



Approved: July 26, 2021

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
JUNE 21, 2021
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.

Note: On March 20th, 2020 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, Interim Public Works Director David Swearingen, Senior Planner Jessica Jagoe, Finance Director Gayle Bauman, Communications Coordinator Gretchen Needham and Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba

Also present via telephone: MnDOT Senior Transportation Planner Joe Widing

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. MnDOT Functional Classification Change to Principal Arterial of MN-51 and US-10

MnDOT Senior Transportation Planner Widing presented information regarding the upgrading of the functional classification of MN-51 and US-10 from Minor Arterial to Principal Arterial. He explained the classification categories and asked for a resolution of support from the City Council.

Councilmember Holden asked if they would take access points away if Highway 10 becomes a Principal Arterial.

Mr. Widing said this reclassification is more a technical formality as to how the roadway is currently operating. There isn't criteria to remove all access.

Mayor Grant asked if a right turn off the road is considered an access?

Mr. Widing responded that it would count as a partial access.

Mr. Widing said MnDOT has taken actions on Highway 51 regardless of the classification of the roadway so this change would be acknowledging the classification as a Principal Arterial.

Mayor Grant wondered what MnDOT got from reclassifying the roads.

Mr. Widing said there would be consistency within the state network and across the country, and they want to avoid such a wide variety of roads classified as Minor. Reclassification could actually be more work and maintenance for MnDOT as it would be added to the national highway system with higher standards.

Mayor Grant asked what would be the driving factor for the Council to issue a resolution.

Mr. Widing responded it would be administrative and acknowledging the road for what it is.

Councilmember Holden asked if there would be a change on how you could ask for funding.

Mr. Widing there wouldn't be a change to the funding mechanisms.

Councilmember Scott asked what would happen if one municipality along the roadway agreed to reclassify but another did not?

Mr. Widing replied that if there wasn't consensus it would remain as Minor Arterial.

Councilmember Holden noted that Roseville has been allowed to have signal lights but in Arden Hills they continue to limit access. Her fear is the Grey Fox/Red Fox exit will be taken away. She asked if a trail is allowed alongside Principal Arterials and why there is a pedestrian crossing allowed.

Mr. Widing said a Principal Arterial can have pedestrian accommodations. He felt there should be something included in the roadway. He couldn't speak to the past actions taken on the roadway.

Councilmember Holden asked who the discussion would take place with.

Mr. Widing replied that there should be an engagement period when a project comes up. He has personally been meeting with cities to get their opinions on MnDOT's collaboration.

Councilmember Holmes felt there had been no collaboration with the State. She said she wouldn't vote for a resolution.

Councilmember Holden said there is still a pedestrian crossing that goes over all four lanes of traffic. Are pedestrians allowed on a Principal Arterial?

Mr. Widing said he personally wouldn't want to see that with a Minor or Principal Arterial designation on this roadway.

Councilmember McClung said it seemed like the only time MnDOT wants to have dialog is after they've already made changes.

Councilmember Holden wondered if Council would like to change Highway 10 to a Principal Arterial. She wouldn't change Highway 51 but might look at Highway 10 differently.

Mr. Widing said they could table Highway 51 and review Highway 10 separately.

Councilmember Holmes commented that she wouldn't want to lose entrances on Highway 10 and wouldn't want it to be a Principal Arterial.

Councilmember Holden asked if MnDOT was required to provide an entrance to Scherer Brothers.

Mayor Grant said closing the entrance to Scherer Brothers would have been a taking of their business. They tried to do that with Big 10 but they fought against it and were allowed the break in the sound wall. The cable median stopped a left turn into Big 10 so now the only way to get there if you're going north bound is to make a U-turn at County Road H.

Mayor Grant asked if they made them Principal Arterials and later wanted to make them Minor Arterials, would they need MnDOT's approval.

Mr. Widing replied that was correct.

Mayor Grant noted that MnDOT has the potential to close accesses regardless of the classification.

Councilmember McClung felt there was no need to make a change.

Councilmember Holden agreed and thanked Mr. Widing for his openness and honesty.

Mr. Widing briefly reviewed next steps and said revised system changes will take effect by the end of 2021.

