

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE ANOKA CITY COUNCIL  
ANOKA CITY HALL  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
JULY 17, 2023**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Rice called the regular meeting of the City Council to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. ROLL CALL**

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

Staff present: City Manager Greg Lee; Public Services Director Mark Anderson; Police Chief Eric Peterson; Police Captain Andy Youngquist; Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse; Public Works Supervisor Jon Holmes; Assistant Finance Director Liz Douglas; Finance Director Brenda Springer; Assistant City Engineer Ben Nelson; Senior City Planner Clark Palmer; City Attorney Scott Baumgartner; and Electric Utility Director Del Vancura.

Absent at roll call: None.

**3. COUNCIL MINUTES**

- 3.1 June 12, 2023, Special Worksession.  
June 12, 2023 Executive Session.  
June 12, 2023 Special Meeting.  
June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting.  
June 26, 2023 Special Meeting.  
June 29, 2023 Special Meeting.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2023, Special Worksession, June 12, 2023 Executive Session, June 12, 2023 Special Meeting, June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting, June 26, 2023 Special Meeting, and June 29, 2023 Special Meeting. minutes as presented.

Vote taken. All ayes. Motion carried.

**4. OPEN FORUM**

- 4.1 Police Activity Update; Promotion of Officer Derek Nelson to Police Sergeant, and Swearing in of Officer Robert Whiteside.

Police Chief Eric Peterson said he was pleased to announce the promotion of Sergeant Derek Nelson and welcome Officer Robert Whiteside. He outlined the rigorous process for hiring and advancement and said he knows both will be good leaders. He shared their backgrounds in detail, issued their oaths of office, and congratulated them both.

Councilmember Wesp thanked the officers for their bravery which means a lot to the City then referred to the recent loss of an officer in Fargo North Dakota and officers' commitment to the City. He thanked retiring Officer Mike Whitaker for his commitment and service to the City as well as our country.

Councilmember Skogquist asked why they chose to serve Anoka. Sergeant Nelson said he liked the people and said the Council has always supportive as well as the public. Officer Whiteside said this is a great community and agency, the best in Anoka County if not the State, and said it was a great place to work.

Chief Peterson said the summer activities are in full swing with little public safety concerns to date then shared about two recent incidents including a hit and run and stolen vehicle driven by a 12-year old girl.

Councilmember Skogquist thanked police staff for being present on the UTV as it was important to see patrol dedicated to the downtown area as well as parks.

#### 4.2 Highway 10 Anoka Construction Update.

Assistant City Engineer Ben Nelson shared an update regarding Highway 10 construction.

### **OTHER INFORMATION UNDER OPEN FORUM**

None.

## **5. PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

None.

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Skogquist, to approve Consent Agenda Items 6.1 through 6.5 as presented.

Councilmember Weaver encouraged the community to attend the upcoming Jam by the Dam event.

Councilmember Skogquist inquired about the change order resulting from an improper locate. Electric Utility Director Del Vancura explained the change order was a result of

both difficulty in locating as well as the location which resulted in redesign of that section of the wall. He noted the old panels could possibly be sold as part of the Ramsey project.

- 6.1 Approve Verified Bills.
- 6.2 Revising and Setting Council Calendars.
- 6.3 Highway 10 Rum River Bridge and Corridor Project; Approve Change Order Number 42.
- 6.4 U.S. Highway 10/169 Improvement Project; Approve Change Orders Numbers 46, 53, 54, 55, and 57.
- 6.5 Request to Waive Area Use Fee for Jam by the Dam.

Vote taken. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to move Items 11.2 and 9.9 forward in the agenda.

Vote taken. All ayes. Motion carried.

Items 11.2 and 9.9 were heard at this point in the agenda.

