

**WORKSESSION OF THE ANOKA CITY COUNCIL
ANOKA CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION ROOM
JUNE 27, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rice called the worksession meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present at roll call: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Barnett, Skogquist, Weaver, and Wesp.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Lee; Community Development Director Doug Borglund; Assistant City Engineer Ben Nelson; Senior City Planner Clark Palmer; Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse; Public Services Director Mark Anderson; Public Services Supervisor Jon Holmes; Green Haven Golf Course Director Larry Norland; Assistant City Manager Amy Oehlers; Finance Director Brenda Springer; Utility Director Greg Geiger; City Attorney Scott Baumgartner; Communications Manager Pam Bowman.

Absent: None.

The agenda was amended to discuss Item 3.3 Discussion; Policy Review; Snow Removal, City Hall Room Reservations.

3. COUNCIL BUSINESS and/or DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1 Discussion; Green Haven Gold Course Redesign.

Community Development Director Doug Borglund shared a staff report with background information stating the Council has had several discussions regarding the potential redesign of Green Haven Golf Course. The last time the City Council discussed this item the Council requested additional information related to tax benefit, development and golf revenues. Part of the overall plan and direction is to develop and maximize the real estate around the golf course. Currently there are two scenarios that can be reviewed to understand the impacts of new real estate development and reviewed development/tax revenue for golf and the tavern in detail which include the redesign, driving range, top tracer technology, lawn bowling and winter curling courts, and a wedding pavilion. He shared the overall estimated project cost in detail as well as estimated total gross property tax revenue if constructed as well as increased revenue from the clubhouse then asked for staff direction.

Greenhaven Golf Director Larry Norland reviewed the driving range and renovation analysis in detail.

Finance Director Brenda Springer spoke about the proposed golf course financing that included land sales, internal loans from SAC/WAC, electric, fund balance, and ARPA funds that totaled \$11,950,000 then explained the resulting amounts to the City based on the restaurant's projections.

Councilmember Weaver said he appreciated staff's work and was supportive of the proposal without any bonding or increased property taxes.

Councilmember Skogquist said the proposal was a cost/benefit analysis and was not supportive of using several different funding sources to accomplish the project when roads and staffing needs were greater.

Councilmember Wesp said it takes vision to build something different and how WPA funds were used to build the course and the back nine holes as a land donation in 1955 and stated the golf course is very popular and important in enhancing the community. He said having a driving range on the north side was important which resulted in having homes constructed on the course, and while there were still questions about how this could be accomplished, he supported the action to continue consideration.

Mayor Rice said he would not support the project unless the taxpayers contribute towards the project. He said people love living on a golf course and that homes are valued as such and that if it adds to the community the taxpayers should help provide funding in an amount of one third of the project so the City does not have to fund from all the proposed funding sources. He asked if the golf leagues were supportive of the concept and said we should move forward but find better funding options as while this was an opportunity, he was willing to consider he did not want to fund the entire cost. He asked about revenue changes based on the redesign and having the project over the railroad tracks.

Councilmember Barnett said she was not comfortable with the project at this time and noted the general ledger included several other projects and funding sources and felt this \$12 million project was a surprise to do this quickly. She said if we wanted to pursue the project, we should plan then budget for it and said while the golf enterprise was currently making a profit the last few years prior to the pandemic it was not.

Councilmember Weaver said a response is needed either way for Mr. Boldoch regarding the property.

Councilmember Skogquist said while the project should be considered in the future it should not be at this time with the proposed funding and likely inflated costs and suggested offering a right of first refusal of the property.

Councilmember Wesp clarified next steps. City Manager Greg Lee summarized the Council did not want to move forward with a future golf course redesign project at this time but continue to work on a proposal and continue negotiations with Mr. Boldoch on his property that included potential acreage cost per acre, relocation costs, replacement, land, and other costs.

3.2 Discussion; 4th and Johnson Development Company.

Mr. Borglund shared a staff report with background information stating Gramercy Development would like to discuss their interest in the 4th and Johnson site and a larger plan that looks at other City-owned parcels in the area for the Anoka Transit Hub apartments.