Mayor Grant said the Council won't be taking the next steps and thanked Mr. Widing for his time.

B. State of the City

Communications Coordinator Needham said she had questions regarding the State of the City such as when they envision the event take place, what format they would like and some specific content items. She asked for questions, concerns or direction.

Councilmember Holden felt it should be 90 days after the court case decision so they know if they can talk about TCAAP. And that it's far enough out they could cancel in case of more COVID issues.

Mayor Grant noted that would be mid-September/early October and that would be a good time. Councilmembers McClung and Holmes agreed.

Councilmember Scott said an in-person meeting was a bit too early to call because they didn't know if COVID was done or not.

Councilmember Holden felt it should be in person and be able to see people face to face.

Mayor Grant said they could plan for an in-person meeting but could change it if necessary.

Councilmember McClung suggested an in-person event with no food but possibly bottled water, and an opportunity for residents to ask questions.

Councilmember Holden agreed with no food, and felt it could give them more options for locations, even possibly downstairs at City Hall.

Councilmember Scott mentioned that Land O'Lakes had been anxious to host.

Mayor Grant said they would have more flexibility at City Hall.

Councilmember McClung commented that the Marsden Room at the Public Works facility would be large enough if people wanted to spread out, and there is ample parking.

Mayor Grant told staff the Marsden Room would be the first choice, with City Hall as the backup location.

Councilmember Holden suggested they have a short segment to talk about what the City is allowed to do in developments; what they have to approve within a development.

Councilmember Holmes added they could talk about their approach to business incentives.

Councilmember Holden said they should also talk about the makeup of the community.

Mayor Grant said they should add how the City compares to neighboring communities. They could educate the public at a high-level regarding levies, budget funds, and the struggle with hiring employees.

During discussion, Lexington Avenue, public safety, tobacco rules, and National Guard were also brought up as possible topics, Council directed to not have the National Guard present at this time and felt a presentation from MnDOT was also not necessary.

Councilmember Holmes felt the evening meetings were poorly attended.

Mayor Grant felt they could do one meeting and have it recorded but he was OK with an evening meeting.

Mayor Grant directed staff to give each Council member a topic, and to have NineNorth video the event.

Councilmember Holden also suggested discussing the length of time City Staff has to respond to inquiries.

Discussion ensued regarding other potential videos with NineNorth.

C. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Finance Director Bauman stated the American Rescue Plan funds will be received over the next two years. The current amount allocated to Arden Hills is \$1,079,505. 50% is expected to be received in July 2021, with the remaining funds coming in 2022. Eligible uses for the funds include supporting public health expenditures, addressing negative economic impacts, replacing lost public sector revenue, providing premium pay for essential workers, and infrastructure investments for water, sewer and broadband. Public safety payroll costs can be applied but there are different criteria. Under the CARES funds it was presumed that all work being performed could be considered. ARPA funds may be used only to the extent that services are devoted to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Loss of revenue is a new category, and based on the current interpretations of the Act, the calculations show that the City had a loss of revenue in 2020 in excess of the total amount allocated to us. What this means is Arden Hills could claim all of the funds under the loss of revenue provision. This money cannot be just placed into fund balance. We must identify what it is being used for.

Finance Director Bauman reported there is a 3 ½ year time period to use the funds. Government services can include, but are not limited to, maintenance of infrastructure or pay-go spending for building new infrastructure, including roads; modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software, and protection of critical infrastructure; health services; environmental remediation; school or educational services; and the provision of police, fire, and other public safety services. The funds should be directed toward one-time priorities and not programs or policies that will continue to need funding into the future. Care should be taken to avoid creating new programs or add-ons to existing programs, funds shouldn't be used to cover operating deficits or normal budgetary items, but long-term capital type projects are well suited for use. There is other money available for capital projects, housing, small business assistance, individual assistance, unemployment and tax changes.

Finance Director Bauman noted that costs must be incurred beginning on or after March 3, 2021 (with the exception of premium pay); Costs must be incurred or obligated by December 31, 2024. That means the item must be paid for or an agreement or contract to pay by that date. If it is obligated in 2024, it doesn't have to be spent for another two years. Staff would like direction on how the Council would like to prioritize spending the funds.