## **7. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

### **7.1 Park Board Item:**

#### **7.1.A. Selection of Roof Structure for Riverfront Memorial Park.**

Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse shared a background report stating the original concepts for Riverfront Memorial Park Veteran Stage included a roof or shelter structure over the stage. The roof structure was not included during initial construction in 2017. As you may recall, 2 stems of the immense cottonwood tree that was located behind the stage fell on a calm day in May 2022. For the safety of the public and park infrastructure, the remaining 3 stems of the tree were taken down later in the summer of 2022. The cottonwood tree provided shade of the park and to the stage area. The Park and Recreation Advisory Board has been reviewing options for different types of roof/shelter structures for the past several months including custom design, pre-fabricated wood and pre-fabricated metal shelters. In 2023, \$30,000 was included in the budget to cover the costs of the custom design a roof structure. Those funds have not been spent as pre-fabricated shelters were determined to be suitable options. Also, in the 2023 budget, \$200,000 in Park Dedication funds were earmarked to support construction of a restroom facility in conjunction with the development of the

restaurant pad. The Park and Recreation Advisory Board is requesting to spend the \$200,000 budgeted funds on the roof structure for the stage instead of a restroom building. This would provide a total combined budget of \$230,000 for the roof structure. At the Regular meeting of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board on June 20, 2023, two quotes for prefabricated customizable metal shelters, and one quote for an all wooden shelter were presented to the park board for consideration. Photo examples and schematics of each shelter were shared. She outlined the different examples obtained and said the Park Board recommended purchase/installation of the MN/WI Playground ROGS5025 – CUS Structure.

Councilmember Skogquist asked how much the tree will cover from the angle of the sun as he did not want to impede the river. Ms. LaCasse said because of the stage the roof structure will come all the way to the back of the stage and instead of 12-foot posts they will be 16 feet to get the best coverage of the stage, adding the front of the stage will help shelter the bands. She noted they will need to also replace the grass strips with something such as granite blocks and that the intent was not to block views for nearby residents or add trees to impede view of the park.

Councilmember Weaver said the facility will have power and asked if the wall in the back could have a restroom included. Ms. LaCasse replied there is not enough room on the back side and the trail is right behind as well as the granite area and would have to be done on the side instead.

Mayor Rice suggested dropping the tilt if needed to more effectively block the sun. Ms. LaCasse said that was considered but there was a concern of people gaining access to the roof if tilted too much.

Councilmember Weaver suggested including an electric bike charging station for use as well and complemented staff and the Park Board on the design and work.

Councilmember Skogquist cautioned using funds when we could use public restrooms, stating we currently have limited options and restrooms need to be addressed sooner rather than later. Councilmember Weaver agreed but said the funding mechanism is needed and revenue from the docks is supposed to go into the park capital fund in the amount of approximately \$48,000 which could pay for restrooms in five years.

Mayor Rice noted a portion of the money has to go to fund the docks too.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Weaver, to approve utilization of the budgeted Park Dedication funds in the amount of \$200,000 for the purchase of the MN/WI ROGS5028 in the amount of \$62,596 with the custom shelter structure with ornamentation for \$147,029 in lieu of constructing a restroom facility in 2023.

Councilmember Weaver confirmed the motion included the pitch reference. Councilmember Skogquist said it did not but felt staff understood Council direction as we want the pitch for sound and the bandshell feel.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver, and Wesp voted in favor. Motion carried.

Councilmember Weaver confirmed e-bike charging station would be included.

## **8. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATION**

None.

## **9. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **9.1 ORD/Amending City Council Salaries.** *(1<sup>st</sup> Reading)*

City Manager Greg Lee shared a background report stating at the worksession on June 26, 2023, the Council discussed a proposed increase to the Council salaries. Anoka City Charter requires the City Council to review their salaries in June of every odd numbered year. At the worksession, staff made a recommendation that the Council increase their salaries on an annual basis, which would not go into effect until January 1 after each Municipal General Election. Staff's recommendation was for the increase to coincide with the COLA increase that the City staff receives. After discussion, Councilmember Weaver had requested that staff present other options for the Council to consider so staff shared a listing of three options: follow the COLA increase given to staff, follow the Consumer Price Index, or follow Social Security adjustments. There is also the option that Council can decide not to approve an increase. Individual Councilmembers also have the option of donating their Council pay to an organization of their choice and may also choose to opt out of PERA contributing if they so choose. If an increase is approved, it would not go into effect until January 1, 2025. The Council may amend the ordinance to designate whatever increase the Council desires.

