



DRAFT

Approved: November 14, 2022

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 17, 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, Public Works Director/City Engineer David Swearingen, Community Development Director Jessica Jagoe, Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba, Residents Ahmed Ali, Katie Bach, Nate Cmiel and Dave Cmiel, and President of Norcutt Homes Owen Norcutt

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Planning Case 22-019 – 3588 Ridgewood Road Concept Plan Review

Mr. Ali explained that he would like to ask for a variance to have the lot entrance on Old Snelling Avenue instead of Ridgewood Road because of the elevation of the lot, and reduced setbacks.

Mr. Norcutt stated the lot is irregular shaped and has a drastic slope. By having the driveway on Old Snelling, they could possibly get a flat area in the back toward Ridgewood Road. He felt access off of Old Snelling would be safer.

Discussion ensued regarding the possible location of the home and setbacks.

Mr. Norcutt added that the elevation to Ridgewood Road was about 20 feet, the driveway would have to have a curve, and there would have to be a retaining wall.

Council agreed that access off of Old Snelling would be acceptable.

Mayor Grant said he was OK moving the house to the north to give more space along the side yard to the south.

Councilmember Holden noted that after looking at the properties next door she was OK with the side setbacks proposed.

Community Development Director Jagoe stated she would talk to the Building Official about the address. In preliminary analysis staff had considered Ridgewood as the front yard and Old Snelling as the rear.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen explained that if the driveway goes out onto Old Snelling that would be connecting into the new construction. They would have to maintain ADA on the sidewalk and the curb cut, and they would most likely require a full width patch. He also noted there are no utilities currently extended to the lot and those connections would be from Ridgewood Road.

Discussion continued regarding the home location. Council agreed they would suggest consideration of Mr. Ali with moving the home slightly uphill (north) to gain more room despite the setbacks potentially not being met.

Community Development Director Jagoe said the applicant would submit changes before the Planning Commission meeting.

B. Planning Case 22-020 – 1861 W Highway 96 Concept Plan Review

Community Development Director Jagoe said the applicants are seeking feedback in advance of a future application for a variance on a concept plan to demo the house that is currently at the subject property and building a new single-family home. The lot is considered non-conforming because of the front yard setback due to additional right of way acquisitions over time. They may also need a variance from ordinary high water in the rear of the yard as measured from the shoreline, due to the requirement of the setback being on average with the adjacent parcels.

Ms. Bach presented a PowerPoint outlining the historical changes to the property lines due to highway expansions, the buildable area of the lot and proposed new home placement, and comparison of the proposed new home setback to neighboring homes. She stated they would like to preserve as many trees as possible.

Councilmember Holden said she thought the proposal looked good and she had no issues.

Councilmember Radziej and Mayor Grant agreed.

Mayor Grant felt that the City owes them some flexibility due to the easement changes.

Councilmember Holmes said her only concern would be the house impeding on the neighbor's view.

Councilmember Radziej encouraged them to look into incentives for building an energy efficient home.

Ms. Bach said they will finalize plans to be presented to the Planning Commission.

C. Floral Park Improvements Discussion

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen passed out a rough budget estimate for the project. He stated this is an amendment to the existing contract with HR Green that was brought to Council last year for the hardcourts at Floral Park. That contract is also tied to the Arden Manor project. The amendment would add the overall park improvements. The entire Floral Park project would come to \$606,000, including design fees. There are no improvements included to the baseball fields. Included is the park structure, the hardcourt and the trail.

Councilmember Holden asked how many trees would be taken down by the tennis courts.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said no trees will be taken down, but they can cut the roots on the north side so they don't continue to push up the pavement.

Councilmember Holden wondered what the plan would be for the large amount of leaves that fall on the court.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said HR Green will give a preliminary design, get resident and Council feedback and host an open house. If they choose to eliminate some trees and plant elsewhere they could do that.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen reviewed photos of current conditions at the park. He noted the shelter's concrete pad is in good shape and can be reused for the new shelter.

Councilmember Holden wondered if there was anything they could add for adults. She was not for the addition of a water source.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said there is a fire hydrant that extends into the park so they could tap into that line.

