



Approved: May 11, 2020

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
APRIL 20, 2020
5:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council Work Session at 5:01 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, Finance Director Gayle Bauman, Community Development Manager/City Planner Mike Mroska, Associate Planner Joe Hartmann, Public Works Superintendent Jeff Frid, Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba

Also Present via Telephone: Scott Moe with Launch Properties; Brian Wurdeman with Kimley Horn and Jordan Horejsi from HRGreen Consultants

Councilmember Holden requested the Council discuss Off-Sale Alcohol Sales prior to the Council Tracker.

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Launch Properties (Pace Site)

Associate Planner Hartmann stated Launch Properties submitted an application for Concept Plan Review for a proposed grocery store and secondary retail/restaurant business at 3737 Lexington Avenue on the former Pace building site. The property is zoned B-3 Service Business District and is guided as Commercial use on the 2040 Land Use Plan.

Associate Planner Hartmann explained the property is currently owned by Pace Industries, LLC, which recently closed their facility. The existing building was used for manufacturing and office

space. The Subject Property comprises two parcels totaling approximately 2.5 acres. The Applicant is proposing to remove the existing building. The Applicant is proposing to redevelop the site on behalf of a national supermarket chain with plans to incorporate a secondary retail or restaurant use on the parcel closest to Lexington Avenue. Once completed, the Applicant is proposing to build a 20,000 square foot grocery store on the site and a 3,600 square foot retail space on the lot. Staff commented further on the proposal and requested feedback from the Council.

Scott Moe, Launch Properties, thanked the Council for their time. He discussed his site plan in detail with the Council noting he was proposing to tear down the large building in order to make way for a large national grocer. He reported the grocer has requested to remain confidential at this time. He stated the City would be proud to have this business in the community. He discussed how COVID-19 has impacted this project. It was his hope the project could begin this summer with the large grocer and an outlet retailer.

Councilmember Holden asked how a high quality national grocer was defined.

Mr. Moe reported he was proposing to bring a high quality national grocery chain into the community that had a very good reputation.

Councilmember Holden asked if there was anything that the applicant was not asking for a variance on.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska reported the applicant would need setback variances but would be meeting all other City design standard requirements. He commented further on the proposed setback variances that would be required.

Councilmember Holden inquired if a drive-thru would be necessary.

Mr. Moe anticipated a drive-thru would be required whether a bank or coffee use were to locate on the retail outlet.

Councilmember Holmes commented on the flexibility requirements that were being requested by the applicant. She stated this was very concerning to her.

Mr. Moe indicated he was not requesting flexibility on the use or the quality of the tenant. In addition, he would not be asking for flexibility on the building materials. He stated he was asking for flexibility on the setbacks and parking requirements. He was of the opinion that the City's parking requirements were out of context for the grocer market.

Mayor Grant stated the parcel only had so much real estate. He explained the minimum setbacks have been reduced which gave the developer more parking space. He questioned if the site could be redesigned to reduce the need for flexibility with setbacks.

Mr. Moe deferred this question to Civil Engineer Brian Wurdeman.

Brian Wurdeman, Kimley Horn, stated he was proposing to have 131 parking stalls on the site. He has been told by the grocer that the site should have 80 to 90 parking stalls leaving the remainder of the site for the retail outlot pad. He commented there may be some flexibility with the site but did not anticipate a huge change could be made to the setbacks on the site. He indicated the setbacks were equal to or greater than what the site had currently.

Councilmember Holden explained she had concerns with the small setbacks and questioned where snow would be stored.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated this would be something addressed by staff during the Site Plan Review process. He commented this was an area for concern but noted the area proposed for zero setbacks, had a zero setback today.

Councilmember Holden indicated she was against the zero setbacks.

Councilmember Scott explained at this time he was throwing up a yellow flag for this project and stated he would like more work to be done on this project.

