



Approved: June 13, 2022

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MAY 16, 2022
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 5:00 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, City Clerk Julie Hanson, Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba and Ramsey County Sheriff Deputy Moe

Mayor Grant requested that Items A and B be reversed.

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. State Fair Parking

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen stated that every year the city has a few locations for State Fair park and rides. Over the years Public Works has created a No Parking signage plan. Last year the Gathering Place and North Heights Lutheran Church sites were not used. Staff is waiting for a response from the State Fair to know what locations they are planning for this year.

Deputy Moe added that the State Fair took about half of the park and rides away last year because of COVID and not enough staff to drive buses.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen thought they could assume all three will be back this year and if it turns out they aren't they can adjust the planning.

Councilmember Holden felt the plan worked good last time, but suggested the City send a letter to residents affected by the no parking areas.

Deputy Moe suggested using safe paint and paint the curb where the signs should be.

Councilmember Holmes thought there was a lot more traffic on Harriet Avenue and Pine Tree Drive due to the construction on Lexington Avenue. She thought they may want to sign all of Pine Tree Drive and on both sides of the street.

After discussion Council agreed.

Deputy Moe confirmed he would like a dot on the curb or road where the sign would be so there's no argument if someone pulls the sign. He said another issue is people parking on New Brighton Road and pulling onto yards, but that is a County road.

After discussion it was decided they should sign the south side of Stowe east of New Brighton Road to Lake Johanna Boulevard.

Deputy Moe noted that the North Heights parking lot is so large that street parking has not been an issue in that area.

Mayor Grant asked staff to update the maps and get them to Council.

City Administrator Perrault said last year they didn't know exact park and ride locations until August.

Mayor Grant thought a letter to residents could be written appropriately stating if a location is opened here's what would happen.

Councilmember Holden suggested a blurb in the city newsletter telling people to check the State Fair website.

Councilmember Holmes said they could do a newsflash, Twitter and Facebook.

After discussion those avenues would be pursued instead of sending a letter.

B. Food Trucks Discussion

City Administrator Perrault said this was a follow up to the April discussion on food trucks. Four residents spoke at the meeting, three thought the regulations could be loosened for different reasons and one resident wanted to limit residential events and wanted to know how violations were reported. Council had previously considered requiring the property owner/event host to obtain permit to host a food truck (similar to garage sales), limiting the number of times a residential property could host a food truck, setting administrative penalties, and language regarding who is being served; what is considered a "private" event versus what constitutes sales to the general public.

Councilmember Holmes asked how many trucks were licensed so far this year.

City Clerk Hanson replied there were six licenses issued so far this year, all were temporary licenses for \$30 each, and all were at commercial locations. She did receive a phone call from a vendor indicating they may be at a garage sale in June.

City Administrator Perrault added that a temporary license was for seven visits or less, and an annual license was for eight to 21 visits.

Mayor Grant noted that the desire for food trucks has potentially quieted down.

Councilmember Holden said that other cities haven't had trucks week after week at the same location and because it has happened here is why they need to look at it. There are neighbors that don't mind it once in a while but not every weekend.

Mayor Grant suggested the first question to answer was do people need to apply for a permit.

Councilmember Scott said like garage sales, he'd be in favor of requiring permits for food trucks with no charge and a limit of two private events a year. He noted that the truck generators make a lot of noise.

Councilmember Holmes suggested the reference to a private event be removed, and residents should be allowed to host just two food truck events a year.

Councilmember Radziej said he'd like to see the permit stay with the property owner, that they could make a phone call to say they are having a truck at their address, to allow for convenience for the homeowner. He'd like to see trucks charged \$20 per event.

City Clerk Hanson said food trucks are required by ordinance to get written permission from the property owner, and get inspected by the Fire Marshal - although he will only inspect them once even if they are in the city on other occasions.

City Administrator Perrault said if they are going to require a permit like a garage sale permit then there would be no need for additional written permission from the residential property owner.

Councilmember Holden stated that so far everyone agreed to two times per residential property.

Councilmember Radziej commented that charging per event would make it easier to track.

City Clerk Hanson thought that trying to get them each time versus once for the license would be challenging. The resident needs to tell her what truck they are having so she can be sure they are licensed. Commercial locations need to give permission also.

Councilmember Radziej said he'd like to see sales be for the general public rather than trying to police if it's part of a private party.

City Clerk Hanson stated they would have to strike that wording from the ordinance.

Councilmember Holmes thought they should take out the \$100 fine.

Mayor Grant felt they would violate as many times as they wanted to if there were no fine.

After further discussion all agreed to have residents apply for a permit in writing with no fee, up to 2 trucks per year and leave in the administrative fine for violations.

City Administrator Perrault noted that the ordinance language currently states that any violation could be a misdemeanor, he proposed Council leaves that or add administrative fee. It wouldn't need to change if they don't add a fee.

City Clerk Hanson clarified that were talking about two potential fees, an administrative one for the resident without a permit, and one for the food truck operator without a license.

City Councilmember Holden recapped: vendors need a license, residents need a permit, if there are violations, both the vendor and resident get a ticket. Vendors pay the license fee as written in the code, no cost for resident permit.

