



Approved: March 8, 2021

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2021
5:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Acting Mayor Holden called to order the City Council Work Session meeting at 5:00 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: Mayor David Grant (joined the meeting at 5:10 p.m.), Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Dave McClung and Steve Scott

Absent: None

Also present: City Administrator Dave Perrault; Finance Director Gayle Bauman; Interim Public Works Director David Swearingen; Recreation Programmer Joe Vaughan; Community Development Manager/City Planner Mike Mrosła; and City Clerk Julie Hanson

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Ordinary High Water Level (OHWL) Setback Discussion

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła stated at its January 11, 2021 meeting the City Council reviewed Planning Case 20-017. The Applicant was requesting a variance for a larger than ordinance permitted accessory structure located within the Ordinary High Water Level (OHWL) setback of Lake Johanna. The rationale provided by the applicant for the variance was that the structure would be used for the storage of modern day recreational water equipment and the hardship was due to the rear yard topography. The City Council voted unanimously to table this planning case to allow them to review the existing OHWL accessory structure size standards.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła commented City Code Section 1330.03 Subd. 5, E states that lakeshore lots are permitted one (1) accessory storage shed within the required structure setback from the OHWL, provided that it is not located within the Shore Impact Zone. The Shore Impact Zone is the land located between the OHWL and a line parallel to

it at a setback of 50 percent of the structure setback. The structure setback standards vary depending on the lake classification as established by Minnesota Regulations, Part 6120.3300, and the Protected Waters Inventory Map for Ramsey County. Staff reviewed a table of information with the breakdown the setback standards for accessible Arden Hills lakes.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla explained City Code Section 1330.03 Subd. 5, E also states that accessory structures within the OHWL shall not exceed sixty-four (64) square feet in size or eight (8) feet by eight (8) feet and eight (8) feet in height measured to the highest point of the structure; and is not used for human habitation and does not contain a water supply or sewage treatment facilities. It worth noting that no more than two (2) accessory structures shall be permitted on a lot primarily used for residential uses and the structures shall not exceed seven hundred and twenty-eight (728) square feet in floor area. The accessory structures shall not occupy more than 25 percent of the rear yard. The exterior finish of accessory structures shall be compatible in appearance and material used with the principal structure.

Councilmember Scott stated he supported the size of these structures within the OHWL being increased, but he did not have a definite number. He questioned if City Code allowed up to two structures on a property at this time, as long as they did not exceed 728 square feet in floor area.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla reported this was correct.

Councilmember McClung commented he was a yes for the first question.

Councilmember Holmes stated her answer to question one was maybe.

Councilmember Holden stated she was a yes for question one.

Mayor Grant indicated he was a yes for question one as well. He requested the Council address question two at this time.

Councilmember Scott stated he could support the structures within the OHWL be no more than 225 square feet which would be a 15' by 15' structure.

Councilmember Holden questioned what the width of the narrowest lot on the lake was.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla estimated the narrowest lot to be 54 feet.

Councilmember Holden indicated she could support the structures within the OHWL going to 100 square feet in size.

Mayor Grant commented he would support the size being north of 100 square feet.

Councilmember McClung stated he could support up to 150 square feet.

Councilmember Holmes recommended the sheds be not wider than 12 feet when viewed from the water. She stated the smaller the better for the accessory structures and noted she would support the consensus of the Council.

Mayor Grant reviewed the comments of the Council and noted he could support the accessory structures within the OHWL being up to 100 square feet.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła stated the next question staff had was did the Council support increasing the roof height from eight feet to ten feet.

Councilmember Scott indicated he could support ten feet.

Councilmember Holden reported she would like the structure height to be eight feet.

Councilmember McClung commented he could support a structure height of eight or nine feet.

Councilmember Holmes stated she would support an accessory structure height of eight feet.

Mayor Grant agreed with this recommendation.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła questioned if screening requirements should be added to City Code for structures within the OHWL.

Councilmember Scott stated supported the code requiring screening.

Councilmember McClung agreed.

Councilmember Holmes commented on the requirements from the city of Roseville. She recommended the screening requirements for the City be further clarified.

Councilmember Holden supported accessory structures having to match the principal structure. In addition, she wanted to see organic screening required.

