

**WORKSESSION OF THE ANOKA CITY COUNCIL
ANOKA CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JUNE 28, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rice called the worksession meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Staff present: City Manager Greg Lee; City Planner Clark Palmer; Public Services Director Mark Anderson; Finance Director Brenda Springer; Police Chief Eric Peterson; City Attorney Scott Baumgartner; Engineering Technician Ben Nelson; Assistant Fire Chief Jon Holmes; Public Services Administrative Assistant Tessa Sceloka; Parks Maintenance Jerry Tri; Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse; Public Services Supervisor Jon Holmes; City Attorney Scott Baumgartner.

Absent: Councilmember Skogquist.

3. COUNCIL BUSINESS and/or DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1 Discussion; Dog License Requirement.

Police Chief Eric Peterson shared a staff report with background information stating Chapter 14 of City Code requires no dog or cat shall be kept within the city limits unless a license is first secured and no license shall be issued for any dog or cat unless a certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian is filed with the application showing that the animal described in the application has been inoculated against rabies and that the inoculation is effective for at least one year from the date of application. City staff became aware that in February of 2021 the City of Ramsey passed a revision to their animal code that lifted the requirement to have city issued dog licenses and amended their ordinance to only require that all dogs in public spaces shall have an identification tag with owner or veterinarian contact information affixed to the dog collar. In lieu of a physical tag, a microchip embedded in the dog with the same information is sufficient for identification. Upon further study, staff discovered that many cities in the metro area no longer require a City issued license and the State of Minnesota does not require licenses by statute. The purpose of licensing dogs and cats was to provide cities with a way to identify ownership of lost pets. The purpose was expanded in the 1970s to ensure that pets were vaccinated against rabies. The rabies virus is now rarely seen in dogs and cats in Minnesota. The City of Anoka issues an average of 172 licenses annually. The fees for licenses are \$15.00 and \$7.00 if the

animal is spayed or neutered. The charge for a dog that is deemed potentially dangerous is \$35.00. The City averages \$1,600.00 annually in revenue for the sale of licenses. He said Council discussion should occur related to the dog/cat license requirement of Chapter 14 and consider the requirement of dogs and cats in public spaces to have non-City issued identification tag affixed to the collar or have a microchip embedded in the animal with current owner information.

Councilmember Weaver asked about the dangerous dog designation process and how many cases occur each year. Chief Peterson explained the process and said the City received 2-3 cases each year.

Councilmember Barnett referenced the current 172 licenses and supported requiring a tag because it would require a collar on the dog to better contain if needed and to encourage the chip.

Councilmember Weaver said he was not opposed to the change and instead require a collar then asked if the amendment would remove the dangerous dog designation. City Attorney Scott Baumgartner said the dangerous dog designation would not change as that was outlined in Statute then spoke about the ability to still be able to ticket habitual violators of the new ordinance.

Councilmember Barnett referred to the City of Fridley's increased enforcement of dangerous dog designations and asked if that was a trend staff was seeing. Mr. Baumgartner noted it was not a trend necessarily but noted the City of Andover was experiencing some of that recently as well.

Chief Peterson noted the importance of education to help increase cooperation with the ordinance.

Mayor Rice stated this process would not address if the dog was vaccinated. Chief Peterson responded the State does not require vaccination, adding a responsible pet owner who licensed their pet would likely vaccinate the pet as well then spoke about the City's annual pet vaccination clinics.

Council consensus was to move forward with the proposed ordinance.

3.2 Discussion; Van Buren/Green Way Concept.

Community Development Director Doug Borglund shared a staff report with background information stating the City Council last discussed the Van Buren Green Way Concept is early 2021. The City Council at that time took the position that the concept would not move forward. Since that time, there has been some discussion and willingness to relook at the concept. A neighborhood meeting was held on June 2, 2021. The meeting was attended by property owners on Van Buren and City Staff. 100% of the affected property owners on Van Buren Street within the immediate neighborhood agreed upon a new concept plan. He outlined

the highlights of the most recent concept supported by the neighborhood and said if the City Council agrees with the concept there would be the need to take further steps that included holding a much larger public meeting to introduce the concept and receive feedback from the greater neighborhood area, temporarily close off Van Buren Street and simulate the Green Way Concept. He said the process would begin in late August and go through the end of September that would include a second meeting with the immediate and greater neighborhood and then receive comment after the temporary closure in early October. He said after that a worksession would be scheduled to provide Council with comments and concerns raised at the second greater neighborhood meeting and then receive Council direction. Mr. Borglund said if that direction is to continue moving forward it would include preparing the concept to be a part of the 2022 SRP program and work through the details and final actions by the end of the year. The engineers estimated construction cost to reconstruct Van Buren Street as it is today is \$211,614.00 and the estimate to reconstruct Van Buren under the Green Way Concept is \$170,704.00.

Councilmember Wesp referred to the lack of 100% buy-in of the neighborhood earlier but how the law office recently supported the concept which brought the item back to the Council. He said he did not support closing off streets but understood other streets had been vacated over time. He shared concerns about the parking lot for the law office as it needed upgrading but would not be the City's responsibility and asked if there would be concerns regarding access due to the alley. He said Golf Street was incomplete and what other neighborhoods would say to the proposal, including Anoka County, but would be willing to consider.

Councilmember Weaver said he was not opposed to the concept because this was a unique situation but had concerns with Anoka County wanting to close Van Buren Street as it would affect the Saturday evening car shows and other events.

