

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
APRIL 4, 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; Fire Chief, Chris Hearnden; and Senior Engineering Tech, Nick Ousky.

FUTURE CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS

Rogers stated that, as liaison for the County Road E Project, he would like to discuss continuation of planning involving the County Road E corridor. He mentioned that the neighboring cities of Gem Lake and White Bear Lake are interested in forming a consortium with Vadnais Heights to integrate new ideas and planning. Wall stated that he will reach out to the appropriate people in White Bear Lake and Gem Lake to bring this issue to a future workshop for more discussion.

Doll Kanne felt that during the budget process, it would be nice to discuss if the City would be open budgeting money to support a winter “Need a Plant” sewing workshop. She thought VLAMO may have grants that could be used for funding too. The money could also support buying 3” potted established plants that the city could give away in conjunction with No Mow May. Rogers said that he would be interested in learning more since native plants are needed for the pollinators.

Krachmer stated that he is envisioning a series of op-eds in the Vadnais Press, or using other communication channels such as the City website or Facebook page, to share announcements or topics of interest with the community. Watson said that the City would need to be able to manage the public discussion since anything public-related should have its data collected. Watson added that generally, that is why there is a refrain from having too much discourse online. However, Watson said that there may be another means of having public dialogue that could be accommodated.

TWIN LAKE BLVD TRAIL DISCUSSION

Farrell stated that Little Canada and Vadnais Heights have been discussing the Twin Lake Boulevard project for a long time. Farrell discussed the history of the project and how a trail was

40 eventually decided upon to be added to the project. The entire trail will cost about \$800,000,
41 which would be split 50/50 with Little Canada. Little Canada has already received \$500,000 in
42 grant money from Ramsey County for the trail. Vadnais Heights was going to apply for the same
43 grant money, but was told by the County that they had already looked at the population of
44 Vadnais Heights when awarding the Little Canada grant so we aren't eligible for the grant
45 money. Vadnais Heights did apply for a different grant via MnDOT, but was unsuccessful in
46 securing it.

47 Farrell stated that it makes sense to split the \$500,000 grant that Little Canada received since the
48 project is about a partnership. He has discussed this idea with Little Canada's staff and they
49 seemed supportive of the idea. The Little Canada City Council will be discussing this issue at
50 their next meeting on Wednesday, April 12. Farrell discussed other ideas that could be pursued if
51 the grant money is not shared, including completing the trail at a future time.

52 Rogers asked why Little Canada would want to split their grant money with Vadnais Heights
53 since it will cost them more. Doll Kanne said that they would be left with a trail that stops at
54 their border and this project is a partnership. Farrell agreed and stated he would like to see the
55 partnership continue since the trail would benefit residents of both cities. Watson welcomed
56 those at the workshop to attend the Little Canada City Council meeting to advocate for the
57 partnership.

58 Farrell said that tree clearing has been done on the property and 40 trees will be replanted. He
59 said the project will change the character of the area in a positive way.

60 Farrell introduced Ousky to those present and shared about his background. He's helped with
61 many projects and has been a great addition to City staff. Watson said that with Farrell's
62 departure, Ousky will be stepping up in the interim until a new City Engineer is hired.

63 **ADVISORY COMMISSIONS DISCUSSION**

64 Wall presented a draft ordinance to the Council and said that he had the bulk of the ordinance
65 originally drafted with help from discussions with the previous Council. The draft ordinance
66 follows up on short-term opportunity goals that the current Council has set, but also was built by
67 the previous Council. Wall discussed details of the ordinance and the need for changes to the
68 City Code. He indicated that the bulk of the ordinance cleans up sections of the Code that should
69 have been done when it was codified. He discussed drafting a Code of Conduct for the Council
70 to adopt as a policy. Wall asked for comments before he brings the ordinance back before the
71 Council for formal action.

72 Much discussion followed about adding the Green Team to the City Code once it is established,
73 whether or not term limits were necessary, and concerns that have arisen involving diminishing
74 the role of commissions. All present indicated their interest in finding a way to exchange ideas
75 with commissioners. Doll Kanne suggested scheduling regular purposeful meetings with the

76 commissions so ideas could be discussed. Wall said that there is language in the draft ordinance
77 about the ability for Council to schedule meetings.

78 Doll Kanne suggested the commissioners give input on the draft ordinance before the Council
79 acts on it. Watson said once the input is received from all of the commissions, this item will be
80 placed back on a Council workshop for further discussion.

81 **PARK MASTER PLAN RFP DISCUSSION**

82 Watson said that it took a while to find example RFPs to review. He suggested that the City ask
83 for proposals from companies that typically do these types of master plans. The Council could
84 then review each proposal and decide how to proceed. The Council's decision may be dictated
85 based on cost, level of engagement, or other factors. When reviewing the example RFPs,
86 Krachmer was surprised at how prescriptive they were since they seemed to want exact answers
87 to exact questions. He felt being too prescriptive doesn't allow for any variations or creativity by
88 the organization whom is creating the plan.

89 Jozwowski said she'd like to hear from the Park Commission to see what they'd like out of the
90 plan. She commented that we could tell the organization chosen to create the plan what our basic
91 goals are, but didn't want to get too specific since we may miss our blind spots.

92 Krachmer suggested working with the Park Commission to create a mission statement since he
93 felt the statement could drive what's in the Master Plan. Watson suggested asking the
94 Commission what they'd like to see in the Master Plan. Then, this topic can be placed back on a
95 future Council workshop to discuss further before sending proposals out to a variety of vendors.

96 **OTHER STAFF ITEMS**

97 Wall stated that a grant application has been submitted for the Comprehensive Housing Study
98 that was discussed previously in an amount of \$30,000. Three proposals were received and they
99 were all very different in terms of cost and strategy. If the City is awarded the grant, the item will
100 be presented to the Council.

101 Rogers asked about Elevage and how construction is going. Wall said the only complaints he's
102 received have to do with parking. The contractors are parking on the street where parking is
103 allowed. The site is tight, but he believes the developer can find somewhere else for them to
104 park. Wall stated that there were 50 cars parked on Twin Lake Blvd today from the Little Canada
105 project. He stated that it is the same contactor as The Ansel, which is unique. Wall commented
106 that he doesn't like the big crane swinging out over the street and lake, but that's the reality of
107 having a tight site.

108 Clement stated that on Friday, a 92-page grant application was submitted for the \$350,000 match
109 that would bring us much closer to the pavilion.

110 Goebel asked for updates on Big Wood Brewery. Wall stated that their building permit was
111 issued, and gas and electric has been connected. He stated that the site has been cleaned up, but
112 he hasn't been inside for a while.

113 Wall stated that there will be a second lift of asphalt on the Mondello Shores development this
114 spring. He heard they are first on the list to get a playground installed so there will be a new park
115 and playground this year. Frank Frattalone will be consulted on a name for the park since he paid
116 for it and it is his land.

117 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

118

119 Respectfully submitted,

120

121 Kevin Watson, City Administrator

DRAFT