Ed Evans, 1186 Benton Street, commented about the number of meetings Councilmembers attend each month as well public contact and phone calls and said they deserved the proposed increases as the public is not aware of the amount of work they do.

Councilmember Skogquist thanked staff for researching other options for increases and said while it is difficult to approve an increase for ourselves and future councils, he supported the increase be tied to whatever increase staff receives.

Councilmember Scott said he supported the increase as well as a way to attract good, quality Council candidates to run and noted the cost of potential childcare that could be incurred to attend City business. He said it was a pleasure to serve the public in the end but noted it is a big commitment from the elected officials as well as their families.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to hold first reading of an ordinance establishing salaries for Mayor and City Council pursuant to Section 2.07 of the Charter of the City of Anoka based on Option 1.

Councilmember Weaver thanked the Council for their support of the channel emergency restoration project for the Rum River and because of that would support this motion.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver, voted in favor. Councilmember Wesp voted nay. Motion carried.

9.2 RES/Recommended Approval of an LG214 Gambling Permit for Anoka Area Ice Arena Association for the Sale of Pull Tabs, Bingo and Tipboards at Cas Rio Tex Mex Restaurant.

**RESOLUTION**

Councilmember Wesp stated his brother is the gambling manager for the Anoka Area Ice Arena Association and asked if that was a conflict of interest. Mr. Baumgartner responded since his brother would not benefit financially from the issuance of the permit therefore Councilmember Wesp does not either and this was not a legal conflict of interest and did not preclude participation.

Mr. Lee noted the Council was just authorizing the State to issue the permit and not issuing the permit itself.

Councilmember Wesp elected to abstain for full transparency.

Mr. Lee shared a background report stating Anoka Area Ice Arena Association has submitted an application for a State issued LG214 Gambling Permit them to sell pull tabs and conduct bingo and tip boards at Casa Rio Tex Mex Restaurant at 210 Jackson Street. This is a State issued license but requires the approval of the municipality in which the event will take place. Staff has reviewed the application and no concerns or objections have been expressed.

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to adopt a resolution recommending the issuance of a State issued LG215 Gambling Permit for Anoka Area Ice Arena Association for the sale of pull tabs, bingo and tip boards at Casa Rio Tex Mex Restaurant.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver, voted in favor. Councilmember Wesp abstained. Motion carried.

9.3 ORD/Playground Lease for Anoka Community Mission; 2612 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)

**ORDINANCE**

Senior City Planner Clark Palmer shared a background report stating the City Council at its June 20, 2023 regular scheduled meeting held first reading of the proposed ordinance and lease of playground area located on 2612 4th Avenue for the Anoka Community Mission. No changes were suggested by City Council. The City Council instructed staff to bring the subject item forward for second reading on July 17, 2023. NOTE: A real estate closing has been sent up for 2612 4th Avenue on July 26, 2023. The Playground Lease will be executed with the Anoka Community Mission after the closing. The City of Anoka is purchasing the property known as 2612 4th Avenue as approved by City Council. Historically, the current owner of 2612 4th Avenue has leased a portion of the subject property to the Anoka Community Mission for playground use associated with its daycare operation. The City is working with the Anoka Community Mission to allow the Mission to maintain its existing playground facility. The City's intention is to remove the structure on the property and allow through a new lease the playground to remain in place. The Anoka Community Mission and its Executive Board and Director have reviewed the proposed lease and find the lease acceptable. The Anoka Community Mission has signed a release of the existing lease. The current property owner or seller of 2612 4th Avenue will sign the release of the existing lease prior or at the real closing of 2614 4th Avenue. The new playground lease will be executed between the Anoka Community Mission and the City of Anoka after the City closes on the subject real estate known as 2612 4th Avenue at the end of July 2023.