Nick and Kathleen Connelly, Gramercy Development, shared their interest in Site B and 4th and Johnson which is a 2.5-acre site. They noted they were two units away from being sold out at Green Haven South which was ahead of schedule and that they planned to start the project soon and said they were excited for the vision of a larger master development of site. They explained the proposed three separate phases in detail and offered to build external amenities for both Site A and B which included an outdoor pool, court areas, community room, and other elements such as an external clubhouse then reviewed the proposed project in detail.

Councilmember Wesp asked if he had approached homeowners on Site A. Mr. Connelly said they had a foothold knowing the City supports the project then reviewed proposed materials and urban feel of the project that would work well with the transit station. He said they would need to address Site A for a master vision then further discussed the small area plan.

Councilmember Wesp noted this area has not moved along as quickly as planned and asked how often Gramercy adjusts their portfolios and if there would be any concerns about maintenance, turnover, and other items.

Mr. Connelly stated it was not their intent to turn over the project as they planned to continue to own and manage the site.

Councilmember Barnett said she would like to see a larger project for continuity and was pleased with the proposal then inquired about income levels for subsidized units. Mr. Connelly explained in detail the income levels and proposed subsidies.

Mayor Rice said the City has been criticized the last 20 years for the number of rental properties and shared concerns about the potential for adding more rental property but said the work over the past five years towards reducing and addressing rental properties has changed his perspective and agreed there is a need for this project and would be worth the large investment from the City.

Councilmember Skogquist thanked the applicants for looking at the overall site and the multiple uses and larger use and their willingness to create a project and not rely on the City to subsidize.

Councilmember Wesp said he supported the project and agreed with the need to be strategic in the vision.

Councilmember Weaver noted it was difficult to provide clear direction when others have offered concepts as well.

Discussion was held on next steps and proposed scenarios and the need to be prepared.

Councilmember Barnett suggested the City sell the property to Gramercy so they can manage the offers instead. Mr. Connelly said it would take a couple months to prepare purchase agreements for City consideration.

Mayor Rice said he supported 450 rental units.

Councilmember Barnett agreed with the number of rental units in this location as she sees it as a shift and providing options to people and adjusting to the market.

Council consensus was to continue work on Site A and return for further direction.

3.3 Discussion; Policy Review; Snow Removal, City Hall Room Reservations.

Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse shared a staff report with background information requesting review of City policies relating to Snow Plowing / Ice Control and City Hall Meeting Room Use. She explained the current snow plowing and ice control policy did not address sidewalk snow removal operations and said language has been added to clarify Public Service's protocols for sidewalk snow removal for the B-3 Central Business District (CBD), residential areas and school zones, and sidewalks abutting City-owned property and said staff is seeking direction.

Councilmember Barnett asked questions regarding costs for overtime for snow removal at businesses. Public Services Supervisor Jon Holmes explained the overtime costs of the first two hours at regular pay and then time and a half afterwards.

Councilmember Skogquist said he had no major concerns as the level of service has been good.

Councilmember Weaver said he spoke with the Chamber of Commerce and that Mr. Jensen was pleased with the status quo and wanted no changes and noted

weekends there were more events and that staff was aware when they occurred and responded. He said he did not want to be bound only by a policy and not react on the weekends and thanked staff for their great work.

Councilmember Barnett said if staff moved forward with the lowest level removal possible but was using discretion, especially for events, then asked if someone is injured who would be liable. Ms. LaCasse explained the City does not do any ice control on sidewalks that do not abut a City building so the property owner would be liable.

Mr. Lee said that is why the term “assist” with removal is so important.

Councilmember Weaver suggested the term “discretion” be added to the policy to help better assist in special instances.

A member of the audience asked what is expected of business owners. Mayor Rice said no one would be criticized for additional clearing of snow, especially within certain temperatures and felt no changes were required.

Councilmember Skogquist if we are going to do something different than the policy then it should be documented. Ms. LaCasse stated staff is acting in the role to make decisions and said there was a need to clearly document the expectation for any other staff member, especially on the weekends.

