



City of Robbinsdale

City Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 6, 2024
Meeting No. 3

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Blonigan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Murphy, Parisian, Wagner, Mayor Blonigan
Absent: None
Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk; Rick Pearson, Community Development Director; Richard McCoy, Public Works Director/City Engineer

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2024, MEETING AGENDA

Peterson-Etem noted the voucher disbursement report would be added to Other Business Item A.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Wagner to approve the February 6, 2024, meeting agenda. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Member Parisian removed items K and N for further consideration.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisian to approve the consent agenda. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

- A. Approve City Council Special Work Session minutes from January 16, 2024
- B. Approve City Council meeting minutes from January 16, 2024
- C. Parks Recreation and Forestry Commission Approval of Minutes
- D. Approval of Credit Card Charges and Payment
- E. Deputy Registrar's Monthly Financial Statements
- F. Robbinsdale Wine & Spirits' Monthly Financial Statements
- G. Bond Reimbursement Resolution
- H. Quarterly Financial Information for General, Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Sewer, and Solid Waste

- I. Investment Report
- J. Replacement Water Truck - Project 8116
- K. Removed for further consideration.
- L. Accept Additional Water Efficiency Grant Funds from the Metropolitan Council
- M. Human Services and Public Health Department Provider Agreement: Local Food Purchase Agreement (LFPA) Grant
- N. Removed for further consideration.
- O. Appointment of Election Judges for the 2024 Presidential Nomination Primary Election
- P. Approval of Licenses
- Q. Approval of Credit Card Charges and Payment – January 2024

CONSENT ITEM REMOVED

- K. Appointment of Human Rights Commissioner

Member Parisian recognized and thanked Courtney for her time and highlighted her commission application.

Member Parisian MOVED, seconded by Wagner to appoint Courtney Kirkeeng to the HRC. This vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

CONSENT ITEM REMOVED

- N. Appointment of Senior Commissioner

Member Parisian recognized and thanked Carl for his interest in the Senior Commission and noted his background.

Member Parisian MOVED, seconded by Wagner to appoint Carl Monson to the Senior Commission. This vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Black History Month Proclamation

Sandvik provided a brief overview and noted the city has previously celebrated and acknowledged Black History Month through a Council proclamation. He mentioned the theme of this year and stated the city continues efforts to make this work a priority.

The Council recognized the importance of Black History Month and Mayor Blonigan summarized the proclamation.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Parisian to Approve the Black History Month Proclamation. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

- B. Presentation - Eckberg Lammers, Prosecution Services for Robbinsdale

Mayor Blonigan stated the City Council has asked staff from Eckberg Lammers, the city's prosecuting attorney, to attend a Council meeting.

Sandvik stated that Eckberg Lammers is here tonight to present an overview of the prosecution services they provide for the City of Robbinsdale. He noted the City Council is responsible for hiring the City Attorney and ensuring they are providing quality services for the city.

Joe Thomme and Anneliese McCahery, of Eckberg Lammers, presented to the Council and noted the importance of their entire team. Their philosophy is to provide an individualized measured victim-centric approach to prosecution and understand that each case is unique. Thomme noted they understand they are responsible to the City Council and are representatives of Robbinsdale and make sure to treat each case and individual fairly. McCahery stated the County Attorney handles felony cases while the City Attorney handles misdemeanor cases like DWI, traffic, theft, domestic assault, etc. She also noted several other things their office does, including case review and charging decisions, e-charging, court appearances, trial practice, appeals, law enforcement training and seminars, and "on-call" prosecution services.

McCahery explained the partnership they have with the Police Department and the importance of open communication with the police staff, and provided statistics of the specific types of cases they handled in 2023.

Mayor Blonigan asked how many cases have gone to trial in the past year and beyond. McCahery stated that in 2023 no cases went to a full jury trial, and in the previous year there were two or three. Mayor Blonigan asked about trials to the court. McCahery stated trials to the court happen weekly and there may be two to three per week. She noted those court trials are all traffic related. Mayor Blonigan asked about their retainer agreement with the city. Thomme noted that it is a flat fee and going to trial doesn't cost the city anything additionally.

Mayor Blonigan asked if the cases opened in 2023 have all been resolved and what happens to them. Thomme noted there are many potential circumstances that could postpone cases being resolved and is unsure exactly how many are still open. He noted they try to resolve as many cases as possible at each hearing. McCahery noted a lot of work is done outside the courtroom to resolve cases.

Mayor Blonigan asked how data is being used to ensure that our police department and prosecutors are administering justice in a way that doesn't have an unfair bend towards persons of certain races or socioeconomic status. Thomme noted it's difficult to measure from strictly a data set, but stated they do make efforts to make sure cases are handled in a fair way. Mayor Blonigan stated he believes the police officers are being fair but would appreciate more data and wondered if we could hire someone to help look into this.

Mayor Blonigan explained that he would like to see their set of standards be more transparent to the public. Thomme noted that the legislature defines standards, however, there can be situations where they could use discretion to reach a fair resolve that is not life changing.

Mayor Blonigan reiterated that the City Council hires the City Attorney and that they must work in consort with the police department. However, he noted the City Attorney is responsible to the Council and should be working with the City Manager, who is the representative of the City Council. Thomme stated they would be happy to have more in-depth conversations about what the Council is looking for. Mayor Blonigan stated he has received very few complaints about the prosecution or the police department and is very satisfied but does want some oversight throughout the year.

