



Approved: August 24, 2020

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
JULY 23, 2020
5:30 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 Special City Council Work Session at 5:30 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, Associate Planner Joe Hartmann, and City Clerk Julie Hanson

Also present via Telephone: Community Development Manager/City Planner Mike Mroska, North Suburbs Youth Coalition for Justice Representatives Gaedy Bindoula, Bri Sislo-Schutta, Del Gilbert and Sam Mesfin, Travis Willemsen, PE from Paulson & Clark, Nathan Fair from Landmark of Minnesota

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. North Suburbs Youth Coalition for Justice Presentation

Mayor Grant noted that this was a listening session with no interruptions from the Council.

Ms. Sislo-Schutta stated their mission as the young people of this community, they are obligated to speak up and be active in the Black Lives Matter movement. In light of racial injustice across the nation, they desire to take reasonable and tangible action at the local level to ensure that such a tragedy will never occur in our multiethnic community. They must stand up to systemic racial injustice and make our communities as just, equitable, and inclusive as possible.

Mr. Gilbert said their concerns as constituents of color include representation, support for BIPOC community members, commitment to change with measurable outcomes and a sense of urgency from City Council.

Mr. Bindoula addressed their concerns in regard to the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Mesfin said they felt the Council should ask critical questions regarding the Ramsey County Sheriff Department: Use of force policy, de-escalation policy, accountability for excessive force-Internal Affairs system, mental health alternatives and the no-knock warrant policy.

Mr. Bindoula stated they would like a Civilian Review Board, to publicize the Sheriff's department use of force policy and publicize reports concerning the department's activity and dispatch reports.

Mr. Mesfin explained community-based public safety including restorative justice, preventative measure, decriminalization of nonviolent crimes, direct democracy at the community level, community patrols and advanced mental health care.

Ms. Sislo-Schutta said they would like the City to create a Human Rights Commission, have outreach to BIPOC constituents, increased education and awareness, equity audit, and hold the Ramsey County Sheriff Department to higher standards and if they do not meet these standards, enter contract negotiations.

Mr. Gilbert read a poem he had presented at the previous organized march.

Mayor Grant thanked them for their presentation and said it would be on a future work session to discuss in more detail.

B. HVAC Project Update

City Administrator Perrault commented that Council had approved Paulson and Clark to review the current system, provide a recommendation and carry out the design.

Mr. Willemssen said the assessment report was an overview of the major pieces in the building with reasonable expectations for remaining life, along with general recommendations. The recommendations report listed out options and costs.

Mr. Willemssen reviewed the recommendations report which included options for the water heater, boiler, cooling system and duct liner. His recommendation was to replace the condensing units outside and the cooling coils. If the higher efficient chiller option was chosen, the return on investment would be about 30 years.

City Administrator Perrault said next steps would be for Paulson and Clark to finish the design and with Council's authorization they will begin the bidding process for the construction.

Mr. Willemssen said they could get documents ready for bid by mid-late August, and a contractor could be working by October, depending on lead time for equipment. He thought the hot water component could be operational yet this fall. The cooling could be done anytime after that.

Councilmember Scott asked if there was a type of boiler that would also provide domestic hot water.

Mr. Willemssen replied there are boilers with a secondary heat exchanger but he felt a water heater replacement made sense because the hot water needs in the building are low. The current water heater and boiler are around 80% efficiency, new equipment would be approximately 95%. He said there would probably be around a 20% reduction in the natural gas bill.

Councilmember Holden asked if there was an economy of scale if we do the hot water heater at the same time as the boiler.

Mr. Willemssen said there would be a small economy of scale by having one mobilization by a contractor, possibly \$15-20,000.

Mayor Grant asked if they could ask for a time frame on the bid and if there was in issue with them installing in October or November?

Mr. Willemssen said if they could get a request out in the next month there would be a lot of interest, as things have slowed down on construction.

Councilmember Holden felt because it is in this year's budget, they should ask for bids now and try to get the work done this year, depending on how bids come back.

Councilmember McClung agreed.

