



City of Robbinsdale

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Murphy, Parisian, Mayor Blonigan, Mayor Pro Tem Wagner

Absent: None

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Kayla Kirtz, Assistant to City Manager - Communications; Diaa Tahoun, Finance Director; Rick Pearson, Community Development Coordinator

DISCUSSION

A. Planning and Zoning Application fees

Pearson introduced the planning and zoning application fees for discussion. He explained that the Community Development Department commits significant staff time to reviewing planning and zoning applications, alongside other departments. Pearson compared Robbinsdale's conditional use permit and variance fees to neighboring cities of Crystal, Golden Valley, and New Hope. Pearson stated that he thinks it would make sense to raise the rates for commercial variances and commercial conditional use permits.

Sandvik explained that the Council will be conducting a second reading of the fee schedule at the next City Council meeting, during which staff could incorporate Pearson's suggested fee changes. Mayor Blonigan asked what the fees are that staff are recommending. Pearson recommends raising the variance fee for a commercial or multifamily project to about 1200 dollars. Pearson clarified he is not suggesting raising rates for residential variances, rather that he is suggesting doubling the rate for a commercial variance. Mayor Blonigan suggested applicants also cover the filing fee to the County.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner confirmed that Council is in support of the planning and zoning application fee changes and Sandvik clarified that the Council is in support of adding a filing fee to residential fees, and increasing the commercial fee to a scale of \$400-\$1200.

STAFF UPDATES

A. Letter to Hennepin County - HERC Closure

Sandvik introduced a draft of letter to Hennepin County regarding the closing of the HERC. Sandvik reminded Council that the letter was written based on the discussion held by the Council at the November work session, and that the Council could approve the letter by the next City Council meeting.

Murphy provided two grammatical edits to Sandvik. Mayor Blonigan offered grammatical and wording edits. Sandvik asked if anything is missing pertaining to the content. Mayor Blonigan responded no. Wagner stated his appreciation for the last paragraph and its references to sustainability.

Mayor Blonigan asked if there is data about the pollution impacts of the HERC. Sandvik responded that when the HERC opened it was successful in burning trash and capturing energy, but now technology is available to dispose of trash in better ways.

B. 2024 Budget Items, to include: Debt Servicing Updates and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) (non-union)

Sandvik and Tahoun explained the updates to the 2024 levy schedule due to an error from Hennepin County in the first version of the approved levy. Council and staff discussed how the changes in debt servicing will impact costs for residents. Sandvik explained the 2023 bond interest payment that was reported to the County. Tahoun clarified that at the next City Council meeting the Council will be asked to approve the updates to the debt servicing in the form of a resolution.

Sandvik notified the Council that the 2024 COLA will be 3.5% for non-union employees and this will be included as a consent item in the next week's meeting agenda. Mayor Blonigan asked who agreed to the 3.5%, Sandvik explained it was worked into the budget. The Council and Sandvik discussed COLA and the City Manager's salary. Tahoun said that staff are seeking more direction from the City Council. Sandvik clarified the compensation agreement in his contract and noted the compensation and class study planned for the beginning of 2024. Mayor Blonigan stated that the city needs to be competitive with salaries. The Council expressed support for seeing comparisons to other cities. Parisian asked when COLAs go into effect - Sandvik clarified that COLAs go into effect on January 1. Parisian suggested that the City Manager's COLA also go into effect on January 1. The rest of the Council agreed. Murphy reminded the Council that they are responsible for hiring the City Manager and suggested doing the City Manager's annual review at the first of the year rather than at the hire date.

C. Employee Handbook Updates, to include Telework Policy and Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST)

Sandvik explained several updates to the Employee Handbook that the Council will approve at next week's meeting, including: ESST policy, controlled substance and alcohol testing, paid parental leave, voting time and election judge service, nursing mothers, pregnancy accommodations, and school conference and activities leave. Sandvik explained that the changes to the Employee Handbook will be effective January 1.

Mayor Blonigan clarified what "safe" means in the ESST policy. Sandvik noted mental health and substance abuse as examples.

Parisian asked about data pertaining to changes made to the employee handbook and whether they contribute to retention or contentedness at work. Sandvik noted that the incoming HR staff person will be looking to do employee baseline surveys.

D. Council Assignments

Sandvik stated that Council can set commission appointments at the first City Council meeting in 2024. Sandvik noted vacancies in the School District 281 Government Advisory Committee and the NW Suburbs Cable Communications Commission. The Council discussed their preferences for council assignments and appointments.

E. Fire Permit Process

Sandvik presented a revised version of the Recreational Fire Permit Application and noted that it will be included as part of the fee schedule to be approved at the next City Council meeting.

COUNCIL UPDATES

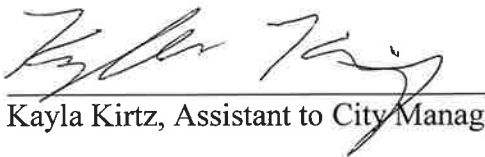
Mayor Blonigan asked about HR Manager position and Sandvik responded that they will be starting on Monday December 18. Mayor Blonigan asked about the four positions that have been budgeted for in 2024. Sandvik stated the Sustainability Coordinator position has been advertised internally. Sandvik explained that the Community Development Department will be seeing some updates in 2024 as the Building Official is retiring in January and then the position will be moved over to Community Development. Sandvik noted that the new Planner position will not get filled right away. Sandvik explained that the job description for the position in Recreation is getting updated and is planned to be advertised in the first quarter of 2024.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner asked if staff will be doing another goal-setting session in 2024. Sandvik directed the Council to discuss and make a decision in January/February. The Council expressed support for setting annual goals. Sandvik will present potential dates for a goal-setting session at the January work session.

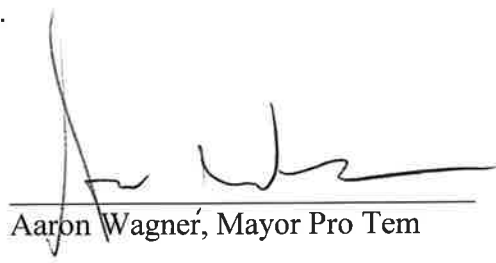
Mayor Pro Tem Wagner asked if there is something the Council could do to send condolences to deceased staff member Shari Ross. Murphy suggested a resolution or proclamation thanking her for her service. Mayor Blonigan asked if there is going to be a celebration of life or wake, and if so, the council and staff should send a card or flowers. Staff agreed to write a resolution for the upcoming City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m.



Kayla Kirtz, Assistant to City Manager - Communications



Aaron Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem