



Approved: February 22, 2021

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
JANUARY 19, 2021
5:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Pro Tem Holden called to order the City Council Work Session at 5:02 p.m.

Note: On March 20th, the Mayor signed a determination allowing Councilmembers to participate in City Council meetings via telephone pursuant to State Statute 13D.021

Present via telephone: Mayor David Grant, Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Dave McClung and Steve Scott

Absent: None

Also present: City Administrator Dave Perrault, Public Works Director/City Engineer Todd Blomstrom, Community Development Manager/City Planner Mike Mroska and Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Tony Schmidt Regional Park Access Concerns Letter Follow Up

City Administrator Perrault stated that a return letter was received from Ramsey County Commissioner Frethem and an attachment from Ted Schoenecker, the County Public Works Director/Engineer. Staff would take further direction or feedback.

City Administrator Perrault said it appears Ramsey County will be doing a corridor study on a few roadways including Lake Johanna Boulevard.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom added the Ramsey County transportation planner is developing a scope of work for the study and they intend to share the draft request for proposal for consultant services with staff prior to issuing the RFP. Staff will be able to review the scope of the study and give suggestions back to the County.

Councilmember Holmes felt the City should proactively tell the County what we need before the study.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden wondered if the study would be for only pedestrian and bikes or if would include road improvements.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom said he did not know the details.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden asked if it were true that we were required to participate in the cost participation policy.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom commented that is true.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden discussed the letter from Commissioner Frethem and asked if we know when any work would be done after the study.

Councilmember McClung said he was disappointed by the letter from Commissioner Frethem. The memo from Ted Schoenecker was a nice recap of the projects that have been done in the area, however those projects have been done separately from Lake Johanna Boulevard. He didn't feel they addressed the City's concerns and wondered if they had responded back about them.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom reported Ramsey County had responded about the lane narrowing that had been done and they have proposed some lane pavement markings. Also, the most recent version of the County's Transportation Improvement Program includes resurfacing Old Snelling from County Road E to Highway 96.

Councilmember Holmes mentioned that area was another place for a potential trail. But she wanted them to focus on Lake Johanna Boulevard.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden noted the additional housing units going in at County Road C and Fairview will be adding additional people walking on Lake Johanna Boulevard and will make it even more dangerous.

Councilmember McClung suggested requesting a meeting with Commissioner Frethem and the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden directed staff to request a meeting with Commissioner Frethem and the Council regarding Lake Johanna Boulevard.

B. Infill Discussion

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska stated the Council had previously directed staff to look at infill development and he would like to move forward with a preliminary discussion regarding building height. Section 1305.04 of the City Code defines building height as "the vertical distance from the average elevation of the grade along a face of a building to the highest point of the roof surface of flat roofs, the deck line of mansard roofs, or the average height between the eaves and the highest ridge of gable, hip, or gambrel roofs." Code currently requirements a maximum height of 35 feet measured to the midpoint, but the height of the building can be significantly higher.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła asked question number one of the memo: Should the maximum height be measured to the top or ridgeline of the proposed single-family dwellings within the R-1 and R-2 districts?

Councilmember Scott said he would vote no, that it should be the average height.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden wondered if they could specify a maximum height.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła said the maximum height is currently 35 feet, but they would have to redefine or revise how they measure. The height could be increased to the top of the structure.

Mayor Pro Tem Holden felt they should measure from the top on infill development.

Councilmember McClung agreed. He didn't like the midline measurement, but wondered if they needed to increase from 35 feet.

Councilmember Holmes agreed, so that new homes don't overwhelm existing modest homes.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła noted the residential inspector felt 35 feet to the top was sufficient.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła felt most homes are generally around 35 – 40 feet on average. He can bring back a recommendation for height so as not to have multiple variance requests.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła asked question number 2: Should the garage portion of the home facing the street exceed fifty (50) percent of the total front façade R-1 and R-2 districts?

Council was in agreement to not exceed 50 percent.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła said he will be bringing forth more information on infill development in the future.

Mayor Grant joined the meeting at 5:35 pm.

C. Chicken Ordinance Update Discussion

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła noted staff has focused on research and fact gathering for drafting an ordinance regarding chickens and is looking for Council direction on a number of items. What is Council's expectations on approval timelines for amending the animal ordinance to allow for the keeping of chickens? Staff is under the impression that the goal to implement an ordinance was to be completed by March 2021.