Councilmember Scott confirmed the Anoka Community Mission is aware that this playground may be removed in the future. Mr. Baumgartner replied they are aware and termination of the current lease is in place and requested to be signed. He said the lease termination has not been signed yet by Mrs. Welte but will be done and the Mission is aware of the City's alternative thoughts for this property.

Motion by Councilmember Wesp, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to hold second reading and adopt an ordinance authorizing the conveyance of a real property by lease to Anoka Community Mission.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver, and Wesp voted in favor. Motion carried.

9.4 RES/Administratively Remove Parcels from the Commuter Rail Transit Village (CRTV) TIF District.

## RESOLUTION

Finance Director Brenda Springer shared a background report stating the City of Anoka created the Commuter Rail Transit Village (CRTV) TIF district in order to redevelop the area around the rail road and parking ramp off of 4th Avenue. State statute for time allowed to redevelop in that district has expired. In order for more redevelopment to happen the City needs to make an amendment to the district and pull out certain parcels to create a new tax increment financing district. The resolution lists the 15 parcels that can be removed from the CRTV district while still keeping the current district compliant. These parcels include PID 06-31-24-22-0010 & 06-31-24-22-0090, also known as 2939 6th Avenue; the Miller Manufacturing building.

Councilmember Weaver said this is a significant site with big changes going forward and said the entire study area needs to be included.

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Wesp, to adopt a resolution approving the removal of parcels from the Commuter Rail Transit Village Tax Increment Financing District (a redevelopment district).

Ms. Springer added staff is recommending removing all 15 parcels but as development occurs, we have the option to create two different TIF districts to bolster future development.

Mayor Rice asked if this diminishes our potential for TIF to motivate buyers. Ms. Springer said the two parcels would make up one district for Miller Manufacturing and the remaining used to finance future developments for builders and be able to finance this project based on the land sales and not rely on TIF revenues.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver, and Wesp voted in favor. Motion carried.

### 9.5 RES/Providing for the Sale of \$11,000,000 Abatement Bonds, Series 2023B.

## RESOLUTION

Ms. Springer shared a background report stating at the June 26, 2023, meeting the Council was presented with a purchase agreement for property known as 2939 6th Avenue (PIDs 06-31-24-22-0010 and 06-31-24-0090). The City Council requested the City Attorney work with the Seller's Attorney to revise the purchase agreement and address concerns brought forward by the City Council. On June 29, 2023, the City Council approved the revised purchase agreement and on June 30 the agreement was presented to the seller along with \$180,000, wire transfer for earnest money. Staff is proposing Council authorize the sale of Taxable GO Temporary Tax Abatement Bonds not to exceed \$11,000,000. The estimated



expenses are as follows: purchase price of land and building \$9,000,000; demo cost of building \$500,000; soil testing and closing costs \$100,000; \$9,600,000 2 Years Capitalized Interest Cost 1,016,142 Underwriters Discount \$64,650 Cost of Issuance \$93,500 Rounding 708 \$10,775,000. Passing this ordinance and resolution would allow the Council to issue Taxable General Obligation Temporary Tax Abatement Bonds in the amount not to exceed \$11,000,000, to finance the purchase of 2939 6th Avenue, Anoka.

Councilmember Skogquist inquired about future use of this property and his concern about acquisition and demolition of improvements as Council was still having those discussions and suggested including language regarding possible demolition to both the ordinance and resolution.

Councilmember Scott agreed, stating if a developer has a good bid and development option in the meantime fine but we could use the space for storage of items we don't want to store outdoors.

Councilmember Weaver shared concerns about leaving the building up as it would require electric, heat, and a roof and could become an attractive nuisance and that it should be taken down instead.

Mayor Rice suggested including language that requires making a decision by a certain point such as demolition of 60-80% of the buildings by January 1.

Councilmember Scott said to that end the building is massive and will need to be maintained and felt the building should be demolished as it will become more expensive to demolish as time goes on.

