

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
MARCH 7, 2023**

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 7:00 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 Hearnden, 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

#23-03-039 “RESOLVED that the March 7, 2023 Regular Meeting Agenda be approved as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 21, 2023 Regular Workshop Meeting

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

#23-03-040 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the February 21, 2023 Regular Workshop Meeting minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

32 B. February 21, 2023 Regular Council Meeting

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

35 #23-03-041 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the February 21, 2023 Regular
36 Council Meeting minutes as presented.”

37 Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

38 The resolution was adopted.

39 **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

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

41 #23-03-042 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves Consent Agenda Items #7A
42 through #7C for the March 7, 2023 meeting as presented as follows:

43 A. Consider Approving Claims #83269 Through #83322 and Electronic
44 Claims #1859 Through #1862 for Payment

45 B. Consider Approving Tenth Rider to Agreement with the Board of
46 Water Commissioners of the City of Saint Paul (Saint Paul Regional
47 Water Services)

48 C. Consider Recommendation on Hiring Deputy City Clerk

49 Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

50 The resolution was adopted.

51 **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

52 Mayor Krachmer opened the meeting to the public at 7:09 p.m.

53 Ralph Buche, 742 Greenhaven Drive, requested the City not consider “No Mow May” in 2023.
54 He spoke about how the new signage on Highway 96 and Rice Street enhances the look of the City
55 and how “No Mow May” does not.

56 City Administrator Watson said “No Mow May” has not been discussed for 2023, but the City
57 may possibly consider it if a request was received from residents, adding the program was
58 challenging for staff to administer. Mayor Krachmer stated that the new Council will discuss the
59 matter and if there is a vote, the item will be placed on a future agenda.

60 Art Peterson, 4320 Greenhaven Circle, commented on how the posted agenda did not include
61 specifics on what would be discussed at the meeting, then expressed concern that “No Mow May”
62 would not be publicly posted prior to formal consideration. He wanted to make sure he could go
63 online and see specifically that “No Mow May” was being discussed at a future meeting. Mayor
64 Krachmer assured Mr. Peterson that if “No Mow May” is not listed on an agenda, the Council will

65 not vote on it. Mr. Peterson thanked the Fire Department for their response to his recent medical
66 emergency. Mayor Krachmer thanked the public present for their input.

67 There being no one further who wished to speak, Mayor Krachmer closed the meeting to the public
68 at 7:16 p.m.

69 **PRESENTATIONS**

70 A. Fire Presentation

71 Fire Chief Hearden presented a review of fire department activities for 2022. He shared
72 emergency response call volume, types of response calls, fire certificate occupancy
73 inspections, and full time and part time staff activities.

74 The Council asked questions and provided feedback regarding call capacity and the need
75 to identify additional staffing. Chief Hearden responded most calls were medical and
76 how evening shifts were limited to three-person crews. He noted that he has started
77 discussing additional staffing needs with City Administrator Watson, but noted it is
78 difficult to get part-time staff as more firefighters are preferring full-time careers.

79 Council Member Goebel inquired about differences between part-time and full-time
80 personnel working on nights and weekends. Chief Hearden responded there was not
81 much difference in response time, but noted there was quite a bit of staff turnover which
82 results in the need for additional training and stronger retention methods. He stated that
83 there is a cost-savings with part-time staff, but full-time staff get a higher hourly wage
84 and benefits which promotes retention. He spoke about the department's work on rental
85 and commercial inspections, plan reviews, and code enforcement work, which at times
86 can take a significant amount of time. He reviewed required training, certifications,
87 public events attendance, and the new engine expected to be delivered in October then
88 shared additional roles in conjunction with other entities such as Ramsey County.

89 Council Member Jozwowski asked if there was a correlation between the number of
90 residents and commercial buildings to the number of full-time and part-time staff needed.
91 Chief Hearden said there are studies that say there is a correlation; however, that concept
92 is changing as we don't get many people who want to donate their time anymore since
93 they just don't have the time to volunteer. He said the fire department's call volumes
94 have gone way up and the amount of training they are required to have has increased as
95 well. He felt some of the studies are older and need to be updated.

