



Approved: August 22, 2022

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
JULY 18, 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, City Planner Jessica Jagoe, Deputy City Clerk Jolene Trauba, Communications Coordinator Grace Arel, Wold Architects Representatives Jake Wollensack and Joel Dunning, Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Director of Administration Kyle Mestad and Ramsey County Property Manager Mehrshad Parsakalleh

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Concept Plan Review (Security Fence and Parking Lot Expansion) at 1411 Paul Kirkwold Drive (Ramsey County Sheriff's Office) – PC 22-013

City Planner Jagoe stated the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office is proposing to install a security barbed wire fence around the Sheriff's Department property, as well as some additional parking spaces. Under current City Code, barbed wire fencing and spiked fencing are prohibited unless a conditional use permit is issued.

Wold Architects Representative Jake Wollensack explained the Sheriff's Office campus houses patrol, emergency communications, public works (Ramsey County and Arden Hills), some space for the school district, and 24 hour emergency services. There is currently no security fencing on the southern portion of the facility and no way to secure the facility. They are proposing decorative metal fencing on areas that are more visible, and a portion is proposed to be three strand barbed wire. There would also be two locations they would like to add additional parking, one area behind a secure gate for Sheriff's vehicles (18 stalls), and another area for public parking with 5 stalls and connected to a sidewalk. Both security gates would have sliders and be

left open except in the case of an emergency. They are under the threshold of needing to do stormwater management, but Rice Creek Watershed District has been notified.

Mr. Wollensack explained where the decorative metal fencing and barbed wire fencing is proposed to be placed.

Councilmember Radziej asked if the fence would be on top of the berm or at the bottom.

Wold Architects Representative Joel Dunning responded that it would be back from the roadway and on top of the berm, screened by existing landscaping. At the west end it would be almost the same elevation as the highway, but going east the elevation drops.

Councilmember Radziej asked if the decorative fencing was as secure as the barbed wire fencing, or it was just a cost difference.

Mr. Wollensack said it was as secure; it has trident spikes at the top and angles out, but is about four times the cost.

Mr. Dunning added that the barbed wire fence would be about 60 feet back from the roadway and basically hidden.

Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Director of Administration Kyle Mestad said the fence was approved through Ramsey County's capitol improvement process. They want a fence that meets security needs but doesn't look like a military fortress.

Discussion continued regarding placement and visibility of the chain link fence.

Councilmember Holden said everyone agrees the building should be secured but felt the chain link fence with barbed wire is ugly and rusts. She asked if there was anything in between the chain link fence and the decorative fencing.

Mr. Dunning indicated they could look at adding vegetation or possibly doing all decorative fence. He said there were 16 stakeholders walking the site that were in agreement with what is being presented.

Mayor Grant felt the decorative fence didn't look like a fortress and wasn't sure about putting chain link fence along Highway 96.

Mr. Mestad said they have been purposeful in making sure the fence would blend in and not look bad.

Mr. Dunning added the fence would be black vinyl coated chain link fence with barbed wire.

Councilmember Scott stated that he doesn't want the facility to look like a detention center and would like to walk the area where the fence will go.

Mr. Dunning said they would be happy to set up a walk through for anyone that would like to see exactly where the fence would go. He added there is a flat area after the grade rises from

Highway 96, and the fence will be to the north side of that flat area, right before it slopes down the hill to the Sheriff's office/public works campus. It will be set back approximately 30 feet further than where the Federal fence is.

Mayor Grant said the Council isn't opposed to the fence, but asked if they could stake it off so Council to walk the area.

Mr. Mestad said they could probably provide some sample fencing too.

Councilmember Holden said she'd like to also talk about maintenance up to the fence.

Mayor Grant said maybe as the fence makes the turn onto Highway 96 some of it could be decorative until it goes behind the berm and changes to chain link.

Mr. Mestad said they have found that without a way to secure the campus it takes a number of staff to do so, which pulls staff off the streets. Having a fence will reduce the number of staff required to secure the location.

Councilmember Holmes wondered if the five new parking spaces were going to be the only spaces for the public.

Mr. Mestad responded that the public parking will remain in the front of the building, they will move employee parking off to the side.

Mayor Grant told the Council they should walk the site.

City Planner Jagoe said she would notify the Council once it is staked. She could bring the item back for further discussion at another work session.

Mr. Dunning asked if the County were to use all decorative fence, would the City want more vegetation? They could develop the cost of maintenance of the chain link versus the decorative fence.

Mr. Wollensack said they hope to have a fall start for the installation.

B. State of the City Update

Communications Coordinator Arel passed out the first draft of slides for the State of the City and a detailed campus map of Boston Scientific outlining the parking lot and location of the room.

Communications Coordinator Arel stated that in the past two years the State of the City was recorded and not held in person due to COVID-19. This year the event will be in person again, recorded and shared after. 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 make it available online. Presentation content will include: TCAAP Overview and Updates, Community and Commercial Development, Building Inspections, Public Safety: RCSO and LJFD data, Beyond the Yellow

Ribbon, Public Works Infrastructure Projects, 2022 PMP, City Finances Overview and 2022 City Property Taxes.