Mayor Grant supported screening being required from the lake side view.

Councilmember Holden recommended doors on the accessory structure not face the lake as this would be difficult to landscape around.

Mayor Grant commented this could be problematic, but screening could still be put in place if setback around the structure.

Councilmember Holden noted Roseville requires these structures to have 50% of the lakeside view screened with opaque screening.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła explained opaque screening would include arborvitae, ornamental grasses, dogwood trees, lilacs, or other conifers. He noted a trellis with a climbing vine could also be used.

Councilmember Holden stated there may be certain plants that do not survive within the OHWL.

Councilmember Scott asked if the DNR had certain species of plants that they wanted planted within the OHWL.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla indicated the DNR does not dictate the type of plantings that are allowed within the OHWL, but rather allows municipalities to set these requirements.

Mayor Grant stated he supported the 50% screening requirement on three sides of the structure, similar to the City of Roseville requirements.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla described how he would define 50% screening on three sides of the structure.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed screening requirements.

Councilmember Holmes reviewed the language included in the Roseville code and recommended the City use this same language. The Council was in agreement.

Mayor Grant asked if the Council wanted to set a maximum width on the sheds when being viewed from the water.

Councilmember Holmes recommended sheds within the OHWL be no more than 12 feet wide.

Councilmember Scott questioned if the DNR had a width limitation.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla explained the DNR does not set a limit, but noted many other cities have set a limit with the maximum width being 12 feet.

Councilmember Scott stated he could support this recommendation.

Councilmember Holden indicated she could support the structure being 10 feet wide from the lake view. The consensus of the Council was to support a width of 10 feet.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla thanked the Council for their input on this item.

B. Spring and Summer Recreation Programs

Recreation Programmer Vaughan stated last year, the City Council made the decision to cancel all spring and summer recreation programs due to COVID-19. Staff is seeking direction on whether or not Council would like to offer classes this summer as it normally would, in a reduced or modified capacity, or no classes at all. If there is an appetite to offer classes, Staff will need to begin the development of a Recreation Guide and start the recruitment process for seasonal personnel. All youth and adult programs would be modified to fit within the current guidelines set forth by the state of Minnesota. Staff has organized spring and summer recreational activities into

the following four categories. The Council may have questions or request additional information regarding these programs. Some information may not be available at this time due to uncertainty surrounding COVID-19. Staff commented further on the proposed summer playground programs and field trips, the youth sports leagues, camps and special events and adult programs that could be held during the spring and summer of 2021.

Councilmember Holden asked if the City provided bussing for the summer program field trips.

Recreation Programmer Vaughan reported this was the case noting the field trips typically lasted six to eight hours. He noted the City would be partnering with Shoreview for these events.

Councilmember Holden stated she could support the field trips.

Councilmember Scott agreed noting he was concerned about the spring activities and how they may be impacted by new COVID strains.

Councilmember Holmes supported the summer field trips.

Councilmember McClung commented he did not have any issues with the field trips so long as all COVID guidelines are being followed.

Mayor Grant concurred. He asked how the Council wanted staff to proceed with the youth sports leagues.

Councilmember Scott supported baseball and soccer being offered this summer.

Councilmember Holden questioned if any events were being planned for August.

Recreation Programmer Vaughan stated fall football and soccer would begin practices in August with games taking place in September.

Councilmember Holden explained she supported the youth sports as proposed. The Council was in agreement.

Mayor Grant asked how the Council wanted to proceed with the youth camps and special events.

Councilmember Holden supported the camps moving forward and understood a large number were held outdoors.

Councilmember Scott suggested a disclaimer be drafted by staff to ensure parents are aware of the COVID/social distancing requirements.

Recreation Programmer Vaughan reported staff could add this disclaimer to the registration software. He explained the City was required to provide a preparedness plan to all parents, coaches and players.

Councilmember Scott noted he could support the City moving forward with the camps and special events.

Councilmember McClung agreed so long as the City was meeting all State health guidelines.

Councilmember Holden recommended the spring egg hunt not be held due to the large number of people that show up, stating it would be difficult for the City to have people properly distanced.

Mayor Grant indicated he understood this was a great community event and commented this may be best for 2022.