96 Council Member Goebel asked if there's a difference between an electronic car fire
97 versus a regular car. Chief Hearden said there's a lot of training on the matter going on
98 right now and there are studies on it. He said basically a regular car fire can be
99 extinguished with less than 500 gallons of water. To put out an electric car fire, it can
100 take 30,000-40,000 gallons of water. Different recommendations are being considered on
101 the best way to deal with the situation.

102 Council Member Doll Kanne suggested Chief Hearden attend an upcoming workshop to
103 review strategies for coverage as call volumes continue to increase.

104 PUBLIC HEARINGS

105 A. Twin Lake Boulevard Improvement Hearing and Assessment Hearing

106 Director of Public Works/City Engineer Farrell stated that there are two hearings tonight
107 involving the improvements to Twin Lake Boulevard – an improvement hearing and an
108 assessment hearing. He stated that the project is something that was pursued with the City
109 of Little Canada since the roadway is located in both cities. He said that doing the project
110 separately would cost the cities more. Little Canada employs Bolton & Menk as their
111 engineering consultant and will be Vadnais Heights' engineer on the project too. He
112 invited Eric Seaburg of Bolton & Menk to share more about the project.

113
114 Eric Seaburg, Bolton & Menk, gave a brief overview of the proposed project, the
115 schedule, and what to expect over the next several months. He stated that the roadway
116 lies in both cities close to equally. He indicated that they have been working with both
117 cities on this project for over a year. Over the winter, they worked on final design,
118 environmental review, permitting, and today, bids were opened on the project. He was
119 excited to say they received good, competitive bids from nine bidders and the low bid
120 contractor came below the engineer's estimate. He outlined the project scope with
121 existing conditions and proposed improvements, then added they would be performing an
122 emergency interconnect between the cities of Little Canada and Vadnais Heights for
123 long-term system reliability as the two cities are on separate water sources, and as we
124 have seen with drought situations the past few years, the reliability of surface water
125 versus ground water is variable depending on seasonality and different conditions. He
126 added having options on the water system is a huge plus. Mr. Seaburg presented the
127 estimated project costs at the time of the feasibility report preparation. The feasibility
128 report was accepted by the Council last month. He said the bid pricing received was
129 better than what was indicated in the feasibility report. He also discussed funding sources
130 in detail and said staff could decrease the project scope if needed should the grants not
131 come to fruition. He spoke about the intersection realignment on the east end of the
132 project that would be addressed and tree removal which would be done ahead of the
133 project prior to bird nesting to eliminate some environmental impacts.

134
135 Director of Public Works/City Engineer Farrell stated that Little Canada and Vadnais
136 Heights completed a benefits analysis by hiring an appraiser. They applied the results
137 through Vadnais Heights' assessment policy. Properties in Vadnais Heights have been
138 properly notified about the proposed assessments. He presented the assessment roll to the
139 Council and stated each improvement project is assessed differently. He stated that the
140 Twin Lake Boulevard project had a lot of assessable frontage along wetlands or public
141 property. Therefore, they decided to assess based on a footage amount. They came up
142 with a per-foot rate for non-residential properties and also a per-unit rate for residential

143 units. He stated that this project contains the 5 Star Mobile Home Park with 200 units, the
 144 church, and a few single family homes. He stated that similar to other projects, the
 145 assessment will be spread over a 10-year period and the property owners will have the
 146 option to pay in full to avoid interest charges. Otherwise, the amount due will be certified
 147 to Ramsey County for collection with their property taxes. He added that the annual
 148 interest rate is determined by City Council, and he said the resolution before them tonight
 149 suggests 6% similar to what was done on the other projects. He stated that our standard is
 150 8% annually, but the Council typically decides to lower it to 6%. There are payment
 151 options which are spelled out very clearly to the property owners in correspondence they
 152 received from the City. He stated that written appeals must be presented to the Council at
 153 tonight's hearing.

154
 155 Mayor Krachmer opened the Public Hearing to the public at 7:54 pm. Since no one was
 156 present wishing to speak, Krachmer closed the Public Hearing at 7:54 p.m.

157
 158 Mayor Krachmer opened the Assessment Hearing to the public at 7:55 pm. Since no one
 159 was present wishing to comment on the assessments, Krachmer closed the Assessment
 160 Hearing at 7:55 p.m.