Councilmember McClung stated he has had growing concerns with lack of information the City Council was receiving. He expressed concern with the setbacks requested and feared the developer was trying to put too much onto the site. He questioned if the retail/restaurant should be removed. He indicated he also would have to give this project a yellow flag, but was close to red. He requested more detail from the developer in order to gain support for the project.

Mayor Grant commented this was a yellow flag project. He recommended the setbacks be reconsidered and the site be redesigned. He encouraged the applicant to reconsider the project design.

Councilmember Holden asked if the applicant was requesting landscaping flexibility.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska stated the proposed landscaping would be similar to what was currently on the site. It was noted there would be an increase in greenspace.

Councilmember Holden questioned how the Council felt about another drive-thru in this area.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska commented on the number of drive-thrus in this area. He explained the main consideration for the Council would be to decide how it feels about the three foot setback.

Councilmember Holden stated she didn't mind the drive-thru but stated she was against the three foot setback. She recommended the setback be at least 10 feet.

Councilmember Holmes commented she could support a drive-thru and anticipated the City would have to change its ordinance regarding the distance between drive-thrus. She indicated she did have a problem with the proposed setbacks.

Mayor Grant explained he had a problem with the three foot setback and the zero setback. He noted he did not have a problem with the drive-thru. He encouraged the applicant to take the comments that have been voiced by the Council and to redesign his plans.

Mr. Moe thanked the Council for the feedback. He noted his plans were very preliminary and indicated he would be using high quality building materials and landscaping. He explained he would continue to talk with the grocer in order to finalize the plans and to address the setback concerns.

Mayor Grant recommended staff and the applicant consider sidewalks for the development.

B. Abatement Process Discussion

Associate Planner Hartmann stated the existing City Code process prescribed for abating properties can take anywhere from 20 days to over a month to complete from the time when the violation is first identified to the time when the abatement can be carried out. City Code section 602.05 requires the enforcing officer to serve a written notice of violation to the property owner on record. If the violation is not corrected within the time frame required, staff will follow up with a written notice that a public hearing will be convened for the City Council to determine if an order to abate is necessary. The public notice must be posted 10 days prior to the meeting. At the Council's discretion staff will serve a written order to abate to the property owner outlining the date, time, and nature of the abatement to occur. Staff commented on the abatement process further and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Holmes explained many of the properties in need of abatement were rentals. She questioned if the City had a lot of abatement issues and stated if there were not that many issues perhaps staff time should be spent addressing other issues.

Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska stated this matter was brought to the Council prior to summer to assist staff with addressing long grass issues. He indicated staff was working on other issues, but wanted to address the accelerated abatement process on behalf of Code Enforcement staff prior to lawn mowing season beginning. He discussed how the accelerated program would assist staff in showing the City was taking action on properties.

Mayor Grant commented he was concerned with fact a feedback mechanism was not in place between City staff and the City Council. He recommended staff consider putting such a mechanism in place in order to keep the Council apprised of staff's actions.

Councilmember Holden explained she supported the accelerated abatement process because she had a number of rental homes in her neighborhood. She believed the new process would provide staff with a better process going forward. She indicated she had concerns with the tree trimming given the fact it was difficult to get a hold of contractors.

City Administrator Perrault questioned if the Council supported this process going forward.

Mayor Grant supported the accelerated abatement process moving forward. The Council was in agreement.

C. Hazelnut Park Neighborhood (2021 PMP)

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated the 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies proposed street and utility improvements within the 2021 Pavement Management Program (PMP) area, consisting of Glenpaul, Edgewater, Jerrold and Prior Avenues. The project area includes approximately 140 single family homes and is generally referred to as the Hazelnut Park Neighborhood. Street improvements to Lake Valentine Road are also identified in the CIP as part of this project.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained residential development within the Hazelnut Park Neighborhood area began near County Road D and New Brighton Road, with initial homes constructed in the early 1940s. Development continued north and east with new subdivision plats approved in 1949 and 1951. The western 480 feet of Jerrold Avenue and western 600 feet of Edgewater Avenue were developed in the mid-1970s and early 1980s.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom reported staff is preparing a resolution ordering a feasibility study for the 2021 PMP for consideration by the City Council at the April 27, 2020 Regular City Council Meeting. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a general description of the preliminary scope, budget and schedule for the project and seek any direction the Council may wish to provide as staff prepares the feasibility report and recommended special assessment roll. Staff commented further on the proposed street replacements and requested comments or questions from the Council.