Councilmember Holmes felt if they put in a water source in Floral Park they should also put one in at the public gardens, and thought they should talk about a policy first. One of the volunteers at the park thought the water barrels were unsightly and caused mosquitoes so they had suggested the hand pump.

Councilmember Holden thought they could put some screening around the barrels.

Councilmember Scott mentioned there is a small pond in one of the gardens and wondered if they had thought about putting a water feature there, and asked if the courts would be striped for pickleball.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he assumed so but that might be determined by resident input. The amenities are flexible at this time.

Discussion continued regarding costs of engineering and amenities.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said that through the survey they will get a better idea of what the public wants to see in the park, they will pick vendors that supply what is wanted and choose the vendor with the better price for the amenities.

Councilmember Scott mentioned a large oak tree in the park that is dead.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said there are 3 that are dead and Public Works will be removing one or more if they can access them.

Councilmember Holden asked if the Arden Hills Foundation might want to provide the grill at the shelter or a second picnic table.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said for the water source he was envisioning a one-inch copper or PVC line running through the park that would be tied to a spicket head with a safety feature to shut it off.

Mayor Grant asked staff to negotiate engineering costs with HR Green.

D. Parkshore Exercise Station Trail Loop – Official Name Discussion

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen explained that the City is responsible to install a park sign at the new Parkshore exercise loop, and so he'd like to know what they would like to name the trail. PTRC had the idea of a staff coordinated contest at the elementary schools to name the trail.

Councilmember Holden noted this is off the beaten track and for seniors. She felt the name needed to be more focused to identify it. She suggested they tell the PTRC to come up with a name associated with the type of park it is and location.

Mayor Grant directed staff to have PTRC suggest a name to submit to Council.

E. Recreation Programming Update

City Administrator Perrault stated there is currently an opening for Recreation Supervisor, there will be seven interviews held. He was happy with the candidates that applied and ideally, someone will start in mid-November. In the meantime, the winter programming guide typically goes out in early to mid-November, and they need to plan a realistic schedule of events.

City Administrator Perrault said in 2020-2021 they didn't have ice rink attendants, but had picnic tables and port-a-potties. This past year they had rink attendants but the shelters weren't open to the public. The current issue is the limited number of applicants for the attendant positions, and having someone to oversee and train them. If a Recreation Supervisor is on board by the end of November they could take over these duties, but they'll be learning the job along with the new seasonals. There have been issues with rink attendants previously, such as not locking the buildings, not showing up for shifts, or leaving the rink lights on.

Councilmember Holden said she liked the idea of hiring one or two people for four months.

City Administrator Perrault indicated they have a Public Works seasonal in mind that they feel would be a good fit, but the schedule would be evenings and weekends and they aren't sure if he will be willing. He explained it would be a winter seasonal position in the Public Works department. Normally there are between 8-12 rink attendants. They could hire the Public Works seasonal in place of that, and that job would be to unlock and lock the warming houses, turn the lights on and off, keep the rinks clear, and supplement with other Public Works duties. There wouldn't be a person at the rink the entire time it's open, but this person could be a roving rink attendant.

Councilmember Holden thought one person wouldn't want to work seven days a week, so they should hire two.

City Administrator Perrault said they would like to do this administratively and patchwork it together, but hiring 12 rink attendants was probably not possible.

Discussion ensued regarding ways the positions are advertised and the lack of applicants.

Councilmember Holmes felt they didn't need an attendant at the warming houses other than to open them and turn on the lights etc.

City Administrator Perrault stated that the person they had in mind may not want to work the proposed schedule, but if he agrees they could hire one or two other attendants for the weekends and the Public Works seasonal could cover the evening shift.

Councilmember Holden said she thought the most important rinks were at Freeway and Hazelnut parks.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen added that Perry Park was also used often.

Councilmember Holden thought the summer playground leaders may be a source for weekend rink attendants.