Councilmember Holmes agreed.

Councilmember Scott asked if bids would be on options 1, 2 and 3? He recommended option 1.

Mayor Grant said he thought everyone was going with the recommended option, option 1.

City Administrator Perrault said they could move forward as soon as Paulson and Clark are finished with the design plans.

C. Concept Plan Review – Old Snelling

Associate Planner Hartmann said Nathan Fair is the applicant for a Concept Plan at 4370 Snelling Avenue North. The property is 1.28 acres, located in the R-1 Single Family Residential and is guided as Low Density Residential Use (LDR) on the 2040 Land Use Plan. The applicant is asking to divide the lot into four separate lots to build detached single family homes and a private drive.

Mr. Fair stated that he was informed earlier in the day that there seems to be quite a bit of neighborhood opposition and he would withdraw the application if the Council feels it's not a proper fit. They did a project in Arden Hills a few years ago, this would be similar homes, with a lot of landscaping at the entrance and on the other sides of the property to screen the existing homes.

Associate Planner Hartmann noted the proposed land use would require a Site Plan, Preliminary and Final Plat, Rezoning to R-2 District and a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for the private drive and for performance standard flexibility (at a minimum, density, minimum lot area per unit and building height). Minimum lot width would require flexibility, along with minimum front yard setback, and minimum corner yard setback.

Councilmember Holden said she is not in favor of the request.

Councilmember McClung said there are other issues that they may end up with the ponds and stormwater issues. He felt it would devastate the character of the neighborhood and not fit in. He could never support it.

Councilmember Scott said he wouldn't be willing to entertain rezoning and it's across the street from a park and the density might be problematic. He can't support this project.

Mayor Grant said he wasn't as averse to private drives but can't support the current application.

Councilmember Holmes was not in favor of the rezoning.

Mr. Fair said he appreciated the Council's time and they will withdraw the application.

D. Communications Discussion

City Administrator Perrault noted the Communications Coordinator was not able to attend the meeting and would have been a key part of the conversation.

Mayor Grant stated unless they'd like to go forward, the item would be postponed.

Councilmember Holden said it's a conversation about what Council wants the Communications job to be so maybe the Council should still say what they'd like it to be. She felt the Communications Coordinator is looking for input and whether she's at the meeting or not wouldn't change what they decide.

Councilmember Holmes felt they should make some preliminary comments.

City Administrator Perrault gave background, noting the Communications Coordinator position was approved by the City Council in 2017 following discussion that began at the City Council's strategic planning session. Prior to having the position, the City relied on a volunteer committee to draft newsletter articles and existing staff for website/social media updates. Since the Communications Coordinator started, they have taken the newsletter in-house, facilitated a website upgrade, webpage maintenance, taken on social media/website messaging, and acted as the point person for the annual State of the City address along with other tasks. Since it has been three years, they thought it might be an appropriate time to talk about the priorities of the position. In early 2018 the Communications Coordinator asked Council to rank their priorities, at the top of the list were the items like the newsletter and website redesign; toward the bottom were digital storytelling and the annual report.

City Administrator Perrault said the Council may wish to discuss the Communications Committee and its role, the newsletter process, how Council want to see this role evolve, and future goals and metrics.

Councilmember Scott, Communications Committee liaison, reminded Council this is a part-time position and a large portion of the position is spent on the newsletter. He sees the social media presence growing. He feared they would be overtaxing the part-time status of the position. Aside from being more responsive he has no particular issues.

Councilmember Holden said they could remove branding from her position description to make it clear they are happy with the current branding.

Councilmember Scott felt that wasn't a huge priority.

Councilmember Holmes agreed that perhaps branding shouldn't be in the position description. Her concern was that the Communications Committee used to write the entire newsletter, not staff. She felt it would be helpful if the Communications Coordinator were aware of the meetings and packets, and interview other staff. She would like to see the Communications Coordinator write the articles, especially articles specifically related to Arden Hills.

City Administrator Perrault said there are quite a few articles where the Communications Coordinator is actively writing and interviewing department heads or other staff members. There are times when the staff member may have to generate some content but he wouldn't characterize it as staff writing their own articles.