Councilmember Scott suggested this event follow the COVID trends and State guidelines. He supported the event moving forward at this time.

Councilmember Holden indicated her main concern people congregating inside the building and sharing the same restroom.

Councilmember Scott deferred this to City staff to meet all State guidelines with respect to COVID.

Councilmember Holmes commented she was more concerned about spring events than summer events. She understood the City always had a great turnout for the egg hunt which may not be conducive for social distancing. She did not recommend the City hold this event.

Councilmember Holden reported Easter was on April 4th this year which meant the egg hunt would be held at the end of March.

Councilmember McClung believed the City had to be very careful when planning these types of events that brought together large numbers of children and elderly. While he wanted to see the event held, he recommended the egg hunt be canceled for 2021.

Mayor Grant questioned how the Council wanted to address adult programs this spring and summer.

Councilmember Holden asked how the community room is cleaned in between classes or on a daily basis.

City Administrator Perrault stated currently the community room was not being used. He discussed the cleaning that was being done by the cleaning service at this time throughout City Hall and they were still implementing enhanced COVID-cleaning. He reported if classes were to resume, a staff member would need to wipe down and disinfect all surfaces.

Councilmember Holmes inquired if the tai chi classes could be held outdoors.

Recreation Programmer Vaughan believed this would be possible.

Councilmember Holmes suggested the City allow for the adult programming with yoga and tai chi outdoors.

Mayor Grant stated that the Council Chambers potentially be used for the AARP classes in order to properly space people out.

Councilmember Holmes raised concern about bringing people into City Hall and stated she would not sit in a class with 8 to 15 people in the Council Chambers, even if spaced out with a mask on. She did not believe this would be safe.

Mayor Grant commented further on the length of the classes that were offered by AARP.

Councilmember Holmes recommended the City not offer these classes in 2021.

Councilmember Scott supported AARP hosting these classes if they believe they can do it safely. He anticipated those 55 and older that are vaccinated could attend this class safely.

Councilmember Holden stated she liked the idea of offering these classes, but understood the classes were available online as well, which may be a better option at this time.

Mayor Grant recommended the City not offer the AARP classes this spring or summer, but noted the Council could support the City offering yoga, foot care and tai chi classes.

Recreation Programmer Vaughan thanked the Council for their input regarding the spring and summer recreation programming.

C. Recreation Programming and Staffing Discussion

City Administrator Perrault stated under a separate discussion item, the City Council reviewed recreation programming and whether or not it would like to offer the full complement of spring/summer programming, a modified version, or no programming at all. The previous year's spring and summer programming was cancelled due to COVID-19 as a measure to protect residents, staff, and program instructors during the pandemic. Following that discussion, the City Council will also want to consider how it wants to proceed with Recreation Programming on a longer-term basis.

City Administrator Perrault explained Council had previously directed Staff to work with the City's Financial, Planning and Analysis Committee (FPAC) on a review of the recreation programming and how it affected the City's budget. The Committee noted that programming decisions are policy decisions the Council needs to make regarding the level and quality of programming offered by the City, but from a budgetary perspective it would recommend that the programming bring in revenue that equals between 95 percent and 105 percent of direct expenses. It did not offer an opinion on related indirect expenses, the largest category being the two full-time staff members that oversee the recreation function. Following a Council discussion of FPAC's recommendation, the Council directed staff to bring a discussion on Recreation Programming to a future work session.

City Administrator Perrault reported the driving question regarding Recreation Programming is the level and breadth of programming the City should be offering. Answering this question will drive other options for Council to consider regarding the recreation function. An example of the Recreation Programming offered by the City in 2019 was reviewed with the Council. He noted the programming found in the example guide is typically more than what a City of our size would offer, but less than our surrounding larger cities that have dedicated recreation facilities. Generally, this level of programming has been overseen by two full-time City employees: a Recreation Coordinator to oversee the administrative piece of the programming, and a Recreation Programmer to assist with the day-to-day aspects of the programming to include: training and supervision of seasonal staff, on-site monitoring, assuming instructor duties when needed, etc.

City Administrator Perrault indicated the Recreation Programmer has reviewed the recreation programs offered by the City and provided a synopsis regarding participation and popularity of the programs. The City Council will want to discuss and consider its program offerings, and whether or not it wants to maintain, grow or reduce the programming being offered.

