



City of Robbinsdale

City Council Work Session
Tuesday, March 12, 2024

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Richard McCoy, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Kayla Kirtz, Sustainability Coordinator

Human Rights Commissioners: Krystyn Lee, Jonathan Hansen, Julie Ralston-Aoki, Rita Fox, Molly Beahen, Patrick Nailon

DISCUSSION

A. Human Rights Commission Updates - Parks Naming Policy, Committee to Review Nuisance Code

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) introduced the discussion of the draft Parks Naming Policy. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner thanked the Commission for putting the draft together. The Commission explained the process of drafting the policy, which included the subcommittee reviewing policies of other cities similar in size to Robbinsdale, identifying objectives and criteria, and discussing findings with the rest of the HRC. The Commission stated they can share an example application to rename parks from another city.

Member Parisian asked about the process after an application is submitted. The Commission explained that the application would go to the City Manager or the City Council for review and then the community would provide input by way of a City Council meeting or special event. Following community input, the application would return to the City Council for final approval. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner asked about the one-year specification. The Commission clarified that the time frame is to ensure that vetting is done on the person prior to naming. Member Parisian noted it helps to account for the grieving process. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner clarified the stipulation about naming a park after a current elected official or employee. Member Murphy suggested removing all elected officials from renaming eligibility. Member Murphy clarified the donation stipulation. Commissioners emphasized they want the policy to be community-based.

Mayor Blonigan stated that he thinks the city should rename Sanborn Park by the end of the year. Mayor Blonigan voiced concerns about the application process, precluding city employees from having parks named after them, and thanked the commission for putting the policy together. Mayor Blonigan voiced support for naming a park after financial donors.

Member Murphy asked about the process for the Council to adopt a policy. Sandvik suggested holding a public hearing, and adopting either by resolution or ordinance.

Sandvik reviewed his recommended edits to the draft Parks Naming Policy with the Council. Member Parisian

voiced support for including elected and appointed officials in renaming eligibility because the policy involves community input. Sandvik suggested reviewing the proposed edits, sharing a draft of the policy with the Parks, Recreation, & Forestry (PRF) Commission, reviewing the policy at a work session, and holding a public hearing at an upcoming City Council meeting.

The Council and staff continued reviewing Sandvik's recommendations. Mayor Blonigan suggested adding to the policy a requirement to review park names every 50 years or so. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner suggested having the PRF Commission review park names every 20 years. The Commission noted that when meeting with other cities with parks naming policies, they did not frequently get an influx in renaming applications from residents. Parisian thanked the HRC for putting the draft policy together and discussing it with the Council.

The Commission shared an update on the proposed Shelley Day event on Friday, May 3rd. A summary of the proposed event was shared with meeting attendees and has been attached to the minutes. Member Murphy expressed support. Commissioners explained that the event will ideally have lawyers present to renounce covenants, public art displays, and an art project for kids. Mayor Blonigan expressed support. Staff, Council, and the Commission discussed logistics of the event.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner transitioned the discussion to nuisance code. The Commission provided background information on the nuisance ordinance and the proposed committee. Member Murphy voiced support for residents that are dealing with nuisance neighbors to be involved in the committee. Mayor Blonigan encouraged diverse points of views to be represented on the committee. Sandvik encouraged having staff involved in the committee. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner clarified that the goal of the committee is to provide recommendations to the City Council. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner clarified that the City Council supports the HRC giving official recommendations to Council for a nuisance code review committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner noted the next HRC meeting is March 28th.

STAFF UPDATES

A. Metropolitan Council Water Efficiency Grant Program

McCoy explained the Metropolitan Council Water Efficiency Grant Program and reminded the Council that the city has been involved now for two grant cycles. McCoy notified the Council that staff are planning to apply for another round of funding, and explained the city's required grant match. McCoy stated that it is a popular program among residents, and he recommends that we apply for another round of grant funding. The Council voiced support for staff to apply for the Metropolitan Council Water Efficiency Grant Program.

B. 2024 Legislative Updates

Sandvik discussed the Missing Middle Housing bill currently being proposed in State legislation and highlighted staff concerns. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner voiced support for the bill. Sandvik noted that if the bill gains traction, it is worthy of the Council to put together an opinion. Member Murphy voiced support for local control. McCoy voiced concerns about wastewater treatment, drinking water availability, and other infrastructure that will be impacted by an increase in high density housing. Mayor Blonigan voiced concerns about the bill and also expressed interest in the bill, voicing his support for diverse and dense housing. Member Parisian noted affordability, climate refugees, and an interest in more density in Robbinsdale.

Sandvik provided an update on legislation potentially affecting North Memorial Health Hospital.

Sandvik updated the City Council that there may be some changes made to language or licensing components regarding cannabis.

Sandvik gave general updates about legislation regarding local government aid and fiscal disparities, public safety, PFAS, school resource officers, and employment.

