



City of Robbinsdale

City Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 2, 2024
Meeting No. 7

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Parisian, Wagner, Murphy, Mayor Blonigan

Absent: None

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk; Richard McCoy Public Works Director/City Engineer; Rick Pearson, Community Development Director; Stephan Papiz, City Forester/Natural Resources Specialist; Jenna Wolf, Water Resources Specialist

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Miles Toth, 4318 West Broadway, stated the lights on the water tower are incredibly bright. He noted he can't sit in the backyard and see stars and that even with blackout shades it is very bright. He also mentioned other people in the neighborhood are expressing similar concerns.

Bob Rausch, 3815 Crystal Lake Blvd., stated one of the greatest assets is Crystal Lake, and noted his concern about the health of the lake. He stated Minneapolis has an excess amount of storm water drainage and there is so much trash that comes with it and is asking how the city will deal with it. He noted time and money is being wasted, but nothing is helping the situation.

Sandvik noted it's been a few weeks since the water tower lights have been on, and we are working towards figuring this out. McCoy noted they are hopeful they can dim the lights down during a certain time of night. He also stated the Council did approve exactly what is being displayed, and they may have been a bit brighter than expected. Mayor Blonigan asked about displaying different colors. McCoy stated there is a large manual (644 pages) and he will need to have a tutorial on all the features that are available. Member Murphy asked if there is someone else who could help us figure this out. McCoy stated he has been in contact to do this. