



Approved: September 26, 2022

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
AUGUST 15, 2022
5:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY HALL**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council Work Session at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Grant, Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Steve Scott and David Radziej

Absent: None

Also present: City Administrator Dave Perrault, Finance Director Gayle Bauman, Public Works Director/City Engineer David Swearingen, Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba, Communications Coordinator Grace Arel, HR Green Project Manager Bridget Osborn and HR Green Project Engineer John Morast

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Water Quality BMP Analysis

HR Green Project Manager Bridget Osborn explained that and MS4 permit stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit. If you have lakes in your city there are certain requirements that have to be met to clean them up, usually including phosphorus or sediment. The MPCA normally does an assessment of the lakes, but in this case the Rice Creek Watershed District sent the total maximum daily load recommendation (TMDL) to the MPCA. A plan needs to be made to bring the lakes down to acceptable levels. They are proposing a scope of study for two lakes, Little Lake Johanna and Pike Lake, which is in New Brighton. Watershed from Arden Hills drains into both of these lakes.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen added that one of the first things to be done would be to have a discussion with New Brighton to lay out the size of each city's watershed.

Ms. Osborn explained they will determine best management practices to filter or capture the sediment before it gets to the pond, or removing phosphorus before they get to the lakes. The plan would also help with future grant opportunities.

Public Works Director/City Engineer David Swearingen said there are four or five lakes that are labeled as impaired and Arden Hills has watershed that drains toward them. These are the two that need to be addressed. They need to show progress toward remediation with the MS4 permit. Eventually they will also have to address the other impaired lakes.

Ms. Osborn said the scope of the work would be to collect data, do a desktop analysis, field reconnaissance and analysis, and a technical memorandum explaining their findings and recommendations. The permit doesn't require clean up of the lake itself, just the water going into the lake.

Discussion ensued regarding what part of the city the storm water was coming from.

Mayor Grant stated the work needed to be done and it will help apply for grants.

B. CDBG Arden Manor Park Improvements Update

HR Green Project Engineer John Morast said the city had applied for a CDBG grant for underserved neighborhoods to replace the play structure, look at drainage and flooding issues, a possible shelter and sport court in Arden Manor. A survey was done and a Rice Creek Watershed District grant was applied for. The grant wasn't awarded but they learned about things that need to happen on the site for stormwater. They reached out to Ramsey County knowing that a lot of the water is coming from the TCAAP site. The thought was to figure out where the groundwater is, what type of contamination is there and what may need to be remediated. The more water that can be held at TCAAP, the less will come to the site and the less they have to contain and/or pass through.

Councilmember Holden thought they should talk to Alatus as they are the developer that would do the grading.

Ms. Osborn explained the flooding that was currently happening in the park and what they looked at to fix that problem. They felt there isn't enough that can be done on site to mitigate the issue, but Rice Creek Watershed District is willing to help.

Mr. Morast said they are waiting on Geotech results, he had received preliminary results of the boring samples. There are no TCAAP contaminants in the groundwater that was sampled. Soils can be re-sued on site. They can start working on the play structure, ball courts and shade structure as long as they don't increase the impervious surface.

Discussion continued regarding the flooding issues on the site.

Ms. Osborn said her hope is the Rice Creek Watershed District will fund the study, and explained the analysis process.

Councilmember Holmes explained what had been done at Valentine Park to raise part of the green space to prevent flooding.

City Administrator Perrault noted the grant money has to be spent by spring, 2023 so they could replace the playground now rather than lose the money.

Mayor Grant said they should work on the playground but also work with Rice Creek Watershed District for other funding.

Mr. Morast thought they might be able to combine Rice Creek and CDBG grants for the water issues.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said they could wait and take care of everything at once, or move forward with the improvements to the park equipment while knowing they need to pursue surface water improvements.

Councilmember Holmes felt they should get started right away.

Councilmember Holden agreed and said it gave them an opportunity to work with TCAAP grading.