Councilmember Holden said she was disappointed with the July newsletter because of all of the COVID items that didn't relate to the city. She felt people were getting that information from television or the Governor but not from our newsletter. She felt a Communications person should recognize hot topics.

Mayor Grant agreed they were happy with the current branding of the city. Based upon background and staff to help, the Communications Coordinator should be able to figure out the hot topics.

Councilmember Scott said there were two long term members of the Communications Committee and when they left, Council thought it prudent to have someone with access to staff. Some things are suited to the newsletter and some not. He felt the COVID updates are probably better on social media.

City Administrator Perrault commented that the newsletter does go through the Communications Committee that includes Councilmember Scott and the City Clerk.

Councilmember Scott said residents like to see the "What's Made in Arden Hills" section.

Councilmember Holden felt the position should concentrate on the newsletter, hot topics such as the fire department and what needs to be responded to and how to respond.

Mayor Grant directed staff to take branding off of the position description.

Councilmember Holmes would like to get away from any articles for the newsletter being written by a staff person other than the Communications Coordinator.

Councilmember Holden wondered if the first paragraph regarding TCAAP should be deleted.

Mayor Grant felt the word “lead” could be changed.

Councilmember Scott suggested “coordinate”.

City Administrator Perrault said he could bring a revamped position description to the Personnel Committee and then bring back to Council to discuss again.

Councilmember Holmes suggested it be made clear that this position writes the content of the City newsletter.

Councilmember McClung suggested under essential functions they add another bullet to “write, design and compile the City newsletter”. He agreed that the person in the position should be appraising Council of issues within the community they may need to react to.

Councilmember Holden also asked to have something included about working with external partners like Ramsey County, the League of MN Cities, the school district etc.

Mayor Grant said the Personnel Committee will try to incorporate the concepts discussed into the position description.

E. Multi-Function Copy Machine Proposal

City Administrator Perrault explained that the City’s current multi-function five-year copy machine lease with Canon Solutions was about to expire. Roseville IT suggested four companies that would be easy to integrate. Canon Solutions, Loffler, Marco and Metro Sales provided proposals. Options to consider include leasing versus buying. The least expensive proposal was from Marco for both lease and purchase. We did receive an updated proposal from Metro Sales that is complete with the Marco option. The benefit of leasing is not being tied to an upfront capital cost, with leasing those costs would be spread over the 60 months. If purchasing, the machine may have residual value at the end of five years, but that amount is unknown. Bids are comparable to what you would find on the State contract.

Councilmember Scott said he would be in favor of leasing, he didn’t think there was much of a market for five-year-old office equipment.

Mayor Grant asked if there were anything in our requirements that would cause a higher priced machine?

City Administrator Perrault replied that we are at the base level of commercial machines, the stapler and large capacity tray were two cost drivers on the machines. Standard machines would have 4 or 5 drawers in the bottom with one ream capacity.

Council agreed with leasing a machine.

Councilmember Scott recommended using the brand that Roseville IT recommended, which was Marco.

City Administrator Perrault said he would bring the item back as a consent item at a future meeting.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

Councilmember Scott noted he attended the North Suburbs Youth Coalition for Justice march. He thought it was well planned and coordinated. He felt it is important to thank them for their presentation.

Councilmember Holmes wondered if there was going to be an FPAC meeting.

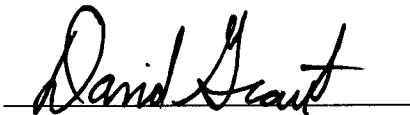
Councilmember Scott said the Finance Director thought there would be one in late July.

Mayor Grant reported the Parks, Trails and Rec Committee met on Tuesday. They talked about the annual donation letter, reviewed the park bench inventory, discussed playground equipment replacement, community outreach, and a trail crossing for I-694 and two solicitation applications for other trail extensions.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the Special City Council Work Session at 6:35 p.m.


Jolene Trauba
Deputy Clerk


David Grant
Mayor