161
 162 Upon motion by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member Doll Kanne, it
 163 was

164 #23-03-043 “RESOLVED, that the Council approve the resolutions ordering the 2023-
 165 5 Street Improvement Project and adopting the Assessment Roll as
 166 presented.”

167 Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

168 The resolution was adopted.

169 OLD BUSINESS

170 A. 2024 Sanitary Sewer Lining and Access Project Update

171 Director of Public Works/City Engineer Farrell began by giving some history on the
 172 project. He said following budget discussions on September 6, 2022, the City Council
 173 included \$1.4M for a Sanitary Sewer Access and Lining Project in the 2023 Adopted
 174 Budget. He said too many of our most critical sewage facilities are practically
 175 inaccessible and easement acquisition and infrastructure improvements have been
 176 considered to improve maintenance and operations activities at various locations. In this
 177 regard, the 2024 Sanitary Sewer Lining and Access Project is the first and most important
 178 effort. This project would benefit 995 properties. Sewage from these properties is
 179 collected from numerous sewer pipes which all drain into this area. Both the pipes and
 180 the manholes in this area are deteriorated and have not received maintenance due to

181 inaccessibility. This project will facilitate access to make long-term repairs and regular
182 maintenance such as jetting and flushing.

183 Council Member Jozwowski asked about the elementary school and the Bears Backyard,
184 which is their trails and outdoor classroom area. She wondered if the project would
185 disturb that area. Mr. Farrell said the project could complement existing uses as the area
186 was now only a footpath to access the space. Accessibility could be improved to the
187 backyard, although it would not be ADA accessible near the wetland area. He added the
188 City would get the school district's support on anything that is proposed and the school
189 district will likely see benefits from the project. Mr. Farrell said no action is required
190 right now on behalf of the Council as the presentation was just an update.

191 B. Goal Session Discussion

192 City Administrator Watson presented the finalized 2023 Goal-setting Report and
193 Strategic Plan that outlined the recent goal setting discussions held on February 2, 2023.
194 He stated that the plan contains both short-term goals and long-term vision for the
195 community. He asked the Council if they had any questions and commented that he
196 would be looking for formal adoption of the plan.

197 Mayor Krachmer asked if the sustainability item was added. Mr. Watson confirmed that
198 sustainable operational practices have been included in the final report.

199 Council Member Rogers referred to a recent League of Minnesota Cities training that he
200 attended that outlined difficulties of cities to find good staff. He said this should be a
201 focus of high-performing organizations to attract and retain good candidates as it was
202 important to keep the City's good culture intact. Mayor Krachmer agreed, stating that
203 retaining good staff is noteworthy as a strategic objective for the Council.

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

206 #23-03-044 "RESOLVED to accept the 2023 Goal-setting Report and Strategic Plan as
207 presented."

208 Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

209 The resolution was adopted.

210 **NEW BUSINESS**

211 A. Planning Case 23-001: SBA Monarch Towers I, LLC – Site Plan Review at 3645
212 Centerville Road

213
214 Planning/Community Development Director Wall stated the application before the Council
215 is a site plan review at 3645 Centerville Road, which is the Vadnais Heights Elementary

216 School campus property. The applicant is requesting modifications to an existing
217 telecommunications tower on the site. The location would be the same, but the design
218 would change. The tower was originally constructed in 2007. The applicant was proposing
219 to convert the existing stealth tower-design to a monopole tower-design to provide better
220 coverage and capacity to the applicable service area based on advanced technology and
221 increased usage. The tower height would not change. He reviewed interrelationship with
222 surrounding properties and land uses, traffic, parking, and access, architectural features,
223 and others and said no changes to the existing conditions were proposed. He stated that
224 unanimously, the Planning Commission has recommended approval. If approved, the
225 project would begin once school is over. The school district has given their blessing on the
226 project as presented.

227
228 Council Member Doll Kanne thanked staff for the information and was pleased the
229 structure would now look like something the public can identify.