Councilmember Holden suggested a subcommittee of the Council be formed to make a list of potential items.

Councilmember Holmes asked if we were anticipating police and fire to give us an itemized list of their time.

Finance Director Bauman said she didn't think it was very probable they would get that information for payroll costs.

Mayor Grant said he would be willing to serve on a subcommittee, as did Councilmembers Holden, Scott and McClung. Discussion ensued regarding potential uses for the money, the size of the committee and if meetings would need to be public.

D. Clean Up Day Discussion

City Administrator Perrault stated the Council had directed staff to begin organizing a clean-up day for the fall 2021. Previously Clean-up Days were held in mid to late October and if this is still the Council's timeframe, staff can check on the availability of Green Lights Recycling. If the City Council chooses they could offer an incentive to residents, for example, a coupon to recycle items for free.

After a brief discussion, Council agreed to try to schedule Green Lights for late September or early October.

Councilmember Holmes thought a coupon was a good idea.

Councilmember Holden asked if Green Lights would charge according to the item recycled.

City Administrator Perrault said if the residents use coupons we would be billed for the cost of the item, or a maximum of \$50.

Councilmember Holden said she likes the idea of a coupon for one item up to \$50.

Discussion continued regarding the number of items per coupon and how residents would receive them. It was decided to have one coupon for up to \$50 and up to two items.

Mayor Grant thought there should be an article in the newsletter explaining how to get rid of hazardous and electronic items ahead of clean-up day.

E. Bethel and E-Scooter Discussion

City Administrator Perrault reported that Bethel University recently reached out to the City to discuss the possibility of e-scooters on their campus. Per the City Attorney, we can't regulate e-scooters on their campus, but Bethel is willing to work with the City if we want them to install a geo-fence to limit them to their campus. The Council was asked if they would like staff to start looking at an ordinance for e-scooters within the city? They cannot be prohibited from operating on City streets but we can regulate them on bike paths and trails. Ramsey County defaults to the State Statute for County roads.

Councilmember Holmes asked if there was anything in our ordinance about motorized bikes.

City Administrator Perrault didn't believe we have signage or ordinance for motorized bikes.

Councilmember Holden would like Bethel to keep them on campus.

Councilmember McClung thought we wouldn't want them on our trails and sidewalks and would like the geo-fence.

Councilmember Holmes would like to know what other cities are doing.

Mayor Grant instructed staff to do some research on the issue.

F. Little Free Libraries Discussion

(Discussed as Item H)

City Administrator Perrault said the Rotary has some Little Free Libraries they would like to donate to the City, there are questions about where to place them. They are currently not allowed in the right-of-way or on City property.

Councilmember Holden added that she has mapped the Little Library locations and most of them are in the right-of-way, and there are two in Hazelnut Park. There are quite a few neighborhoods that don't have Little Libraries. She is looking for feedback and wondered if they will need to move the ones that are in the right-of-way.

Councilmember Scott wondered if Arden Manor had restrictions.

City Administrator Perrault replied they are private roads and Little Libraries would fall under their association's jurisdiction.

Councilmember McClung said the townhomes he lives in have several in cul-de-sacs and they are adding one or two more. He was willing to accept the donation to add them to neighborhoods without them.

Mayor Grant would like to have them at least four feet from the curb to leave room for snow removal, he wasn't overly concerned with them being in the right-of-way.

Councilmember Holmes wondered how the libraries ended up in Hazelnut Park. She thought they could add more to other parks.

Councilmember Holden said her first choice would be to have them on residential property so there would be someone there to watch them. But she wouldn't mind putting one in Freeway Park.

Councilmember Homes said there have been no problems so far so she thought they should just leave them alone and let people put them where they wanted.

Councilmember Holden suggested they ask online if anyone was willing to put a library in their yard, four feet from the curb.

Interim Public Works Director Swearingen said he'd like to have enough clear zone for snow removal but more importantly to get the resident off the street while they are making the book exchange. He thought they should be placed at least five feet from the curb.

Mayor Grant said he wasn't in favor of an ordinance change to regulate them.

City Administrator Perrault said if the Council wished to formally allow them in City parks they would want to have some kind of approval along with a maintenance agreement.

Councilmember Holmes felt it wouldn't be a big deal if city staff needed to maintain them from time to time.

Councilmember Holden said she will put an inventory list together for staff.

Councilmember Scott called a point of order, Council voted to dispense with the Council Tracker but extend the meeting for 5 minutes for Council and Staff comments.

Discussion continued on Little Free Libraries and Council generally agreed they would allow Little Free Libraries in City ROW if they were at least four feet from the street and in City Parks.

G. Community Development Staffing

City Administrator Perrault stated there is a vacancy in the Community Development Department. He proposed two options; consider hiring a City Planner, or a Community Development Director retooled with planning influence. There are other cities that have a Community Development Director that has a planning focused role and also provides leadership and direction.

Mayor Grant commented that the Personnel Committee was split on this item. He felt they were jumping the gun by several months and wanted to give the Senior Planner time to settle into the job as she could be a candidate for the new position.

Councilmember Holden asked what a Community Development Director would do.

Councilmember Scott said his preference was to have two individuals with hands on planning responsibilities, one of which could have a supervisory role. He'd like to see a City Planner and Senior Planner with the City Planner having supervisory responsibilities.

Councilmember McClung felt if you called someone a Community Development Director they wouldn't want to touch a planning case, so he'd like to end up with a Community Development Manager/Planner that oversees the department and continues to work on planning cases.

Councilmember Holmes thought it was important to have the parallel of Finance Director, Public Works Director and Community Development Director. Under the Community Development Director is the Planner, Building Official and Inspector, and in the management scheme it takes pressure of the City Administrator. A Community Development Director would clearly need to understand they're responsible for high level planning cases.

Councilmember Holden said many Community Development Directors don't have planning experience and if they are looking for a Planner that can do some Community Development the title of Community Development Director doesn't work.

Councilmember Holmes said she'd be interested to know how other cities recruited a Community Development Director that does planning.

City Administrator Perrault commented that from his recollection, Vadnais Heights' Director was previously a City Planner, and Little Canada's was in the planning function at Met Council. Little Canada's first duty on the job description is "serves as the principal Planner for the City".

Councilmember Holden asked for more information and a copy of the position descriptions for those cities, as well as a position description that we might use.

Mayor Grant instructed Staff to research position descriptions and bring them back to Council.

H. Public Works Staffing

(Discussed as Item F)

City Administrator Perrault noted the Personnel Committee discussed the need for assistance to the Interim Public Works Director. Previously there was a Public Works Director and Assistant City Engineer on staff, he would like Council to consider a similar position. The current plan is to keep Mr. Swearingen as Interim Public Works Director until the end of the year, and consider making him the Public Works Director at that time.

Councilmember Holden would like to move forward with hiring someone for assistance.

Councilmember Scott concurred.

Councilmember McClung would like to move forward.

Mayor Grant said that was the recommendation of the Personnel Committee. He directed staff to draw up a job description and bring it to Council for approval and posting.

I. Council Tracker

Not discussed.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Holden asked if TCAAP was still "in litigation" or will they be able to talk about it at the next Council meeting?

Mayor Grant said they are technically still in litigation, as the option to appeal is there for 90 days. Also, the non-disclosure agreement that everyone signed still stands.

Councilmember Holmes reported that she asked for the chicken ordinance be put on a work session before it goes to the Planning Commission. She also felt they needed guidance on Zoom meetings post-COVID.

Mayor Grant recommended they discuss chickens at the July work session before it goes to the August Planning Commission, or have a special meeting.

City Administrator Perrault said the July work session could be lengthy. He thought they'd have a fairly close draft for review, pending Council changes. They could have a special work session relatively soon.

Councilmember Scott said he wouldn't mind a special work session after a regular Council meeting.

City Administrator Perrault noted that on June 28 there will be a large agenda and there has been a closed session requested prior to the meeting.

Councilmember Holden proposed after the first meeting in July.

Mayor Grant said they will let everyone know when the extra work session is scheduled. It looks like they will have in-person meetings starting in July.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 8:19 p.m.



Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk



David Grant
Mayor