

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS
APRIL 21, 2020**

The meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Gunderson at 4:01 p.m.

Everyone present stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Heidi Gunderson and Council Members Craig Johnson, Bob Morse, Patricia Youker and Greg Urban.

The following members were absent: None.

Also present were: Kevin Watson, City Administrator, Tim Sandvik, Assistant City Administrator, Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director, Jesse Farrell, Public Works Director, Bob Sundberg, Finance Director, Chris Hearnden, Interim Fire Chief, Caroline Beckman, City Attorney and Peggy Aho, Deputy City Clerk.

City Administrator Watson provided several announcements.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Morse, seconded by Johnson, approved by Urban, Youker and Gunderson, it was

20-04-065 “RESOLVED that the April 21, 2020 Regular Meeting Agenda be approved as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 7, 2020 Regular Council Meeting

Upon motion by Morse, seconded by Youker, approved by Johnson, Urban and Gunderson, it was

20-04-066 “RESOLVED, to approve the April 7, 2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Morse, seconded by Johnson, approved by Youker, Urban and Gunderson, it was

20-04-067 “RESOLVED, that the Consent Agenda Items #7A-7G for the April 21, 2020 meeting be approved as follows:

- A. Consider Approving Claims #79162 Through #79202 and Electronic Claims #1487 Through #1491 for Payment
- B. Consider Amending the Permit Date for the Lawful One-Day Gambling Permit for the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society
- C. Consider Terminating Firefighter Alexander Boyer
- D. Consider Accepting and Acknowledging Donation of Hand Sanitizer from Norseman Distillery
- E. Consider Accepting and Acknowledging Donation of Face Masks from Linda Bigelbach
- F. Consider Approval of a Services Agreement with the City of White Bear Lake for Building Permit Review and Inspections
- G. Consider Acknowledging Receipt of Quarterly Four Building Permit Report.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Gunderson opened the meeting to the public for comment at 4:06 p.m. There being no one that wished to speak, Gunderson closed it at 4:06 p.m.

PRESENTATION(S):

- A. Proclamation: National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2020

Mayor Heidi Gunderson read the following proclamation proclaiming the week of April 19-25, 2020, National Volunteer Week:

WHEREAS, volunteerism strengthens communities, improves social problems, and enhances the overall quality of life for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, experience teaches us that government alone cannot solve all of our social problems or meet all of our opportunities, so we have focused on partnerships with businesses, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and citizens; and

WHEREAS, volunteering changes the lives of volunteers in a positive way, increasing self-confidence, self-esteem and physical wellbeing; offering the chance to meet new friends and associates; and providing opportunities to learn new skills and abilities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vadnais Heights recognizes that volunteering improves our quality of life and increases community participation and ownership; and volunteers are vital to our future as a desirable, caring and productive city.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Vadnais Heights City Council, that the week of April 19 - 25, 2020, be hereby recognized as National Volunteer Week in the City of Vadnais Heights.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Resolution was passed unanimously by the City Council for the City of Vadnais Heights on April 21, 2020.

Upon motion by Youker, seconded by Morse, approved by Urban, Johnson and Gunderson, it was

20-04-068 “RESOLVED that the Council adopts the Proclamation Proclaiming the Week of April 19-25, 2020 as National Volunteer Week.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. Planning Case 20-006: Lunski VH Holdings, LLC – Minor Site Plan at 1239 Willow Lake Boulevard

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that the applicant has submitted a minor site plan application for approval of a parking lot improvement project. This property is zoned/guided industrial. Wall noted that the applicant is proposing 19 additional parking spaces. Wall reviewed the proposed site plan and noted that there will be no building improvements and that it will include a new driveway access. Staff recommended as a condition that the three trees being removed be replaced somewhere else on the site.

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Johnson, approved by Morse, Youker and Gunderson, it was

20-04-069 “RESOLVED that the Council adopts a resolution approving the Minor Site Plan at 1239 Willow Lake Boulevard with conditions as noted.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Update City Council on COVID-19 Response

City Administrator Watson gave an update on the City's response to COVID-19. He thanked staff for being flexible and creative and said that staff are beginning to look at what reopening might look like and how to provide an environment that is safe for residents and business members when they come into City Hall, as well as staff. Having stanchions set up so that there is one clear spot for people to access the counters and speak to staff.