Ms. Springer added whether or not the buildings are demoed would not affect the bonding, adding it is sometimes better not to demo until we know what the development will be but noted in 2022 the City billed \$4,000 per month for electricity for the building.

Councilmember Wesp said it was his intent to demolish the buildings because we've had a developer show us something different than what's currently there and this way, we can be creative with what's happening on the north side of Grant Street,

Mayor Rice commented on the unsightly buildings and was surprised we received any interest.

Councilmember Weaver said if we didn't demo the buildings the \$500,000 could be redirected to the river dredge project.

Councilmember Skogquist said he just didn't want to be in a position to make a decision now until there could be a discussion and said we were not prepared to

discuss tonight. He said this is a four-acre building worth \$9 million and the land is worth less and that he would just like to see a plan, even if it's for one winter, and wanted to add the word possible to allow for possibilities.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to adopt a resolution providing for the issuance and sale of taxable temporary General Obligation Tax Abatement Bonds, Series 2023B in the proposed aggregate principal amount of \$11,000,000 with the addition of "possible demolition" in Section 1.01.

Discussion was held about the liability of leaving the building in place.

Councilmember Wesp said adding possible was creating a discussion that didn't make sense and said we don't have to demolish anything right away although he would support demo and would not support the proposed language.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, and Skogquist voted in favor. Councilmembers Weaver and Wesp voted nay. Motion carried.

9.6 ORD/Authorizing the Sale of Abatement Bonds, Series 2023B in an Amount not to Exceed \$11,000,000.  
*(1<sup>st</sup> Reading)*

Ms. Springer shared a map of the abated parcels during this process and outlined the parameters required as the parcels were scattered throughout the City. She said the Council will hold a public hearing on August 7 and any action would require a 4/5 vote.

Councilmember Skogquist said he would like to add the term possible demolition to the ordinance, adding while there was consensus to purchase the building we need to discuss what we want to use it for and look at options, adding if we don't bond we don't buy the property and the sale falls through.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to hold first reading of an ordinance authorizing the sale of taxable temporary General Obligation Tax Abatement Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$11,000,000 with the addition of "possible demolition" before Section 1.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, and Skogquist voted in favor. Councilmembers Weaver and Wesp voted nay. Motion carried.

9.7 RES/Official Intent to Reimburse City Initial Cost of Property Acquisition with Tax Abatement Bonds Issued by the City.

**RESOLUTION**

Ms. Springer shared a background report stating on June 29, 2023, the Council approved a purchase agreement to purchase 2939 6th Avenue, Miller Manufacturing. She said the City is issuing abatement bonds to pay the initial cost of the acquisition of the property, the possible demolition and other improvements and related expenditures. The abatement bonds are scheduled to close on September 15, 2023. The City wired \$180,000 of earnest money on July 3 and 14 days after the expiration of the due diligence period, no later than August 10, 2023, the City will wire \$500,000 to the seller. The \$680,000 will be applied toward the purchase price of \$9,000,000. In order for the City to use abatement bonds to pay for the \$680,000 down payment, Council must adopt this reimbursement resolution. Staff is recommending the Council approve a resolution adopting a statement of official intent to reimburse down payment expenditures.

Councilmember Weaver confirmed the term possible demolition of the building was used because of the previous motions.

Councilmember Wesp said Councilmember Skogquist was on the precipice of losing this sale due to his amendments and said the Council needs to be in order as Councilmember Skogquist said he would not hold up the sale and that he would not support including the term possible demolition.

Councilmember Skogquist said he was very upfront with his intention and said we were going to purchase and bond for this property then discuss what would be done here and expressed concern that two Councilmembers members were trying to throw it back on him. He said he never supported demolishing the buildings and noted the only proposals so far were for apartments which the Council does not want as it would increase rental so this action is leaving all options on the table. He said if this doesn't pass, we don't have any options and if we pay \$9 million of taxpayer money there should be other options and have a plan. He said he was disappointed that he was being blamed because he doesn't want to earmark \$500,000 to demolish a building.