City Administrator Perrault stated the next item to discuss was Recreation programming. Staff reviewed programming and believes they can continue with many of the outside instructor led classes such as fencing, yoga, dance, etc. However, the programming that requires seasonal hiring, training, and oversight presents issues. While they are hopeful to have a Recreation Supervisor on-board by mid-November, they still need to work on the development of programming that starts the beginning of January. This mainly consists of before and after school programming, camps, one-time events like snowshoeing, and ice-skating lessons. If they continue these programs, they would need to start looking for seasonals late October and early November; however, they need to identify and have these programs planned for a Winter Rec Guide. Shoreview is running their Island Lake program and willing to let Arden Hills send people to register with them. He anticipates not holding before and after school programming at Valentine Hills, skating lessons or events such as gingerbread house decorating, letters to Santa, or breakfast with Santa.

Councilmember Holmes suggested they follow the same types of programs they did last year.

City Administrator Perrault said ice skating lessons, volleyball (TBD depending on instructor availability) would not be held, but yoga, fencing, dance, fraud prevention could be held.

Councilmember Holden suggested they try to get the ice-skating instructor from last year to come back for the 4-6 year age group and starting January 8.

City Administrator Perrault added the guide may only be an insert into the newsletter rather than a regular guide, but there will be a QR code that will take them right to the website to register.

F. Council Tracker

City Administrator Perrault provided the Council with an update of the Council Tracker. After discussion, the completion date for Trees West of 96 was updated, and International Paper Parking Issue and Public Works Fleet Management Program items were removed.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Holden asked if pickleball striping was done.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen responded the striping was done at Freeway and Hazelnut parks.

Councilmember Holden asked if they were going to try to dredge some of the Fernwood channel this year.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said sediment samples had been taken and they should be receiving results soon, which will tell them where they can put the sediment when they remove it. They plan on removing some this year.

Councilmember Holden said there are people “moving” their yards into City property with fences, mowing, shrubbery etc. She discussed one property in particular adjacent to Hazelnut trail.

Community Development Director Jagoe stated it could be allowed with written permission from the City.

Mayor Grant thought if we want it left natural we should tell him to stop mowing.

Community Development Director Jagoe asked if they told the property owner to stop mowing but the shrubs remained, would Public Works want to mow around them.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he would want to see the exact placement of the shrubs but they would want to match what they are doing along the entire line, which was to mow approximately 5 feet off the pavement.

Mayor Grant said the property owner is encroaching on City property by making a hedge fence and planting on City property.

City Administrator Perrault commented that they could send a letter making it clear the plantings are on City property and if they need to be taken down or moved it would be at the homeowner's expense.

Mayor Grant said he would like to walk the trail and see the property first.

Councilmember Holden said she is seeing more rental properties and there are some cities that only allow a certain number of rentals. She thought they might want to consider finding out the limits.

City Administrator Perrault said staff is working to bring a discussion on short-term rentals to Council.

Councilmember Scott asked if the parking issues on Grant were still happening.

City Administrator Perrault responded that the Sheriff has issued citations the last two weekends, he hasn't had any complaints since then.

Councilmember Holmes stated she attended a Ramsey County Legal Government meeting/call where they talked about homelessness and encampments. She thought they might want to have a checklist or policy in the case that it becomes a problem.

Mayor Grant asked staff to put that as an item on a future work session.

Councilmember Holden wondered if they could have another meeting with Ramsey County about Lake Johanna Boulevard or brainstorm some ideas to give to the County. She would like to see a speed bump or something else for safety.

Councilmember Holmes thought they could possibly do some different striping.

Mayor Grant suggested they put in a couple of stop signs.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said the County will not allow a speed bump on a County road. Bollards are a maintenance issue.

Mayor Grant said the Council should send ideas to the City Administrator who can compile a list of ideas and share it with the County.

Mayor Grant noted there is a cracked bucket swing at Freeway Park. He thanked Public Works for rebuilding a mailbox structure that had been broken during snowplowing operations.

Mayor Grant said staff is checking on political signs that have been taken down along Old Highway 10.

Community Development Director Jagoe mentioned that Mr. Ali has requested the closing for 3588 Ridgewood Road be pushed back to on or before December 15 to allow time for his variance to be reviewed.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 7:41 p.m.

Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk

David Grant
Mayor