City Administrator Perrault commented should the City want to maintain or grow the programs being offered, it is recommended the City have at least two full-time employees to oversee the programming. However, should the City want to reduce the programming to keep the “core” programs and reduce the less popular programs, less full-time staffing may be needed. The Recreation Programmer has drafted a program offering that would retain the popular programs, shed the unpopular programs, and could be managed by one full-time person (with a few modifications, including additional seasonal assistance during the busier months). Staff is assuming this would more or less be offset with associated expenditures of the programs, i.e. programming will generally still be a net zero for recreation revenues and direct expenses. Below is a summary table of recreation revenues and expenditures since 2015, note this does NOT include full-time salaries and 2020 was not included as programs were mostly eliminated. When considering full-time salaries, it can be assumed that approximately \$170,000 of General Fund expenses are not off-set by associated recreation revenues. The savings associated with changes to the full-time positions may not directly affect the recreation budget as some of those salaries are allocated elsewhere in the General Fund, but they will all affect the General Fund as 100 percent of both salaries are paid for via the General Fund.

Councilmember Holmes discussed the previous breakdown of rec activities and staffing needs. She stated she was concerned about the two different documents. She reported the Personnel Committee believed the City needed one full time staff member and one seasonal during the summer, which was different from staff’s recommendation of two full time staff members.

Mayor Grant agreed the staff memo was not in alignment with the Personnel Committee. He explained the Personnel Committee recommended the City have one staff member with additional seasonal assistance in the summer. He commented the City’s park and rec offerings were quite robust considering the size of the City.

Councilmember Holden discussed the activities offered by neighboring communities and indicated residents could always go to another community to participate in an activity. She asked if any of the organization work for the Parks and Recreation Department had been completed by Jennifer in Public Works.

Interim Public Works Director Swearingen stated he would have to check with staff to see if these tasks had been completed but noted Jennifer was quite busy with other activities.

Councilmember Holden reported 33% of this position was to be tasked to administration. She agreed that the City should have one full time person running Parks and Recreation and all other help should be summer help or interns. She explained if this became too much for staff, the City could cut back on the programming that was not well attended.

Councilmember McClung agreed with the recommendation from the Personnel Committee. He also supported the City working cooperatively with neighboring cities for some programming.

Councilmember Scott stated people move to Arden Hills because of the City's parks and recreation opportunities. He believed it would be unwise for the public works receptionist to be taking on additional duties for the parks and recreation department. He recommended the City have two full time parks and recreation staff members.

Mayor Grant reported the consensus of the Council was to support the recommendation of the Personnel Committee which was for one FTE and one seasonal employee.

Councilmember Holmes commented on how the workload for parks employees differs between the summer and winter months.

Mayor Grant reported the Personnel Committee recommended the temporary layoff of the recreation coordinator be permanent.

Councilmember Holmes stated 80% of the parks and recreation programming was done by the recreation programmer. For this reason, the Personnel Committee was recommending the City keep the position of Recreation Programmer in place.

Councilmember Holden explained this was correct. She agreed a lot of the programming could be further evaluated to see if the City should continue to offering all of its programming. She commented on the administrative costs it took to offer these programs to the City.

Mayor Grant indicated the City Council would have to take a formal vote to eliminate the recreation coordinator position.

City Administrator Perrault reported this was the case.

Mayor Grant recommended this item be placed on the February 22nd City Council agenda. He also supported the Council reviewing the classes being offered by the parks and recreation department in order to scale back on classes that were not well attended.

Councilmember Scott discussed how eliminating this position would impact the current staff member by increasing the overall workload.

Mayor Grant questioned if the Council supported eliminating some of the programs or classes that were “in the red”. He supported the Council directing staff to consider which programs should be removed.

Councilmember Scott supported staff looking into which programs were most viable.

Councilmember McClung agreed.

Councilmember Holden explained local Community Education also offers a wide variety of programming for Arden Hills residents.

City Administrator Perrault thanked the Council for providing feedback regarding the parks and recreation staffing situation.