Councilmember Weaver said if the building was going to remain, he would not support the action, adding leaving the building in the middle of the development was not prudent.

Mayor Rice said he was supportive of including the term possible demolition as there may be a part of the building that could be reused and noted we will demolish it at some point and get redevelopment on this 8-acre parcel. He said this action will happen and we owe it to ourselves to look at the potential of the buildings.

Councilmember Wesp asked if we start transferring money and the transaction is lost do, we lose earnest money. Ms. Springer said we wouldn't lose money because it was part of the transaction of the purchase agreement.

Mr. Baumgartner confirmed when we revised the purchase agreement, we included language regarding an opt out without a reason during the due diligence period and that earnest money would be returned.

Mr. Lee suggested discussing this further at the next worksession as it seemed the Council was in agreement but was merely a question of timing and cash flow, which could benefit the channel restoration as well.

Councilmember Skogquist noted it takes 4/5 to bond but not to spend the money once it's ours and the vote would be a majority of the Council but said he wanted to know we were doing our due diligence before spending \$11 million.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to adopt a resolution stating the official intent to reimburse certain expenditures of the City of Anoka using the proceeds of tax abatement bonds to be issued by the City with the addition of the language possible demolition.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, and Skogquist voted in favor. Councilmembers Weaver and Wesp voted nay. Motion carried.

9.8 ORD/Amending Chapter 18 Buildings and Building Regulations.  
(1<sup>st</sup> Reading)

Mr. Palmer shared a background report stating the State of Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) conducts plumbing plan reviews for permits in Anoka, as stipulated in Minnesota Rules 1300.0215, Subpart 6. Minnesota Statutes 326B.43, Subdivision 2 permits the delegation of authority for plumbing plan review for public and commercial projects to municipalities. This statute enables the DOLI Commissioner to establish an agreement with a municipality, in which the municipality agrees to carry out plan reviews typically performed by the commissioner or their designee. To obtain this special delegation, the City of Anoka must undertake steps to formalize the delegation, including the approval of an ordinance to offer local plumbing plan review services, the endorsement of an application and submission of an agreement with the State of Minnesota, the establishment of local fees, and ensuring the designated representative of the municipality is eligible to perform the local plumbing plan reviews. This delegation agreement will benefit the City of Anoka by generating additional revenue that the State of Minnesota usually retains by conducting these reviews. More importantly, the customer service benefits for permit applicants and residents are significant. The State is typically 8-12 weeks behind on plan review, causing considerable delays in construction. The City's Building Inspection Consultant (Rum River Consultants, LLC.) has the capacity to review plumbing plans in half the time. If Anoka receives this delegation, it will enable projects to begin and conclude more swiftly and improve our level of customer service. The City of Anoka currently handles its Electrical Inspections and Permits under a

delegation agreement from the State of MN DOLI (State of Minnesota, Department of Labor and Industry).

Councilmember Skogquist thanked staff for bringing this forward as it made sense keeping it in house.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to hold first reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 18 Buildings and Building Regulations; Article II Building Code of the Code of the City of Anoka Minnesota.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver (absent for vote), and Wesp voted in favor. Motion carried.