Communications Coordinator Arel said that Council may want to consider assigning topics to Councilmembers so staff can work with that particular Councilmember in preparation for the next work session. Another consideration is how, or if, Council will take questions: should questions be submitted in advance, taken live at the end of the presentation, or one-on-one after the presentation concludes. The budget for the State of the City is approximately \$1,000.

Council reviewed the draft slides, made changes and additions, and assigned topics to Councilmembers. It was also decided to have tables with placards for staff and City Council for break out discussions after the presentation, which would allow participants to ask questions one-on-one.

C. Tree Plan Discussion

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen explained that to date, the City has collected \$115,440 in Tree Replacement funds. One location that has come up in previous discussions is Highway 96. In 2006, the City of Arden Hills partnered with Ramsey County to add landscaping to the highway, the landscaping plan can be seen in Attachment A. The plan included 173 boulevard trees, but it doesn't show the 40 trees that were existing just east of the project limits that staff identified through aerial photos from 2006. That brings the total trees in 2006 to 213, today there exists 139 trees. Therefore, over the last 16 years, there has been a loss of 74 trees or about 35%. Recently, Public Works staff inspected the existing condition of the remaining trees along Highway 96. There were seven trees identified to monitor and 26 to remove.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen reported that after speaking with Rainbow Tree Care, they have an eight-inch limit and won't inject trees that are smaller. Smaller diameter tree can have a ground root treatment, the cost would be about \$35 per tree. There are currently about 50 Ash trees (including EAB identified trees) along Highway 96 that would qualify for this treatment. The other approach Council could choose would be to remove all trees identified with EAB and begin growing a new tree in its place. Other locations considered for planting new trees are Perry Dog Park (possibly 4 trees), the Thom Court median turnaround and Oak Avenue median turnaround. In a future project, staff would look at locations to apply our "buddy tree" program where we would plant trees near other trees that are declining in health.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen noted that he would like to get a variety of tree species to avoid disease from infecting a large number of trees. A three-inch caliper tree ranges from \$500-\$800 to install. Council could choose to order larger trees but the cost increases with size. Tree bags cost about \$25 per bag and could be ordered for each new tree. All the bags the City currently owns are being utilized on existing trees.

Councilmember Holden suggested they plant trees in the dog park, and Oak and Thom Drives. Council agreed.

Councilmember Holden didn't know if they should put money into treating trees when they will have to cut them down eventually.

Mayor Grant said there are a lot of trees on Highway 96 that the bark has peeled back, opening the core of the tree. Some have no leaves, and some look fairly good even though they are tagged EAB. He wondered if maybe they should take some trees down in the fall and some in the spring. He showed some photos he took of trees along Highway 96. He would like to see the trees mulched and bagged like at City Hall.

Mayor Grant discussed agreements with the County regarding trees along Highway 96 east of Highway 10. The City says the County should maintain the trees, the County says the City should do it, so nothing gets done, the trees die and the city looks bad. Rather than point fingers his expectation is that if we plant trees we maintain them.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said that part of the hurdle with watering trees on Highway 96 is they need use a driver with a CDL, and a seasonal employee can't necessarily go out alone.

Councilmember Holden felt no-one disagreed that if the City plants trees they want them taken care of.

After further discussion it was decided to plant 30-50 trees with mulch and bags along Highway 96, also mulch the existing trees and potentially use ICWC crews to do some of the work.

City Administrator Perrault suggested the contractor planting the trees could do the original mulching on the new trees.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said they could push to have the trees planted around the end of September, depending on tree inventory.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen noted that if they weren't going to cut down tree with EAB now, they should treat them so as not to harbor the disease and spread it to other trees.

After discussion it was decided to take down the infected trees east of Highway 10.

Mayor Grant showed photos of thistles of two areas along Highway 96 west of Highway 10. He noted they are considered a noxious weed.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said the County isn't maintaining the right-of-way.

Councilmember Holden suggested they send a letter to Ramsey County Commissioners telling them there are noxious weeds on their property that they need to clean up, and take down the dead trees and replace them.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen said he has spoken with a Ramsey County Maintenance person and it seemed that they wanted to take the trees out of that area and put the area back as turf. They would also like to hand it back to the City to maintain. The contract doesn't call out who is responsible for the landscaping.

Councilmember Holden restated that the City should send a letter to Ramsey County telling them to take out the noxious weeds, take out the dead trees and plant new trees and the City will maintain them.

D. Hazelnut Parking Lot Discussion

City Administrator Perrault reported that staff has re-engaged with the Gathering Place Church. They are willing to give up about 28% of their parking lot to turn back over to park land, members of the public would have the right to continue to use the parking lot. Finer points of the agreement include the City leading the project and costs split 50/50 between the City and the church, it would be tied to another project and anticipated to be done in 2024, the cost estimate is approximately \$250,000 which may increase if they add lighting, the City will crack seal and/or sealcoat the parking lot for a period of 20 years and annually fill minor potholes that could be reasonably filled, the City would continue to pay the church \$1,500 a year for snow plowing, the Gathering Place will be responsible for addressing any maintenance activities outside of the crack-sealing, sealcoating and/or minor pothole filling, and at the end of the 20 years they may enter into another agreement.