C. Hollingsworth Park Donation Update

Sandvik gave an update on Hollingsworth Park and the Donato family's plans, seeking Council direction. Murphy suggested planting low maintenance plants in the park. Sandvik suggested plantings in alignment with work that staff are already doing at Hollingsworth. Council voiced support for staff to renegotiate with the Donato family.

D. Other items

McCoy updated the Council that eight of the 14 remaining water meters have been replaced. Five of the six remaining properties are unoccupied.

McCoy updated the Council that the new water tower was being filled and staff were anticipating that there would be water main breaks due to increased water pressure. At the time of the meeting there were a total of eight water main breaks. The water main breaks were budgeted for in the 2024 budget.

McCoy notified the Council that Sochacki Park will be receiving \$1.6 million dollars to support water quality efforts and the proposed classroom.

COUNCIL UPDATES

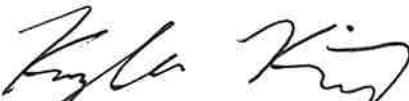
A. City Hall Drapery

Mayor Blonigan suggested replacing the drapery in the City Hall lobby. Sandvik explained that the quilts absorb sound, and also explained that the quilts were treated with a fire suppressant when they were originally installed, but the fire retardation has diminished. McCoy suggested replacing the quilts with acoustic paneling.

Sandvik notified the Council that yard waste pick up will resume on April 15th. Sandvik reminded the Council that the RFP process for organized waste collection will start this summer.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner adjourned the meeting at 9:43 p.m.


Kayla Kirtz, Sustainability Coordinator


William A. Blonigan, Mayor

Shelley Day, seeking final approval from City Council

Despite the serious topic, we want this to be a celebration of the anniversary of the Shelley decision. Let's celebrate the progress that has been made, and continue to make progress!

We'd like to have booths/tents set up for different activities/learnings such as:

- 1) Realtor panel** discussing racism in home buying and code enforcement.
 - We could discuss Crime Free Housing ordinances as part of this.
- 2) Lawyer(s) to discuss racially restrictive deeds** with people and how to discharge them, and a notary.
 - Maria Cisneros
 - Get Rep. Mike Freiberg involved too? He's a lawyer and has discharged racially restricted deeds.
 - Potentially could draft up the discharges for the racially restrictive deeds around Sanborn Park beforehand and have them ready at the event. Homeowners would just need to sign and the notary could notarize. Best to send out flyers to those households ahead of time, in case they don't see the marketing for the event otherwise.
- 3) Art and poetry** from the organization Free the Deeds (www.freethedeeds.org) about racial covenants - ask for donations to the black land trust
- 4) Community art project(s) for the kiddos** like the ones we've done the past two years at Meet & Greet with prompts like:
 - What is home to you?
 - Who deserves to have a home?
 - Why people shouldn't be excluded from living in Robbinsdale based on race/ethnicity/nationality
- 5) Play Jim Crow of the North** episodes 2 and 3 (<https://www.pbs.org/show/jim-crow-north-stories/episodes/>) in the Sanborn warming house
- 6) Elicit community input on what Sanborn Park should be renamed to.** Want CC to formally pass that Sanborn Park will be renamed, with the new name to be determined by end of year. Castille Park (HRC preference), Justice Park, etc.
- 7) Large map of racially restricted deeded properties** around Sanborn Park.
- 8) Display about the landmark Shelley v. Kraemer SCOTUS decision** and why it's so important.
- 9) How do we bring narrative change?**
 - Racial justice dialogue training (I know I'd like to have some training)

- Restorative circle training - why do you react the way you do when racism is brought up?
- Maria suggested that Professor Raj Setharaju (<https://www.metrostate.edu/about/directory/raj-setharaju>) might be willing to lead this. Also, she said he would be a great guest to have at a HRC meeting.

10) Music

- Rita has mentioned the song referencing systemic racism/Philando Castille would be great to play during this.

We will also want some other activity options for kiddos in the park, ask that the Parks and Rec dept handle that.

We will need the materials, booths/tents, light refreshments, staff/volunteers for the booths/setup/breakdown, Wifi hotspot, marketing, and to have Sanborn Park reserved for Friday May 3 for the event.

Should try to partner with theNewMpls (Robbinsdale farmer's market) for tents, especially since they're local and owned by a black person (Chaz Sandifer).

Should partner or at least reach out to BLM Minnesota (<https://blacklivesmattersmn.com>)

Should reach out to the North Mpls neighborhoods, especially the ones that border Robbinsdale (Victory, Cleveland, Jordan, Willard-Hay) and emphasize that we all belong here and we're neighbors. No one is better because they live in Robbinsdale than someone who lives in North.

Nice to have: Could reach out to some black-owned food trucks like Soul Roll/Wendy's House of Soul

Would be great to have yard signs for people who have discharged a racially restrictive deed.