9.9 RES/Rum River Channel Emergency Restoration Project; Authorize Feasibility Report.

**RESOLUTION**

Mr. Nelson shared a background report stating the proposed Rum River Channel Emergency Restoration Project would be for the dredging operation of a navigational channel in the Rum River from the confluence of the Mississippi River to south of the Anoka Dam. The proposed work would include the excavation for a navigation channel approximately 3,450 feet in length, 40-foot wide, 2-feet to 4-feet deep, with a bottom elevation of 825 and 3:1 side slope. The first step for the proposed work in the Rum River would be to prepare/complete a feasibility study and submit applications to all necessary agencies, including the MN DNR, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Army Corps of Engineers. Based on Minnesota Statute §429.021 and §429.031, City Council may act on its own initiative in proposing a local improvement and authorize a feasibility report. The report will examine the scope of the proposed improvements, analyze alternatives for construction, explore estimated project costs, outline required permitting, environmental assessment (if applicable), project schedule, as well as the feasibility and general cost-effectiveness of the proposed project. He reviewed the MN DNR Public Waters Work Permit required and said the typical MN DNR agency review process to approve an amendment was 30 days. Pursuant to Minnesota Statute §471.345, with an estimated contract amount in excess of \$350,000; sealed bids shall be solicited by public notice using the competitive bidding process. The advertisement must be published once in the official city newspaper and at least once in a recognized trade journal. Publication is required at least three weeks before the last day to submit bids.

Mayor Rice asked if there is a study that can be done to show removal of the sand was because the river was not in a natural state and needs to be restored. Mr. Nelson noted these were federal guidelines regarding environmental aspects but that could be possible.

Councilmember Weaver suggested choosing where the acre amount would be done to keep the cost down. Mr. Nelson agreed spot dredging could be done and decrease the quantity to keep the amount under one acre and if we have to get a second permit that could be done to remove more material.

Councilmember Weaver stated you can see the noticeable sand and that spot dredging could be done without encumbering an acre of land.

Councilmember Skogquist noted need a feasibility study would be needed but that he would support the motion.

Councilmember Weaver confirmed the report would include funding options for this work.

Motion by Councilmember Skogquist, seconded by Councilmember Weaver, to adopt a resolution for the Rum River Channel emergency restoration project; and authorize feasibility report.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Scott, Skogquist, Weaver, and Wesp voted in favor. Motion carried.

Councilmember Weaver thanked the residents for attending and their support.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

### **11.1 Consideration of Appointment to Economic Development Commission.**

Mr. Lee shared a background report stating the City currently has one vacancy on the Economic Development Commission (EDC) for a partial term that would expire December 31, 2024. City staff has been publishing notice of our vacancies, per our City policy and received one application for the Economic Development Commission; Michele Schnitker.

Councilmember Weaver supported the appointment and complimented her for her service. Councilmember Scott agreed this was a strong application and that Ms. Schnitker was well qualified.

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Wesp, to appoint Michele Schnitker to the Economic Development Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2024.

Vote taken. All ayes. Motion carried.

11.2 EDC Resolution Supporting Channel Emergency Restoration Project for the Rum River.

EDC Commissioner Jeff Lee shared a background report regarding a resolution passed by the EDC on July 13, 2023, that supported channel emergency restoration project for the Rum River. He spoke about the vibrancy of the downtown area and flooding which have made the lower Rum River virtually impassable and asked for Council support.

Councilmember Weaver referred to the room full of residents from Anoka and other communities and how important the river was to the identity of our community as well as public safety then shared how this was impacting the City by not allowing boats to access the river.

Commissioner Lee encouraged the public to speak on this topic.

Mike Shoup, 1509 Franklin Lane, thanked the Council and EDC for this resolution and shared how river access drew them to the community as well as the cultural and historic aspects. He said Anoka was a river town and wasn't anymore and needs to be restored.

Scott Nielson, Anoka, shared how he spends money in Anoka coming up along the river and that there should be access on both sides. He noted the river was one reason he moved here and how the Rum River was the City's identity.

Jen Shoemaker, 6150 Rivlyn Avenue and former Anoka resident, said she used the river to come to the downtown area then spoke about the need for access for public safety to assist people in the river then shared concerns that the economic benefit was now going to Champlin.

Un-named individual thanked the Council for their work over the years to create unique access to both rivers and said they love to boat along the river as it was a huge draw and encouraged the City to make the river navigable again.

Ben Schmid, Champlin, shared about the river culture and how far people will travel to Anoka to build memories with family in the City and encouraged the Council to support the resolution.

Jim Burns, Anoka, thanked Commissioner Lee for sharing about the public safety aspects as well as commerce and said he held them both equally with regard to dredging the river and noted time was of the essence in a water emergency and if not addressed could create a dangerous situation.