Member Murphy asked how many municipalities they represent. Thomme stated 21 or 22 other municipalities. Murphy asked how the case statistics compare to the City of Crystal. McCahery stated they would be comparable.

Member Murphy asked about body and dash cameras and how those tools have changed the way they handle cases. McCahery noted they do utilize them in evidentiary hearings or trial type settings, particularly with traffic type offenses. She noted they work with the RPD to obtain the videos and find them very useful. Thomme also stated this information has been helpful and can help people be prepared and transparent.

Mayor Blonigan stated he is an advocate for photo cop and thinks it could be another positive tool.

Member Wagner asked how often minor city code offenses escalate into larger issues that would be handled by the prosecutors. Thomme and McCahery noted it depends how the city wants to handle civic and criminal code enforcement but noted it doesn't happen often. They noted if this is happening, it typically is animal related or parking enforcement. They also stated the police department could see this happening more, as they are dealing with the violation first.

The Council asked for clarification on the acronyms listed. Thomme and McCahery defined the acronyms and explained them in more detail.

Member Parisian asked for more information and communication on training opportunities and how they are engaging with the police officers. Thomme noted their firm has its own training branch and they are happy to do more of this.

Sandvik encouraged the Council to reach out if they are interested in becoming more involved with training and noted it has been a great working relationship with Eckberg Lammers.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. None

OLD BUSINESS

A. None

NEW BUSINESS

A. **FIRST READING** of an Ordinance amending:

- Section 520.03 B-2, Limited Community business district.
- Section 520.05 B-3, Highway commercial district.
- Section 530.09 TOD overlay district.

Pearson presented the item and stated this ordinance is related to developing a housing plan around the LRT station area that is anticipated for the County Road 81 corridor. He noted there are three amendments that are being proposed tonight. These amendments are intended to address issues related to multiple family housing near the new station area and reinforce the vision of implementing the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Blonigan asked for clarification on the 20 percent requirement for non-residential uses in a multifamily dwelling. Pearson stated developers could include lobbies, community rooms, and mail rooms to reach the 20 percent threshold, and noted this update could encourage mixed-use buildings.

Sandvik noted the language in the ordinance would allow developers flexibility during the design process.

Member Wagner asked where 20 percent came from. Pearson stated this would be the complete first floor of a five-story building.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Wagner to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 24-01 "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 520.03, LIMITED COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT, 520.05, HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, AND 530.09 TOD OVERLAY DISTRICT." The vote was

unanimous and the motion passed.

B. Point-of-Sale Inspection Program

Pearson gave an overview and stated on January 16, 2024, the Council indicated support for the discontinuation of the Point-of-Sale Program. He noted that in the past, repair/replace issues were much higher, and these have now dropped dramatically, both in severity and in the amount issued. He indicated that staff is asking the Council to make a motion suspending the program and a motion to approve the first reading of the ordinance.

Member Parisian MOVED, seconded by member Murphy to suspend enforcement of the Point-of-Sale Inspection Program. This vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisian to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 24-02 "AN ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTION 435 OF THE CITY CODE POINT OF SALE HOUSING DISCLOSURE." This vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Voucher Requests Pending Approval for Disbursement

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Murphy to approve the Voucher Requests Pending Approval for Disbursement. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

McCoy stated the City Engineering Association of Minnesota awarded the Robbinsdale Water Treatment Plant as project of the year. He noted this award is typically for a street project, but an exception was made this year, and they included a street project and a non-street project. He also noted that other communities have been touring the Water Treatment Plant.

Peterson-Etem noted upcoming elections, including the Presidential Nomination Primary Election on March 5, 2024. He encouraged people to vote and provided ways to vote early and directed people to the city website for more information.

Sandvik mentioned that staff remain busy filling new positions and working on projects. He thanked the Human Rights Commission for letting him participate in their goal-setting session in January. He noted LMC hosted a legislative preview session and that he will continue to update the Council as more is known. Sandvik noted he continues to work with the LRT office and will set up a work session to discuss with the Council. He shared the Sun Times listed the City of Robbinsdale as the best place to work based on reader feedback. He noted that on March 13, the Multicultural Advisory Committee will meet, and he invited one or two council members to attend that meeting. Lastly, he reminded the Council that their goal-setting session will take place next week on February 12.

COUNCIL GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

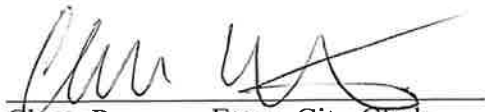
Member Wagner noted he would be absent for the February 20 City Council meeting. He asked about organics recycling and if there is a cost associated with getting the bin. He also asked if folks would need to use compostable bags for organic recycling. Sandvik stated there is no additional cost to obtain the bin and that there are bags made specifically for compostable materials and organic recycling. Member Wagner also noted that he attended the Park, Recreation, and Forestry Commission meeting where they did a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threats (SWOT) analysis. He stated there was good discussion around these topics and highlighted that it's important to invest in these programs. He noted the importance of Black History Month and shared a quote from W.E.B. Du Bois.

Mayor Blonigan mentioned consent item M and highlighted the efforts that this grant aims to make. He also

noted he attended the Legislators' breakfast where folks shared each of their legislative priorities for the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisian to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chase Peterson-Etem", written over a horizontal line.

Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William A. Blonigan", written over a horizontal line.

William A. Blonigan, Mayor