Mayor Grant noted that the developer wants to raise the grade along Interstate 35, and that may take over a year to move that much dirt. He confirmed they are asking staff to spend the \$189,000 from the grant for park improvements project with the rest coming from potential future grants.

Mr. Morast said they would talk to CDBG again regarding another grant.

Mayor Grant asked staff to get back to them with park equipment costs.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he would also do public outreach to see what the community would like at the park.

C. City-wide Speed Limit

Mr. Morast stated that speed limits have been discussed previously, there was most recently a discussion about the MSA roads Lake Valentine Road and Old Snelling. He felt it was appropriate to include them in the speed limit reductions.

Mayor Grant would like to see consistency for the driver, noting Lake Johanna Boulevard is 30 mph.

Councilmember Holden felt all city streets should be 25 mph.

Councilmember Radziej thought all city streets should be 30 mph and didn't want to go down to 25 mph.

Councilmember Scott wanted 20 mph but was willing to go up to 25 mph.

Mayor Grant noted that the majority of the Council preferred 25 mph.

After discussion it was decided to make State Aid roads Old Snelling and Lake Valentine Road also 25 mph.

Mr. Morast said they would work on messaging.

Mayor Grant said they could put the information on the City website, in the newsletter, social media and newsflashes.

Mr. Morast added they will also put flags on the new signs. He suggested putting information in utility bills.

Mayor Grant asked what the implementation timeline would be.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said they would have to work the sign changes into the Public Works schedule as a winter project.

Mayor Grant directed staff to install no later than March 1st with a preference for earlier if possible.

City Administrator Perrault asked if there were any more formal approvals the Council needed to make.

Mr. Morast felt it would helpful to make a formal ordinance change.

Mayor Grant said once the work has been put on the schedule they can add it to the agenda for a vote.

D. Water Efficiency Grant

City Administrator Perrault reported the Met Council Water Efficiency Grant was previously discussed in 2019. The program is being renewed for 2023-2025 but it is unclear if the City can be involved. The program is offered to residents to upgrade devices such as low flow toilets, washing machines and irrigation system smart controllers. There is a match of 25% city and 75% Met Council. Council would need to decide what devices to include and the dollar amount per item. The minimum grant award is \$5,000 but it's not clear what happens if the city doesn't meet that amount.

Councilmember Holden thought it would be good to include businesses.

City Administrator Perrault explained that the resident would pay the entire amount for whatever appliance they are purchasing, then apply for the grant to potentially receive whatever amount the Council determines, much like a rebate.

Finance Director Bauman said the program is labor intensive on staff time. She stated when she worked with the program previously, they got interest initially but not as time went on. If we give a rebate, we'll get reimbursed but if we don't give out at least \$5,000 she doesn't know if they will reimburse the city.

City Administrator Perrault suggested they pick an amount that they can use to go forward with the application, assuming they City is able to get into the upcoming cycle. He felt \$10,000 would be a good amount with the City contribution being \$2,500.

Mayor Grant directed staff see if Arden Hills can get into the program and bring it forward to a Council meeting if they are able.

E. State of the City Update

Communications Coordinator Arel passed out the draft slides for the State of the City.

Communications Coordinator Arel stated that Boston Scientific will host the event Thursday, September 15. Refreshments will be catered by Boston Scientific's catering company with options for a continental breakfast. NineNorth will record the event, edit and post a recording of the event online. After the slides are finalized staff and Council will work on the script for each presenter. The total cost of the event is higher than the estimated amount but there is sufficient balance in the EDA fund to cover the overage. There will be no charge for the room rental even if the City doesn't use the onsite caterer.

Council reviewed the draft slides, made changes and additions, and decided to use onsite catering.

Communications Coordinator Arel said the Council had discussed moving the event to earlier in the year and wondered if they would like to have next years State of the City in March or April.

Councilmember Holden liked the idea of having it in April.