Ray Turnquist, Anoka, said he currently leases a dock on the Rum River and has had his boat out only twice and that there needs to be access if the City continues to lease docks.

Councilmember Weaver said he will commit to find the funding necessary to address and noted the City just spent \$500,000 for 45 lots for street repair on Harrison Street and that the biggest concern in this issue was public safety, adding there were hundreds of residents on the river to consider. He referred to the necessary equipment to pick up sand and place it on shore which was an option given by the Conservation District and should be considered.

Councilmember Wesp shared a story about a fishing incident in 1995 where a boat capsized that resulted in a death and how public safety was first and foremost for him. He said the City's EDC made a recommendation and understood the economic importance to the community and when you have residents from other communities using the river to go to Anoka that is critical. He said he was aware many came from other cities for the City concerts as well as special events and those who live on the river pay a premium already and should be able to use the river. He said the historic aspect was critical as well and that we need to look at funding options and correct.

Councilmember Scott echoed the statements of Council stating we are a river town but can't do so if we don't address. He spoke about the overall culture and upcoming social district that adds to the flavor of Anoka then noted the City has been lobbying for a lock system for a dam and what would happen if we don't address this. He compared the channel to City streets as a way to navigate Anoka then said while it may be expensive how expensive would it be to not do. He said his only concern was how frequent will we have to do this and many communities share in this asset and suggested the possibility for a consortium of other cities.

Councilmember Weaver spoke about how many residents have moved to the river which says a lot as it brings in residents who invest in our community and suggested creating a maintenance fund for future needs and asked where the sand came from this year as it needs to be addressed. He said public safety was very important and suggested a recent grant for retention and recruitment for police in the amount of \$780,000 be earmarked for channel restoration as a great use of the public safety fund.

Mr. Nelson shared a video of the dredging machine that could be used in the river which would dredges 6-7 feet wide on one pass and do 3,000-6000 cubic yards per week at a cost of \$475,000.

Councilmember Scott spoke about relocating the sand to create more beaches and provide more places for people to enjoy the river and said he was surprised about the clarity of the river.

Mayor Rice noted navigability was four feet deep and while it was necessary to free up a channel, he's had no problem in the river this year but noted launching is a problem. He shared how he recently came to the downtown area and how the river was dredged 15 years ago and he hoped this would be a one-time incident



that never occurred again and suggested waiting until next year to remove the sand.

Councilmember Weaver said it may be spring by the time we get the permitting but encouraged Council to identify funding and get the permit in place now, adding a maintenance agreement for 600 feet from Main Street to the dam should be done and amend the existing permit to allow maintenance on the lower part of the river near docks and ramps.

Councilmember Skogquist agreed with the need and the feasibility report to see how long the project would take as well as costs and suggesting trying to get this work included in a bonding bill if there's one next year as well as navigation to the dam. Councilmember Weaver agreed but said he wouldn't want to wait for the legislature decide.

Motion by Councilmember Weaver, seconded by Councilmember Wesp, to support the EDC Resolution Supporting Channel Emergency Restoration Project for the Rum River.

Vote taken. All ayes. Motion carried.

## **12. UPDATES AND REPORTS**

### **12.1 Tentative Agenda(s).**

The Council reviewed the tentative agendas of the upcoming Council meetings.

### **12.2 Staff and Council Input.**

Councilmember Weaver thanked MaGillyCuddy's and 10K Brewing for sponsoring the Jam by the Dam event and supporting music education.

Councilmember Skogquist said the next MPPA annual meeting would be held on July 25 and while he couldn't attend it would be a good event and encouraged other Councilmembers to attend to meet other city agencies. He said the meeting would be held in the City of Buffalo and requested the date be added to the Council calendar.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Wesp made a motion to adjourn the Regular Council meeting. Councilmember Scott seconded the motion.

Vote taken. All ayes. Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 9:40 p.m.

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

Approval Attestation:

Amy T. Oehlers, City Clerk