Councilmember Holmes felt the language should say the Gathering Place should be responsible for paying for maintenance activities, not just addressing them.

Councilmember Holden asked why it was 28%.

City Administrator Perrault said it was a rough number based on the stalls that they were removing from the north end of the lot, with the intention to retain the ingress/egress points.

E. Noise Barrier Discussion

City Administrator Perrault stated Council had discussed noise barriers along the west side of Highway 51 near the Glenhill Road access and the west side of Old Highway 10. Council could consider the east side of either road (for the Highway 10 location the east side location would be further south). MnDOT does have a noise barrier program where cities can compete for funding. The City put in an application in 2021, a study was done which included the west side of Highway 10, it was not selected. The east side of Highway 10 near Norma was also looked at and was also considered not cost feasible. Staff could put in another application for as many areas as Council desires.

Mayor Grant asked if they had redone the noise study on the west side of Highway 10.

City Administrator Perrault said it was looked at again in 2021 and the decibel count didn't meet the criteria.

Councilmember Holden asked if they could get a copy of that study.

Mayor Grant said he'd like to see the City apply for the west side of Highway 10.

Councilmember Holden asked if they could do a special assessment on property owners.

City Administrator Perrault replied that it is in statute that you can assess for a noise wall. The question was if all the properties in the area were in favor of the wall.

City Administrator Perrault said each location is reviewed when an application is received but he would need to confirm if they did a new noise study each time. The application itself is simple, but if selected there would be a 10% match from the City.

Councilmember Holden thought they should also submit an application for the west side of Highway 51 near Glenhill.

Mayor Grant said he doesn't support a wall on the east side of Highway 10. He added that if shortening the length of wall on the west side increases the score they should consider that. He suggested getting a copy of the last report to see what length will get the best score. Staff should also ask for Highway 51 so a study gets done.

F. 2023 – 2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Discussion

Finance Director Bauman explained that the CIP doesn't commit the Council to any of the proposed projects, but is the basis for the 2023 budget. She reviewed the Summary of Capital Improvement Plan Expenditures chart, and changes from the previous year. Projects were discussed individually and changes made as necessary. Other items reviewed were Equipment in 2023, Estimated Ending Fund Balance by Year, and the MSA Summary.

Discussion also ensued regarding the Lake Johanna trail and the need for something being done that would be safe now, rather than waiting until the trail is built.

Finance Director Bauman asked if staff should assume a \$50,000 increase in the levy for the Public Safety Capital Fund for 2023. Consensus was yes.

Finance Director Bauman asked if staff should plan on transferring \$102,540 from the General Fund to the PIR Fund. After discussion, staff was directed to do so.

Point of order was called at 8:03 p.m. by Councilmember Holmes and a vote was taken to extend the meeting 15 minutes.

G. City Code Section 910, Swimming Pools Fence Regulations

Mayor Grant asked the Council if they'd like to change the fence height to 48 inches. He noted that most cities are at four feet.

Councilmembers Holmes and Holden felt they should stay at five feet.

Mayor Grant and Councilmembers Scott and Radziej would be agreeable to the change.

H. International Paper Parking Update

City Administrator Perrault stated that International Paper requested an extension on a plan to September 30.

Councilmember Holden said no extension.

Councilmember Radziej suggested September 15 as an acceptable date for a plan.

City Administrator Perrault reminded them the original date to have a plan was the middle of July and no plan was submitted.

Councilmember Holden said the city should start ticketing them.

Councilmember Scott felt they should stick with the original date and ticket them.

Councilmember Holmes agreed that they should start to ticket them.

Mayor Grant also agreed and instructed staff to stick with the original plan to begin ticketing.

I. Council Tracker

City Administrator Perrault provided the Council with an update on the Council Tracker. After discussion, all items were left on the tracker.

Mayor Grant requested additions to the tracker: trees on Highway 96 west of Highway 10, pond maintenance at Indian Oaks, and green space preservation fund in place of a tree fund.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Holmes said she met someone who works for the University of Minnesota who helps cities write grants. She has his business card if they would like to contact him.

Councilmember Scott said a resident had approached him for the second time about the Met Council water conservation program.

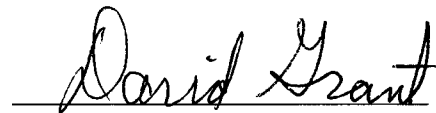
Mayor Grant said he had been contacted too, it sounds like the program involves intelligent irrigation controllers. He asked staff to take another look into the program.

Councilmember Holden asked if a letter had been sent to MnDOT about cutting down trees on Snelling Avenue. She wondered if the speed sign had been moved. She asked how often the parks were being mowed with the dry weather, and noted the school speed sign is still on by Valentine Elementary.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 8:20 p.m.


Jolene Trauba
Deputy City Clerk


David Grant
Mayor