Ms. LaCasse said staff is suggesting revisions to the City Hall room reservation policy to increase the use of the Community Room/kitchenette following improvements that are budgeted for 2022. She said a \$35,000 budget has been approved to help make the room more inviting and usable for a variety of functions that are currently not allowed then outlined the proposed revisions that included restricting private use reservations to the lower level of City Hall in the Community Room/kitchenette, outside groups would no longer be allowed to use the second floor meeting rooms unless it relates to City business, updated definitions for determining resident status, updates to the reservation process, schedule, and rules and regulations, updated process for requesting fee reduction or free use by civic groups/non-profits, updates to the list of prohibited uses/activities to allow for private parties (baby/wedding showers, birthday parties, and wedding receptions without dances, and removal/addition of any other restrictions as advised by Council.

Councilmember Skogquist spoke about Coon Rapids’ policy with their separate civic center and how business owners want to use it as well then asked about the Anoka/non-Anoka groups and the process around holidays and music not being detectable outside the building.

Councilmember Barnett said she was pleased the policy addressed security and suggested that coded doors could be easily accomplished and would like to see

non-residents use who were charged a little more to bring more people into the community. She spoke about contributions to the City and asked which organizations would be contributing then asked about online booking being offered.

Ms. LaCasse said she saw this as a community service project and free use of space for a year-end event would be good and that staff was working towards online booking. She said staff will make the proposed changes and bring both policies back for formal consideration at the July 18 Council meeting.

3.4 Discussion; Social Media Policy Review.

Communications Manager Pam Bowman shared a staff report with background information stating at the April worksession, discussion was held regarding revisions to the Social Media Policy and concerns about elected officials having moderator rights for a private community group Facebook page. Staff was directed to contact staff at the League of Minnesota Cities to learn how they addressed elected officials' use of social media and if they have a recommendation about the moderator role on a community (private group) Facebook page. League staff said many cities were dealing with similar concerns and their response concluded that there is not much a City can do in this specific situation. She said they did not recommend language in a policy which may impede an elected official's First Amendment rights, saying that "regulating the private conduct of a councilmember seems to be trying to place First Amendment burdens" and that "the city could experience backlash on these very social media channels, outright defiance, or even legal challenges to such a policy" and noted there could be unintended consequences in attempting to enact such a policy. The League explained this would be similar to regulating a councilmember's social media page for their own business, as a member or volunteer for the local Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce or another group. Ms. Bowman said after discussion it was concluded that elected officials with a personal "city council" social media page should include somewhere on their page or profile include the disclaimer stating "These are my own opinions and do not represent those of the City." It was discussed that placing this disclaimer on every post was unnecessary, but having it on the platform someplace, it would be representative of all posts. She further outlined discussions held regarding "scope" and was suggesting language that stated this policy applies to any existing or proposed social media websites sponsored, established, registered or authorized by the City of Anoka. This policy also covers the private use of the City's social media accounts by all City representatives, including its employees and agents, Councilmembers, appointed board or commission members and all public safety volunteers to the extent it affects the City, and that language stating the City does not create or maintain social media accounts for its elected officials be included. Ms. Bowman added that staff would also like to include language that allows the City to be more selective in what we post/share for others that focused on local civic and non-profit organizations in which the City supports, co-sponsors, or those that promote

Anoka businesses in a positive manner. She said staff was seeking Council's approval to move forward with the revised Social Media Policy and after City Attorney final review, will bring forward for consideration at the July 18 City Council meeting.

4. UPDATES/REPORTS/COUNCIL SUGGESTIONS FOR TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Lee shared an update regarding the upcoming special event Jam by the Dam and their request to waive the \$250 event fee. Ms. Bowman explained the fees involved and their request in detail and said the application fee needs to be submitted to cover administrative costs but the area fees were being requested to be waived.

Councilmember Weaver said he supported the waiver as he was comfortable with last year's direction as the Jam by the Dam organizers paid for all additional costs incurred.

Councilmember Skogquist asked for update on zoning changes 7th and Grant. Mr. Borglund said the item had been considered by the Planning Commission and was recommended for approval and would be on the July 18 Council meeting for consideration.

Mr. Lee noted there would be a County task force meeting on this topic which will need to be open to the public.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Wesp to adjourn the Worksession at 6:58 p.m. Motion carried.

Submitted by: Cathy Sorensen, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

Approval Attestation:

Amy T. Oehlers, City Clerk