Councilmember Holden stated the assessment costs for the Glenpaul neighborhood was concerning to her. She questioned what kind of stormwater replacements were required.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained the stormwater requirements would be taken into consideration during the design phase of the project. He understood this was a sandy area so there would be less water runoff.

Councilmember Holden anticipated that the majority of this neighborhood would not want curb and gutter.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated if this was a desire of the Council, staff could put this into the feasibility report. He indicated this decision would be up to the City Council. He noted that the work the City was proposing to complete along Lake Valentine Road would connect with the work being done by the Mounds View School District.

Councilmember Scott commented he had a problem with telling residents they had to drive on gravel roads when they were paying for pavement. He recommended all water and sewer lines be investigated when the roads are being replaced. He stated he could support spot replacement of curbs.

Councilmember McClung thanked staff for the thorough staff report. He stated he generally supported the project and recommended the drainage issues in the Glenpaul neighborhood be considered without all the bells and whistles.

Councilmember Scott questioned if the Glenpaul neighborhood were reconstructed without curb and gutter, would this reduce the life span of the road.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained curb and gutter does provide better drainage for a roadway. He indicated streets with curb and gutter generally do last longer than streets without curb and gutter when drainage ditches are not provided adjacent to the road surface.

Councilmember Holmes requested staff provide the Council with the rating for Valentine Road.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated he could include this information in the Resolution documentation.

Mayor Grant asked when State Aid dollars would be available to the City.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated this would occur in 2025. He commented on the projects that would be utilizing these funds in future years.

Mayor Grant expressed concern with the fact the City had limited resources doing double duty at this time. In addition, the City was not certain how COVID-19 would impact finances. He questioned if the City Engineer had discussed this project with the Finance Director.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained he had discussed this project with Finance Director Bauman. He commented on how the feasibility report would define how the project would be funded by the City. He noted only one road within the Glenpaul neighborhood would qualify for State Aid funds, along with Lake Valentine Road.

Mayor Grant indicated he would like more information regarding the budget for this project in order to support it going forward. He suggested the feasibility report include the project being done with and without curb and gutter. He stated he would like to understand what the assessments would be for the Glenpaul neighborhood.

Councilmember Holden stated that an approximate assessment could be generally determined by dividing the street costs by the number of properties. She stated she had a concern with fixing up Lake Valentine Road without fixing the sewer line. She recommended this work be done at the same time.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom commented staff would be evaluating the condition of the sewer line and if work was needed this would be completed prior to work beginning on Lake Valentine Road. The City has dollars available for sewer lining to be done in 2020.

Councilmember Holden explained she would like to have staff review the CIP to see when sewer lining would be completed given the fact the City would not be receiving any grant money from the Met Council for I&I.

Finance Director Bauman indicated she did not have the CIP in front of her and stated she would need to report back to the Council on this matter.

Mayor Grant asked if the Council wanted to move forward with the feasibility study. The Council supported staff moving forward with the feasibility study.

D. City Hall Parking Lot Update

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated the 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Program identifies proposed reconstruction of the parking lot at City Hall in 2020. The project consultant has prepared a preliminary plan for the proposed parking lot improvements. The plan includes replacement of damaged sidewalk and concrete curb, replacement of sidewalk where vertical movement has created a trip hazard, site improvements for compliance with ADA requirements, replacement of existing light poles and fixtures, reconstruction of bituminous pavement, and drainage improvements.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom reported in an effort to contain project costs, the proposed improvements do not include modification of the existing parking lot configuration. The estimate assumes milling and removing the top four inches of the existing pavement, then reclaiming the remaining pavement to blend the bituminous material with the underlying aggregate base and stabilize the subgrade support for the new pavement. In addition, the entrance road would be crowned to shed water to the curb lines and conveyed runoff to the surface discharge points by new valley gutter. This design avoids the additional cost of installing storm sewer to address current drainage problems. The proposed costs were reviewed with the Council and staff requested direction on how to proceed.

