternative for this project. He noted that the wind screens would also have a lower cost.

Council Member Rogers provided additional context on the purpose of the wind screen as a tennis player. He stated that the tennis experience is lessened when there are not wind screens. He noted that trees often have other unintended consequences for a tennis court, such as dropping leaves and pinecones. He recognized that \$90,000 was budgeted for this project, but the bids were almost double that cost. He noted that there were projects that have been pushed off which in essence freed up additional funding that could be used for this project.

Council Member Doll Kanne clarified that all three projects were planned to use park dedication funds, when the balance in that fund could have never supported all three projects. Mr. Watson explained how park dedication funds are used, recognizing that the fund balance never covers the full cost of all the anticipated projects therefore some projects are delayed, or additional funding sources are identified. He stated that the Park Master Plan will provide guidance on funding for future park improvements.

Council Member Rogers stated that the project is needed and commented that the park is a great setting for the courts.

Council Member Doll Kanne asked the lifespan of the windscreens. Mr. Watson anticipated about five years, dependent on weather conditions. It was confirmed that the screens are removed prior to the winter season.

Council Member Doll Kanne stated that perhaps the Park Commission is asked to review alternate wind screening options in the future to determine if there is a better solution.

Council Member Rogers commented that there are four courts and asked if the screens would be located on all four sides. Mr. Watson replied that he would assume the screens would be on all sides but noted that another member of staff would have that information.

Council Member Doll Kanne commented that the courts are well-used and therefore the cost for the screens would seem justified for this case.

Upon motion by Council Member Goebel, seconded by Council Member Rogers, it was

#23-04-061 “RESOLVED, that the Council adopt Resolution Approving an Amendment of the Approved 2023 Capital Improvement Plan and accept the bid from Bituminous Roadways in the amount of \$166,500, plus an additional \$10,000 for wind screens, for the reconstruction of the Kohler Meadows Park tennis courts, as presented.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The motion was adopted.

Council Member Jozwowski asked for additional information from the City Attorney on Item 12 D which was removed from the agenda. City Attorney Beckman explained that the City is the licensing agency and provided additional background information on the authority of the City on that matter.

COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Chief Hearden commented that there was a great turnout for the Fire Department open house and waffle breakfast, which was hosted by the Lions.

Assistant City Administrator Clement noted a new staff member, Phillip Lundquist, will be joining the team the following week. She also recognized Mr. Farrell noting that he will be missed.

Finance Director Sundberg had nothing to report.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell commented that this has been the snowiest winter in over 40 years and commended the public works team for their continued hard work in snow removal. He stated that residents who received damage in their yard should contact the City for assistance.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall had nothing to report.

City Attorney Beckman had nothing to report.

Council Member Doll Kanne stated that she is excited for Mr. Farrell's next opportunity, although he will be missed in Vadnais Heights. She recognized a resident of Vadnais Heights who assisted with the revisions she provided to the Slow Mow May resolution. She noted that she had a great time at the waffle breakfast and Fire Department open house.

Council Member Rogers shared an update from the health and public safety monthly meeting which took place the previous week. He recognized the great job that Mr. Farrell does, noting his great communication with residents.

Council Member Jozwowski commented that she was able to spend time with the public works crew recently, who do an amazing job. She thanked Mr. Farrell for everything he does and noted that the new city will be lucky to have him.

Council Member Goebel commented that he works in Oakdale, which is where Mr. Farrell is going and plans to keep him busy. He noted that the City is losing a true asset.

Mayor Krachmer had nothing to report.

City Administrator Watson had nothing to report.

ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Watson, City Administrator

APPROVED