Watson said that staff have put up new signage on the playgrounds indicating that they are not sanitized and that people using them will do so at their own risk and also that the CDC recommends no usage. He said that staff have been utilizing Zoom for most meetings in order to facilitate social distancing. He said he appreciates the Council's flexibility.

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik gave an update and noted that we continue to facilitate things differently, some staff are working split shifts which may include evening and weekend hours to make things work. Utility bills went out on time and payments are coming in. He said that staff continue to work on a backlog of identified research and policy issues in conjunction with general day-to-day stuff. He noted that going forward they will be looking at Park and Rec planning as we get closer to summer time. Staff are also working to make sure that the City abides by ever changing HR laws (state and federal guidance).

Interim Chief Hearnden noted that the Fire Department continues to operate under Level 1 and that calls are rising slightly closer to normal rates. He said that there is a Statewide homemade mask drive being held on Saturday, April 25 and that they will be taking donations at the South Fire Station. He said that once the masks have been collected, the Fire Department will reach out to congregant living facilities in the City to see if they have any need for these types of masks and that any extras will get sent to the County. He said that the Fire Department participated in a teacher parade, throughout the City, to encourage the kids to stay positive and move forward on their learning, and that they have also done a couple drive-bys for birthday parties. He said that Fire Department staff are doing the same thing as City Hall staff, trying to get caught up on a couple things, cleaning, and researching grant opportunities, etc.

Finance Director Sundberg noted that utility bill process is going smoothly, seems like the pace of payments is a little faster than normal. There has been some issues with payroll because the laws keep changing and the City is relying on its payroll provider, ADP, to keep the City in compliance. He said that the audit begins next week, and he is hopeful that most of it will be able to be done on-line.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said that they are actively recruiting for the building official position. The action on the agenda today is for a temporary service agreement with White Bear Lake for temporary coverage for commercial inspections and plan review. He said that the City will also continue to use White Bear Township to cover our residential inspections. He noted that the contractor the City is currently working with has indicated that he no longer wishes to do inspections and plan review and will end providing these services to the City at the end of the month. Wall noted that the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing for the At Home project last week and that it went very well. Two residents registered prior to the hearing and provided testimony to the Planning Commission at the meeting. He said that the same process for registering to testify before the Council at the Public Hearing will be used as was for the Planning Commission and that a sign-up sheet is posted on line for residents who wish to provide testimony at the May 5th hearing.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Farrell noted that Public Works staff continue to do split shifts as it has for the past three weeks. He said that working longer days creates some efficiencies, but while the Department is starting to get a backlog, they are meeting the core functions. He said that hydrant flushing and other annual maintenance might get pushed off a little, but once they are able to nail down some dates, especially for hydrant flushing, staff will notify residents. He noted that they have begun sanitizing all of the City's buildings including the Fire Department, public works and parks. The City is on a monthly schedule with the cleaning company and staff will continue to monitor this as things change.

Watson noted that the County is considering a deferment of payment for property taxes. Staff will continue to monitor this issue

Council Member Urban asked if Watson's intent is to open up City Hall and bring meetings back in person as soon as the stay-at-home order expires. Watson noted that the plan is for the May 5th meeting to be done in person in the Council chamber, and at that meeting they will hold a public hearing on At Home Apartment. It is a day-by-day decision, he continues to work with the City attorney, as he considers what the latest news is.

Council Member Morse asked what the County is talking about with regards to property tax deferment and asked if there is a date they are discussing. Watson said he understands that the County is considering deferring the property tax payments to July 15th and that they may also work with individual property owners that have been affected by the virus. He said they should know more later. Morse asked about people that have street assessments on their property taxes and whether they will continue to accrue interest on those assessments until the new due date in July. Watson said he isn't sure, and that he will follow up on that.

Mayor Gunderson thanked staff for thinking outside the box and for all their hard work and flexibility, it is greatly appreciated.

B. Consider Accepting Bids for 2020 Improvement Project, Ordering Preparation of Assessment Roll and Scheduling an Assessment Hearing

Public Works Director/City Engineer Farrell noted that last Thursday they opened bids for 2020 Street Improvement project. The low bid was provided by Bituminous Roadways. \$1.55 million. There were six bids and SEH's estimate was right in the middle of the bids. The next steps are for the Council to accept the bids and order the preparation of the Assessment roll and set May 19th as the date for the Assessment Public Hearing. Farrell said that staff have been discussing the possibility of revising the term for special assessments for the project, perhaps a longer term, 10 or 15 years, to soften the blow for those that will be paying the assessments. Watson said that perhaps the City might want to defer the first payment for a year instead of extending out the term. Mayor Gunderson asked if there be a resolution regarding possible deferment for the Council to consider prior to the Assessment Hearing. Farrell said he will have to see what information is required in the public hearing assessment notice because it has to be sent in for publication.