Councilmember Scott commented he supported this project being deferred.

Councilmember McClung did not support the project being deferred, but was concerned about the cost of the project. He stated he needed to think about this project further before making a recommendation.

Councilmember Holmes reported at this time she would like the Council to review the CIP in further detail prior to making a determination on the City Hall parking lot. She requested further information regarding the lighting options for the parking lot.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom discussed the lighting options available to the Council.

Councilmember Holmes stated she could support the project moving forward but wanted the Council to take a closer look at the costs and options available.

Councilmember Holden explained she wanted to see this project completed for safety purposes. She asked for further information regarding the drainage concerns.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom discussed the drainage concerns that were occurring in the parking lot through an inverted crown. He described how the parking lot needed to be pitched in order to address this concern.

Councilmember Holden supported the City keeping the lights as is, but recommended the parking lot project move forward.

Mayor Grant was of the opinion this was an item the City could defer. He supported the City putting this project on the back burner for financial reasons. He understood staff safety was a concern and suggested a patch be considered for the parking lot for this year.

E. Off Sale Alcohol Sales

City Administrator Perrault explained Governor Walz had passed an executive order that would allow for the sale of beer and wine with curbside food orders for restaurants with liquor licenses.

Mayor Grant reported this type of sales would only be allowed while the Stay at Home order was in place. He stated he understood businesses were hurting and for this reason, he supported the off sale alcohol sales with no restrictions.

Councilmember McClung commented he supported this type of off sale liquor sales with no restrictions.

Councilmember Scott agreed.

Councilmember Holmes and **Councilmember Holden** supported the sales as well.

F. Council Tracker

City Administrator Perrault provided the Council with an update on the Council Tracker. After discussion no items were removed from the Tracker.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Scott thanked staff for working diligently to keep City services operational during this crisis. He encouraged staff to remain safe. He noted the City had received a little bit of blowback from the public after canceling all of the City's summer programming. He anticipated the COVID-19 crisis was going to go longer than people anticipate and he supported the Council's actions.

Councilmember McClung thanked staff for all of their efforts in these uncertain times.

Councilmember Holmes thanked staff and CTV for recording meetings. She commented at the last Council meeting she stated she received an email from a resident with respiratory issues and asked that staff put an alert on the website regarding recreational fires. She asked if staff would be addressing this issue.

City Administrator Perrault indicated he had discussed this with staff and would report back to Council on how this matter was being addressed.

Mayor Grant stated the comment should be carefully be word stating the City allows recreational fires, but was encouraging residents at this time to be considerate of those who may have respiratory issues.

Councilmember Holmes explained if there was confusion with her previous request, she would like feedback from staff.

Councilmember Holmes questioned if staff had spoken to Ramsey County regarding property taxes.

City Administrator Perrault commented he had spoken to Director Bauman regarding this matter and Ramsey County would be discussing this matter at their meeting on Tuesday, April 21st. He explained the City did not anticipate having a cash flow issue through July 15th given current level of cash flows on hand.

Councilmember Holden indicated the E2 trail by Old Snelling had large cracks that should be fixed this year.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained this portion was still under warranty and he would investigate this further.


Councilmember Holden commented on the feedback the City received regarding the cancelation of all summer recreation programs. She suggested staff offer further information regarding the staffing concerns on Facebook.


Mayor Grant noted a face mask collection would be held on Saturday, April 25th. He commented these face masks would be utilized by senior living sites like Presbyterian Homes.

Mayor Grant explained he received a call from the United States Census and he learned the City was doing quite well with its responses, which was just over 60%. He indicated he would encourage residents to fill out their census information at the Monday City Council meeting.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 7:09 p.m.


Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk



David Grant
Mayor