230
231 Mr. Wall explained the antennae system is inside of the current design and is difficult to
232 maintain and switch equipment. He noted technology was ever-changing and the City
233 even has antennae on its water towers, adding the existing structure has served its
234 purpose but is no longer viable to maintain at a reasonable price. He said there was no
235 proposal to increase the structure but just enhance, adding he was unsure of the number
236 of monopoles in the City.

237
238 Council Member Rogers said the stealth tower was for text and cell usage, but now
239 needed for data usage and asked if this will be the trend for more monopoles in the City.

240
241 Mr. Wall said when these systems first came into cities, there was an analysis done by the
242 City for acceptable sites including those being tall enough for multiple antennae systems.
243 Basically, the analysis was done to cover what was reasonable of the city and
244 surrounding communities. He said you wouldn't want these systems to interfere with
245 each other's frequencies. He didn't think it would be a proliferation of any more towers,
246 but just an enhancement to an existing tower. He added, the tower provides a revenue
247 source to the school and he didn't have any concerns with it.

248
249 City Attorney Bell Backman said the ordinance came as a result of a lawsuit as the
250 Council back then did not want to allow towers at all. The Federal Telecommunications
251 Act said we had to allow them so staff did an engineering analysis to create criteria for
252 towers while stopping the over proliferation of them.

253
254 Upon motion by Council Member Goebel, seconded by Council Member Jozwowski, it
255 was

256 #23-03-045 "RESOLVED, that the Council approve Planning Case 23-001: SBA
257 Monarch Towers I, LLC – Site Plan Review at 3645 Centerville Road as
258 presented."

259 Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

260 The motion was adopted.

261

262 **COUNCIL REPORTS**

263 Chief Hearden had nothing further to report.

264 Assistant City Administrator Kaylin Clement shared the importance of recruitment and
265 retention of good employees and how Vadnais Heights has many long-standing employees.
266 She congratulated City Administrator Watson for his 10 years of service and presented him
267 with a memento recognizing that accomplishment.

268 City Administrator Watson thanked the Council and staff for this recognition and said he has
269 enjoyed his time working with a great team in place.

270 Mr. Farrell shared plans to address the upcoming snow event then shared about a recent
271 message acknowledging snow removal work and thanked the Council for their support of the
272 Public Works Department.

273 Mr. Wall had nothing further to report.

274 Ms. Beckman thanked the City for the opportunity to work with Council and staff.

275 Council Member Doll Kanne spoke about the recent training at the League of MN Cities and
276 appreciated the opportunity to serve as an elected leader and appreciated the training.

277 Council Member Rogers shared about the recent VLAMO meeting actions that worked to
278 track and preserve groundwater. He welcomed Deputy City Clerk Phillip Lundquist since he
279 has been hired. He spoke about the Ramsey County Under Sherriff meeting that he attended
280 and what he learned about their work. He thanked Public Works for their efforts with snow
281 removal. He commented the West Field Park project was approved and is moving forward to
282 improve filtration.

283 Council Member Jozwowski welcomed the two new Planning Commissioners and said she
284 was pleased to see this level of participation and encouraged others to become involved,
285 especially youth ambassadors. She thanked Mr. Watson for his 10 years of service and
286 wished a happy birthday to Council Member Doll Kanne.

287 Council Member Goebel thanked Ramsey County for the work they do as he was impressed
288 with their actions. He spoke about the VHACF board meeting and need for more board
289 members. He thanked Mr. Watson for his work and welcomed the new Deputy City Clerk.

290 Mayor Krachmer thanked former Deputy Clerk Aho for her work and said she will be missed
291 then thanked Mr. Watson for his great work. He thanked Public Works for the great job with
292 snow removal this season. He also thanked the Sherriff's Office for their service in a very

293 thoughtful and flexible way to meet the demand. He thanked staff and thanked the public for
294 their participation.

295 Mr. Watson said the goals will be published online and that staff looked forward to its
296 implementation. He said the City was looking forward to having the new Deputy City Clerk
297 on staff and that he and Mayor Krachmer will be attending the City Day on the Hill event at
298 the Capitol. He congratulated the Gentry Academy girl's hockey team for winning the State
299 championship.

300 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

301

302 Respectfully submitted,

303

304

305

Kevin Watson, City Administrator