Councilmember Barnett asked about leasing the law office parking lot and that this would be creating the only option for them and then leasing or offering the space. She spoke about the need for an upgrade to Golf Street and the result of more traffic. Mr. Borglund noted many of the law office's clients park on the street so they would gain parking because of the lot and essentially be a wash then added the County was exploring four different options at this point.

Engineering Technician Ben Nelson noted part of the 2022 reconstruction project included this alleyway. Discussion was held on parking needs in light of court activities and the continuation of virtual options. City Manager Greg Lee said discussions had been held at Anoka County about consolidating services which would likely include the State hospital.

Councilmember Wesp noted the St. Stephen's neighborhood would likely be interested in moving forward with this proposal. Colleen Hansen, 432 Van Buren

Street, said she had reached out to staff at St. Stephen's and they were comfortable with the proposal.

Mr. Lee said staff would conduct traffic counts during the mock street closure to provide data as part of the process.

Mayor Rice said he would like to facilitate changes to allow ample parking. Mr. Lee noted there are 480 vehicles per day in this area.

Mr. Baumgartner commented how there was no perceived conflict of interest with regard to Councilmember Skogquist's brother owning property in this area but would advise him to disclose that fact for the record prior to any formal action on this item.

Council consensus was to move forward with the action as proposed.

3.3 Discussion; Emerald Ash Borer Tree Removal Program.

Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse shared a staff report with background information stating in 2015, Minnesota Department of Agriculture confirmed an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation in Anoka County. Anoka County has joined Dakota, Hennepin, Houston, Olmstead, Ramsey, and Winona counties in the state under federal quarantine to help prevent the spread of EAB outside of the known infested area. There are now 27 counties in MN affected and EAB was confirmed in the City in May 2021. Based on the visible signs/symptoms of the trees evaluated it is anticipated that the emerald ash borer has been present in Anoka for 2-3 years. Based on an aerial tree survey completed in 2010 by the MN Department of Natural Resources, it is estimated that Anoka has approximately 11,000 ash trees. In 2010, about 50% of the trees were estimated to be 12"-18" diameter trees. Chemical treatment is only effective on trees with less than 30% of crown die back. Treatment is approximately 1/5th of the cost of removal, but treatment is ongoing and must occur bi-annually as long as the tree remains healthy/eligible for treatment. Chemical treatment is therapeutic in nature and only delays the future removal of the tree and approximately 30 significant ash trees are being chemically treated on the golf course. Ms. LaCasse said staff has not begun treating trees in the parks or boulevards then shared a proposed management strategy in detail and financial impact and said Council was requested to consider restore the current CIP allocation for EAB for the 2022 from \$45,000 to \$100,000. Staff is requesting council direction on the level of support desired for the treatment/removal/disposal of private trees as related to EAB prevention and infestation. If private tree support is desired then additional funds will be needed.

Parks Maintenance Jerry Tri shared more about how to address EAB including treatment options of tree injections then outlined more about the impacts of the disease.

Ms. LaCasse said an inventory should be conducted to identify which trees were affected and address, such as those around parks. She said the injections could result in trees lasting another 2-3 years and estimated costs of \$120 per tree every other year then discussed how trees, if removed, would have to be conducted in October to help stop the spread of the disease and therefore would have to be done by contractors due to staff's lack of availability during the busy fall.

Councilmember Weaver asked for comparisons regarding funding of EAB and Dutch Elm disease. Public Services Administrative Assistant Tessa Sceloka recommended treating some trees now and waiting to treat others and plan funding for replanting as these trees die.

Councilmember Barnett said she would support allowing residents to partner with the City on private tree removal but did not want to pay for private tree removal.

Council consensus was to move forward based on staff recommendation that includes conducting a tree inventory of all public trees, consider costs as part of the Capital Improvement Plan, treatment of appropriate trees and public education for residents with no private subsidy, and to be very selective on the number of trees saved and those replaced with other disease-resistant trees.

3.4 Discussion; Capital Improvement Plan and Equipment Replacement Plan.

Finance Director Brenda Springer shared a staff report with background information stating annually the Council and staff review the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP) prior to adoption. The document is for planning purposes and allows staff to project future funding needs based on planned capital improvement projects and equipment replacement. She stated these plans were in draft form and impact several governmental and business type funds then invited department heads to review their proposals in detail.

Discussion was held on each item in the CIP, including City Hall room rental and the need to update the public meeting rooms and an additional storage building for electrical and other equipment on the new property versus 501 Pierce Street and construct in phases over the course of 10 years. The Council supported the proposal of phasing building construction based on need.

The Council discussed proposed improvements at Green Haven Golf Course especially in the meeting rooms and simulator rooms and requested a report on usage of the simulators. The Council also discussed park shelter rental and requested a report on park shelter usage.

The Council discussed the proposal of the grain mill site and possibilities of creating a destination location in the City as well as the possibility of leasing City vehicles instead of purchasing to save funds.

Ms. Springer outlined the process that included further review of the proposed items for formal approval by Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Lee shared about the 2021 food truck festival scheduled for August 21 and outlined two options for its location for Council consideration. He said most restaurants do not want the festival located on Jackson Street and asked for Council input. He noted The Mill Site would likely not support the event as well because of a scheduled wedding at their site then said the need would be for two ingress/egress access points for the ramp as special events continue.

Council consensus was to have trucks from City Hall River Plaza, 2nd up to Van Buren (both sides), block west entrance of the municipal ramp, the access the ramp would be on the south side. No trucks will be on Jackson Street.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Wesp, seconded by Councilmember Weaver to adjourn the Worksession at 8:16 p.m. Motion carried.

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

Approval Attestation:

Amy T. Oehlers, City Clerk