Councilmember Holden agreed with March depending on staff availability.

Mayor Grant felt people wouldn't be building chicken coops in March.

Councilmember Holmes noted that residents would order chicks in March to get them in the spring. She agreed it depended on staff time.

Councilmember McClung said a number of residents that want to have chickens have contacted him and told him that spring is crucial in planning. He would prefer to complete the ordinance as early as possible.

Councilmember Scott said he isn't willing to prioritize this over an economic project.

Councilmember Holmes asked if March was realistic as Council would want to see the ordinance before it went before the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Holden noted that chickens can be purchased from April to September, but agreed that planning projects with deadlines should come first.

Mayor Grant stated this ordinance is lower on the priority list and should be done as time allows. He moved on to question number two: the number of hens allowed.

After discussion, Council agreed on allowing 3 hens and no roosters, with Councilmember McClung requesting four to six hens and Councilmember Scott suggesting up to four.

Mayor Grant asked if chicken coops or runs should be permitted in any area of the yard besides the rear yard. He asked for a description of a chicken run.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla responded that a chicken run is the area that the chickens can move about outside of the coop. They are generally fenced in and roofed with netting.

After discussion, it was decided coops and runs should be located in the rear yard only, close to and behind the dwelling.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla presented questions five through eight of the memo and were all answered as "yes" by the Council.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla asked the final question from the memo, should a coop count against the number and size of accessory structures onsite?

Councilmember Holmes said a coop could be used for storage once they no longer want chickens.

Councilmember Scott felt it would count against the total number of structures.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla asked if Council was agreeable to coop size of 50 square feet or should they leave that open ended for now?

Councilmember Scott thought maybe it should be 2 structures each limited to X number of square feet.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła clarified that two accessory structures are currently allowed, if coops aren't counted as a structure they could have three.

Mayor Grant thought it should be counted as an accessory structure but that it could go down to less than 50 square feet.

Councilmember Scott noted that a coop could be added on to an existing structure as an addition.

Councilmember McClung felt it should be counted as an accessory structure.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła said he will use the Council's responses to draft ordinance language and bring the ordinance back for review.

D. Planning Commission Onboarding Policy

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła said the City Council discussed the Planning Commission - Zoning Approvals and Plan Review Guide at a previous meeting. During the meeting staff stated that they were creating an onboarding policy for new commissioners. He wanted to create a document to outline what should be given to a new commissioner and as a guide for future staff. He was open to comments and suggestions on the policy attached in their packet.

Councilmember Holmes felt the Planning Commission as a whole could benefit from some education, not just new commissioners. Policy issues, variances and zoning were items she felt commissioners needed to review.

Councilmember Holden also felt onboarding for everyone was a good idea.

Councilmember Scott said there were other resources available from the League of Minnesota Cities. He also felt they need to understand their role within the planning responsibilities of the City, and what the generic state and regional codes are.

Councilmember Holmes said the Planning Commission Chair along with the Community Development Manager/City Planner and herself are going to have a meeting to set expectations.

Councilmember Holden encouraged the Council Liaison to speak up during the meeting if clarifying statements are needed.

City Administrator Perrault suggested a joint meeting between the Planning Commission and the City Council to discuss concerns.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła asked if the Council will support the onboarding document with the role of the Planning Commission added to the second item.

Mayor Grant commented that it was a nice outline and has probably been needed for a while.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla will prioritize working on the advisory aspect and roles of the commission.

E. Council Tracker

City Administrator Perrault provided the Council with an update on the Council Tracker. After discussion the 2020 Work Plan for ICWC Contract Work Crews would be removed, and Crack Sealing on Tennis Courts would be removed if it is on the Public Works maintenance schedule.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember McClung noted that the Fire Board meeting will be held the next day.

Mayor Grant stated that Karth Lake Improvement District met. They are looking for new board members. He also had a conference call with other Mayors and discussed legislative spending; congressional spending will be funding certain projects. Representative McCollum is willing to take projects presented to her forward. They also discussed COVID-19 and vaccine roll out.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla noted material boards for New Perspective Senior Living are in the office for the Council to review. And almost 500 pounds of holiday lights have been collected so far this year as compared to around 300 pounds last year.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 6:44 p.m.

Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk

David Grant
Mayor