D. Planning Staffing Discussion

City Administrator Perrault stated for Council’s discussion, staff has provided an updated City Planner Job description. The Council may want to discuss the filling of a higher-level planning position to support the Community Development Department and the Community Development Manager. This position would not have any supervisory duties, and would be mainly responsible for administering the City’s Zoning Code, associated planning duties, and the City’s recycling program. He explained to the Council that Mr. Mroska has submitted his letter of resignation in order to pursue a high-level, planning position with another city. He noted the City would now have a vacancy for the City Planner and Community Development Manager. Council should provide direction on if further information or discussion is needed, or direct Staff to bring forward to a future Council meeting for a formal approval.

Mayor Grant discussed the City Planner position and stated he supported the City posting this position quickly.

Councilmember Holden supported the City hiring for this position.

Councilmember Scott agreed, especially in light of the fact the City would be losing its Community Development Manager.

Councilmember McClung recommended the City move forward with hiring a City Planner while also starting the process of hiring for a Community Development Director.

Councilmember Holmes supported the City hiring a City Planner and Senior Planner as well.

Councilmember Holden recommended the City hire a City Planner prior to hiring the Senior Planner. She indicated this would allow the City Planner to have some input on who they would be working with.

City Administrator Perrault commented if this were the case, the City would recommend having the City Planner position take on a supervisory role.

Councilmember Scott supported this recommendation.

Councilmember Holmes agreed the City Planner should have a supervisory duties.

City Administrator Perrault suggested the City Planner position be bumped up one pay grade if supervisory duties were required.

Councilmember Holden asked if the City's long term plan was to have a Community Development Director, a City Planner and then another planner.

City Administrator Perrault stated this had been the structure previously, but the City had not had a Community Development Director since 2016.

Councilmember Holden recommended the pay grade only be bumped if a serious candidate were to apply for the position. She supported the pay grade remaining at 15. She noted this individual would not be supervising an entire department but rather would be overseeing one individual.

Councilmember Holmes questioned if supervisory roles were typically pay grade 16.

City Administrator Perrault reported this was not the case.

Councilmember Holmes supported the City hiring at pay grade 16 in order to attract a higher quality candidate for the City Planner position.

Councilmember Holden asked what would happen if a City Planner was hired and they did not want the Community Development Director portion of the position.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed pay grade for the City Planner position.

Councilmember Scott proposed posting the position as pay grade 15 with supervisory duties with the understanding the City could bump up the pay to page grade 16 if the candidate was deemed worthy.

Councilmember McClung discussed the work that was being done by Mr. Mrosla at this time and questioned what the City needs.

Mayor Grant commented the City was looking for a City Planner.

Councilmember Holden asked if City Planners wanted to be Community Development Directors or if this was a natural progression.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla stated this generally was the next career step for many City Planners. He recommended the City hire a City Planner with supervisory experience and have them grow into the Community Development Director position in the future.

Councilmember Holden supported the position being posted at pay grade 15.

Councilmember Scott agreed with posting the position at pay grade 15+.

Councilmember McClung supported Councilmember Scott's recommendation the position should be posted at 15 and this could perhaps be rounded up depending on the candidate.

Councilmember Holmes suggested the position be posted at 15+.

Mayor Grant recommended the position be posted at pay grade 15.

Councilmember Holmes explained two Councilmembers could sit in on the interviews for this position.

Councilmember Holden questioned if a meet and greet would be held for this position.

City Administrator Perrault commented he had not considered this, but would hold a meet and greet if directed by the City Council.

City Administrator Perrault thanked the Council for their feedback and noted he would get the City Planner position posted.

E. Council Tracker

City Administrator Perrault provided the Council with an update on the Council Tracker.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Holmes asked if the agreement with Bolton & Menk would provide the City with assistance even after Mr. Mroska leaves the City.

City Administrator Perrault reported this was his understanding and noted he would be speaking with Ms. Kanzier about this further.

Councilmember Holden requested further information regarding what the funds from the County could be spent on.

City Administrator Perrault explained he reached out to a staff member in Representative McCollum's office and noted the Federal Government was working to earmark dollars and a distribution process. He understood that transportation and transit projects with a regional benefit would be a priority for these funds.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska thanked the City Council for the opportunity to work for the City and for being able to grow in his position.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Julie Hanson
City Clerk

David Grant
Mayor