

**WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
MAY 2, 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 5:31 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; Engineering Technician Nick Ouskey, and Deputy Clerk, Phillip Lundquist.

**TREE REPLACEMENT PROCESS**

Specific numbers are in the memos attached to agenda. Replantings underway, e.g. Elmwood 20-30 trees. Public Works tries to accommodate screening requests. City has a map of ash trees and their rating with size and location including right-of-way status so replacement of ash trees can be prioritized. Budget will be reviewed in the fall to see if additional trees can be removed and replaced. Trees on right-of-way pose challenges due to infrastructure under trees and to repair that infrastructure the trees would need to be removed. Lighting and trees may be explored through private residents rather than the city. Council Member Goebel asked would it make sense to hire a tree specialist as a city. Farrell recommended increasing this budget line to get the lion share of the removal/replacement done. Efficiency would lie in leaving it to professionals. Council Member Jozwowski inquired on behalf of a resident if a 1:1 removal/replacement program was possible, or a city tree trust. Discussion of a planting/removing incentive program. Exploring a tree trust may be part of intern if fits in scope. Farrell added the WBL sustainability person has a background and a full scope including bees and conservation efforts. Mayor Krachmer closed the discussion.

**RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT**

Administrator Watson continued discussion from February on ways to cover personal costs while the person is doing City business. Examples from other cities provided in memo. Discussion of reimbursement processes. Vehicle would include Public Works Director, Planner/Community Development Director, and Administrator, phone would include Fire, Public Works workers. Council Member Goebel and Jozwowski supportive. Council Member Rogers inquired process for previous reimbursement and roles of city phone vs personal phone. Would cover around 30

people. The program would transition staff off city owned phones. Mayor Krachmer inquired on advantage of direct income vs untaxed stipend. Administrator Watson responded if someone filed their own taxes – with paycheck makes it easier for tax and staff purposes though it would be less than face value due to taxes. Mayor Krachmer confirmed cost variation between department heads and other staff with Administrator Watson. Administrator Watson explained this would be an update of personnel policy to be approved by council and implemented in 2024. Council Member Rogers confirmed claim for PW employees. On the topic of vehicle allowance Council Member Jozwowski supportive.

## **PARK, TRAIL MASTER PLAN SOLICITATION**

Assistant Administrator Clement led this discussion with Parks Commission. If an RFP is created for this the commission there are topics the commissioners would like included in the proposals. Council Member Doll Kanne asked for clarification of the language for adding green space with general agreement. Discussion of financing proposal including grant possibilities. Council Member Rogers noted in the past commissioners were to solicit feedback and asked for what was learned relevant to creating a master plan. Administrator Watson and Assistant Administrator Clement indicated how much detail was included in the RFP. Administrator Watson described the balance between being prescriptive and open-ended. Agreement on the commission proceeding with an RFP for a Parks Master Plan. Mayor Krachmer clarified expectation of an open-ended RFP with general suggestions for what the City would like. Agreement for Parks Commission to proceed.

## **COMMISSION FEEDBACK**

Administrator Watson reviewed process and purpose for getting feedback on commissions. Assistant Administrator Clement recapped commission discussion and feedback provided to workshop. Discussion was focused on balancing prescriptive and broad language to allow commissions to complete their work. Administrator Watson suggested creating a year-long calendar with the commissions and Council approves/refines to give the commissions their scope and commissions can then come back to Council with proposals. Other suggestions included a commissioner orientation and paths of communication to Council. Council's direction to staff is to bring these changes to Council Meeting and requesting a goal-setting session with the committees. Administrator Watson suggested starting with Parks and evaluating after that. Mayor Krachmer added commission rotations. Council Member Jozwowski noted that other commissions have not met very frequently and Council Member Rogers added that in a four-year term there is opportunity to be a part of other/all commissions.

## **STAFF ITEMS**

Budget Workshop May 23<sup>rd</sup> would go 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Lakes Room.

Future Council Suggestions – Council Member Doll Kanne would like a future discussion on an update the lawn weed section of code and if future discussion is warranted it may be a part of a Parks Commission task-list.