Discussion ensued regarding potential City Code language changes. It was decided to leave the misdemeanor for vendors violating the code, but not the property owner. Property owners could get a \$100 fee for violations. Vendor licensing requirements will stay the same. Staff will work with the City Attorney and bring revised language to the first Council meeting in June.

C. Spring Lake Park Lions Donation Discussion

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen stated that Council had directed staff to look at shade structures for the Perry Park dog park, he also noted the Arden Hills Foundation wish list was attached and the PTRC gave input as to what they'd like to see the funds used toward.

Councilmember Holden asked if the shelter options were winter proof.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen believed the fabric portion would be removed in the winter.

Mayor Grant asked if staff looked at the cost for the Don Messerly pavilion.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he had not.

Councilmember Holmes felt they should look at only what they could do with \$10,000 and was able to be winterized.

Councilmember Holden asked if it was more important to have something for the dogs or something for the people. If the answer is people they need more places for people to sit, trees and a shade structure. She asked if the field was all grass.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said there is turf everywhere but you can still see some of the aggregate from the old baseball field. There are drainage issues but that would require regrading to fix.

Councilmember Holden suggested some type of dog wash facility or water spout.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said they do get complaints about dogs getting muddy.

Councilmember Holmes felt that was the nature of a dog park, that dogs will get wet and muddy if it has rained.

Mayor Grant said the mud issue will be somewhat reduced by putting in the concrete entryway. It would be nice to have a water hose there.

City Administrator Perrault thought it would be most cost efficient to put a hose at the shelter and a sign pointing to the shelter.

Councilmember Holden wondered how many tables or benches would be needed if they built a shade structure. The structure could be like the one at Ingerson Park.

Mayor Grant said it wouldn't have to have a concrete floor.

Councilmember Radziej added they could start with class 5 rock and if that doesn't work they could add concrete down the line.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he would do more research and bring his findings back to the next work session.

Councilmember Radziej suggested they ask the Boy Scouts to help.

Mayor Grant said there was a request to segregate an area at Perry Park for small dogs, and that could be a future project for the county workers. He asked staff to put picnic tables inside the dog park at Hazelnut Park, and noted the shelter at Perry Park would only need to be large enough for two picnic tables.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he has a list of suggested tree species.

Mayor Grant asked staff to send the findings to Council before the meeting it would be discussed at.

D. Highway 96/Old Highway 10 Speed Sign Update

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen stated that Public Works had installed a speed feedback sign along Highway 51 southbound, two signs were purchased rather than install the second sign on the northbound lane, Council suggested installing it along Highway 96. Ramsey County Engineers said they would support a sign at any point along Highway 96. Staff's recommended location is just east of the Holiday gas station but before the Highway 10 bridge.

Mayor Grant said the justification for a sign along that area is that the traffic is rising to the intersection, and because of the fatalities that happened at that intersection.

Councilmember Holden wondered if it would slow traffic down once they go past it?

Councilmember Radziej said anytime there is something flashing your eyes are drawn toward it so it would be a reminder to slow down. He supported the sign on Highway 96.

Councilmember Holden said she is more concerned about New Brighton Road or Pine Tree Drive where there are no sidewalks or trails. But Highway 96 was fine.

Mayor Grant instructed staff to have it placed where it will have the maximum impact where you are making a left hand turn onto Old Highway 10.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he will work with the Ramsey County engineer for placement eastbound on Highway 96 between Holiday and Highway 10.

E. City Hall Layout Reorganization

City Administrator Perrault said this was discussed by the Personnel Committee as part of the potential need to add staffing when TCAAP develops and reorganizing now for better efficiency and effectiveness of departments working together. There were three different scenarios discussed; moving a department upstairs, transforming the upstairs area into a c-suite for department heads and city administrator, or making changes to the lobby, basement or both to build out additional office space. The third option would impact public access and be the most costly.

City Administrator Perrault stated the preferred option is Option 1; to move a department upstairs and build out offices there. Public Works makes the most sense to move upstairs, they will have potential additional staff and the least amount of public contact at City Hall. That would involve building out two to four offices, retaining some cubes and maintaining some collaborative work space. Timing-wise they could start right away or wait six months to a year. There has not been a budget identified yet, but they could be looking at around \$10,000 per work space. This could be done in two phases, moving a department upstairs and the communications person downstairs in the first phase, and reconfiguring the first floor after additional staff is hired as phase two.

City Administrator Perrault said the advantage of moving staff includes having department staff close together to work more effectively and for ease in supervising.

Councilmember Holden said she wants the cubes to be a set size for everyone. She wondered if there were enough conference rooms. She wanted the upstairs to be lit.

Mayor Grant said his concern was there be enough room for staff to run TCAAP, and not come back to make more room. If they start building walls and use up floor space and decide later they need floor space they won't be taking down walls to recover it. And they may need a small conference room.

City Administrator Perrault said they are projecting the need for 6 additional staff. If the Council desires, he could start the planning process with Fluid Interiors or another contractor to talk about what is possible.

Councilmember Holmes felt that people upstairs aren't as efficient as they could be and it's a disservice to the staff that are upstairs by themselves.