Councilmember Holmes suggested skipping 2023 and having the next event in spring of 2024.

City Administrator Perrault said staff would have the slides updated within two weeks and the script to Council in three weeks.

F. Lake Johanna Trail Study

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said the Lake Johanna Boulevard Trail Study open house held at City Hall was well attended. He invited Ramsey County to the September 19 work session to discuss.

City Administrator Perrault asked if the Council wanted to send a letter to the County prior to that meeting or just discuss face to face.

Councilmember Holden thought they could tar the curb as a short-term solution but if they're coming there's no need for a letter.

Councilmember Holmes didn't understand why it had to be so elaborate and thought they could do a trail like the one on Old Snelling.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said they are planning for TIF and construction in 2028. They are asking for \$6 million from Met Council, which would be a \$4.8 million grant, equating to \$600,000 each for the City and County.

G. 2023 Preliminary General Fund Budget

Finance Director Bauman explained the City was required to adopt a maximum tax levy by the end of September. A 5% increase is shown, which leaves the General Fund underfunded by \$161,330, as compared to 2022 with a budget shortfall of \$140,000.

Finance Director Bauman reviewed the General Fund revenues, expenditures, personnel services and FTE's, supplies and materials, and other services and charges. The proposed tax levy was also discussed, along with other funds relying on tax levy dollars.

Finance Director Bauman noted the current wage and benefit assumptions include a 3% COLA, 6.5% health insurance and 3% dental insurance increase. She asked if any of those assumptions should be changed.

After discussion it was decided to continue those assumptions for now.

Finance Director Bauman asked if Council would like a significant building project added to the 2023 budget.

It was determined to not add any building project fees to the budget.

Discussion ensued regarding where to put the proceeds from the sale of the Ridgewood property, it was decided to put the money in the PIR budget.

Finance Director Bauman stated that Lake Johanna Fire Department models project 2023 tax levy increase of either \$75,000 or \$125,000 depending on if the SAFER Grant is received. She asked if Council would like to set the preliminary max levy to included additional funds for the fire department if needed.

Mayor Grant noted the SAFER Grant should be awarded before the Council has to approve the levy increase.

Finance Director Bauman said she usually brings the levy adoption to the first meeting in September but could bring it the second meeting on September 26. She felt a revised preliminary levy could be emailed to Council prior to the meeting.

After further discussion staff was directed to send Council a budget with the levy increase listed in increments between 4% and 7%.

H. Council Tracker

Not reviewed.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Holden asked what was happening with Cummings Lane and if it was too late to put curbs in because of the steep grade.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said it was his understanding the drainage issues were at the catch basin, not along the street. The pavement is complete but seeding hasn't taken place. Staff could look into a cost-effective alternative for curb in that area.

Councilmember Radziej suggested using the type of curbing that is sometimes used in landscaping.

Councilmember Holden asked if the old Smith Medical Building was full, and thought the information could be given at the State of the City.

Councilmember Radziej said he had been seeing semitrucks with trailers on the north side of the road at International Paper.

Councilmember Scott said he would forward an email he received regarding a rental property on Grant Avenue. He also asked about the drainage pond on Indian Oaks trail.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said the pond was lowered 2.5 feet, and it now sits at the outlet elevation.

Mayor Grant reported that he has been using his laptop instead of a paper copy of the agenda for the last eight months and felt it was working. He invited other Councilmembers to try going paperless.

Councilmember Holmes said she would try going paperless.

City Administrator Perrault asked if Council would like to schedule a Special Work Session with Ramsey County to discuss the staging of the roundabout on County Road E, on either September 12 or 26, and before or after the Council meeting.

It was determined to schedule the special meeting on September 12.

City Administrator Perrault stated the cost to stripe pickleball courts was \$275.

After discussion it was decided to have the contractor stripe a court at Freeway Park, and two courts at Hazelnut Park.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 8:40 p.m.

Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk

David Grant
Mayor