Council Member Johnson said it looks like the City is spending \$500,000 more than it typically does in a year for street improvements and that that is a good sign. Farrell replied yes because Arcade is a State Aid Road and that this project makes it a more robust construction project than past years. He said that the City will be doing about \$2 million in street improvements this year.

Upon motion by Johnson, seconded by Morse, approved by Youker, Urban and Gunderson, it was

20-04-070 "RESOLVED that the Council adopts a resolution accepting the Bids, Ordering the Preparation of the Proposed Assessment Roll, and sets May 19, 2020 as the Public Hearing Date to consider the Proposed Assessments for the 2020-01 Street Improvement Project."

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

C. Consider Accepting Bids for County Road D Improvement Project, Ordering Preparation of Assessment Roll and Scheduling an Assessment Hearing

Public Works Director/City Engineer Farrell noted that bids for this project were opened by Little Canada (the City leading the Project) on April 16 also had six bidders. This project is a larger construction project and the bid came in low. But, unfortunately, Vadnais Heights portion of the project came in higher than projected, so the City's

portion of the project increased to \$130,000. The City share of the project costs will be funded using the City's State Aid Funds.

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Youker, approved by Morse, Johnson and Gunderson, it was

20-04-071 "RESOLVED that the Council Accepts the Bids, Orders the Preparation of Assessment Roll, and sets May 19, 2020 as the Public Hearing Date to consider the Proposed Assessments for the 2020-03 County Road D Improvement Project."

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Amend the 2020-2021 Liquor License Application Process to Waive the Inspection of Establishments Requirement and Authorize Prorating the 2020-2021 On-Sale Liquor License Fees for On-Sale Liquor Licenses to Account for the Period of Time the Establishments have been Closed due to the Governor's Executive Order 20-33

City Administrator Watson noted that staff are looking for authorization to amend the 2020 liquor licensing process and proportionately provide a credit for the upcoming year, whatever the portion of lost time is towards the cost of the new license.

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Morse, approved by Johnson, Youker and Gunderson, it was

20-04-072 "RESOLVED that the Council approves amending the 2020-21 Liquor License application process to waive the inspection requirement in City Code Chapter 4, Article II, Section 4-25 and authorizes staff to credit a portion of the On-Sale establishments 2019-2021 License fees by prorating the 2020-2021 On-Sale Liquor License Fee to account for the period of time on-sale liquor establishments have been closed due to the Governor's Executive Order 20-33 closing bars and restaurants."

Ayes – 5 Nays - 0

The resolution was adopted.

COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Finance Director Sundberg noted that Ramsey County Board took action today which will allow no penalties for property tax payments up to two months late.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Farrell noted that the work on the Oak Creek Culvert has begun.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that turf at the Sports Center is under construction. The development agreement and final plat is not approved for yet for the Frattalone project, but they are starting to work on grading. Working with the City Attorney to work on an agreement for preliminary grading to get the project moving. A development agreement will be brought before the Council for approval once the plans are ready.

City Attorney Beckman noted that EBBQ is operating and custody court is still taking place. Doing most business via phone.

Deputy City Clerk Aho thanked the Council for approving the amended Liquor License application process and noted that applications will be sent out this week.

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik noted that the Census is still going on, and suggested that you fill it out if you haven't done so already. He also noted that staff are in the process of postponing some events at the Commons. He said that staff are beginning to look at Park and Rec programming for the summer.

Council Member Urban noted that he attended the peaceful rally at the Governor's house.

Council Member Youker will be meeting Phil Bellaorte at the VLAWMO meeting this week.

Council Member Johnson said, as quoted by someone, do not be afraid but be diligent and be careful.

City Administrator Watson noted that he, Wall and the Mayor met with a potential user of the Garceau site and have another meeting with someone else soon.

Mayor Gunderson noted that NYFS is not doing their fundraiser of the year in person, but will do an online forum on May 6. She said to contact her know if you are interested in participating and she will send the link.

There being no further business, Council Member Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 pm, seconded by Council Member Youker. Council Members Morse and Urban were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Watson, City Administrator