City Administrator Perrault said if they do the build out it would probably be in about 1 ½ years. This is a very preliminary discussion.

Councilmember Holmes indicated only phase one was necessary now.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen noted that he used to work upstairs. It was nice when there were others there and he sees the benefit of having everyone from the same department on the same floor.

City Administrator Perrault felt it would be necessary to move Public Works upstairs especially when TCAAP begins and they add additional staff.

Councilmember Holden asked how many recreation employees they would hire.

City Administrator Perrault replied they are planning for one lower level person and a Parks and Recreation Director.

Mayor Grant suggested they build an office upstairs and everyone else gets a cubical.

Councilmember Holmes said they could make the cubes upstairs smaller and the cubes downstairs bigger.

City Administrator Perrault proposed that the Accounting Analyst move to an office, and there would still be a vacant office for a Senior Planner. However, if they hired a Community Development Director, the Accounting Analyst would likely move back out of the office. But that would be during the second phase where they would possibly be knocking down a wall and adding more cubes.

Councilmember Radziej was in favor of having a game plan, even if it has to change.

Councilmember Scott wondered if there would be a lack of conference rooms.

City Administrator Perrault felt they were doing pretty well with the conference room upstairs, the smaller one downstairs, the Council chambers, and the lower level space.

Councilmember Radziej wondered how often the lobby waiting area is utilized.

City Administrator Perrault said there may be two to four people, but most of the time it's not very utilized.

Deputy City Clerk Trauba added that it depends on the number of meetings there are with outside people coming in, and that in the evening Parks and Rec activities like dance will cause the lobby to be full.

Councilmember Radziej said he was thinking of a smaller meeting room in that area.

Councilmember Holden was in favor of looking further into changing the second floor but to keeping offices to scale, and when the downstairs gets done offices may need to come out and made a more normal size.

City Administrator Perrault said he'd like to have a preliminary discussion with Fluid Interiors to get a sense of cost for modular offices.

Councilmember Holden said the priority should be to maximize the space.

Mayor Grant added they need to be sure to not build offices too big only to find out they need more staff and there's no place for them to go.

City Administrator Perrault said he would take a step or two forward and bring his findings back for more discussion.

Councilmember Holden noted once TCAAP gets going we will need space for several inspectors.

City Administrator Perrault replied that inspectors may be contracted and could work from tablets in the field with minimal need for desk space.

Mayor Grant suggested taking the amount of space we think we need and add three additional people.

F. Council Tracker

City Administrator Perrault provided the Council with an update on the Council Tracker. After discussion, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Data Reporting and Quarterly Updates to Council item was removed from the tracker.

Councilmember Holmes requested that International Paper be added to the tracker.

Discussion ensued regarding International Paper parking semi-trailers along Red Fox Road. It was decided to tell International Paper to remove trucks from the north side of the road within a month or they will be ticketed, and to submit a plan of action within two months. Once the plan is received the decision will be made as to whether or not they will ticket trucks on the south side.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Holden commented that according to the Met Council affordable housing unit report Arden Hills has 436 affordable housing units under 30% below the Federal poverty level, based on 3200 household units, which is over 12%. She felt this information should be told to residents, as Arden Hills has more at this level than other neighboring communities. She wondered if the people from All in One had talked with the people in the manufactured home community.

Councilmember Holmes suggested they could publish an article in the newsletter.

Councilmember Scott said he met with three members of the Karth Lake Improvement District and took a walking tour. He explained to them that it was storm water flowing into the lake, not sewer.

Councilmember Scott noted there will be a retirement ceremony for Terry Schwerm at the Shoreview Community Center Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. Saturday at 10:00 a.m. is Touch a Truck and Scoops for Troops is Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Councilmember Holmes said there is someone in her neighborhood with a boat in his front yard that was sent a letter, he is concerned about his situation about other neighbors in similar situations, and thinks the ordinance should be changed.

Councilmember Holmes said she would like more information on the alarm system for the water towers.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said they were notified by a passerby that noticed the water coming out of the ground on Lexington Avenue. Because it was a large break it drained the water tower to below 20 feet, which is what the alarm is set at, and the alarm did go off while they were working on the leak.

Councilmember Holmes felt the rate of the water dissipated should also set the alarm off.

City Administrator Perrault said if you bump it too high the alarm will go off every day.

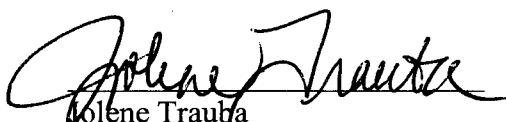
Councilmember Radziej thought Public Works did a great job fixing the break as fast as they did, and keeping the lift stations working during the storms. He noted he would be gone on June 13.


Mayor Grant wondered if given recent Federal announcements of programs and the amount of money that is available, would the City be well advised to hire a grant writer? And would that position be able to fund itself? He asked Council to consider the idea.

City Administrator Perrault noted the Public Works appreciation and staff recognition event will be pushed out until later this summer. Staff started visiting businesses on Lexington Avenue to discuss the road construction.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 8:10 p.m.


Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk


David Grant
Mayor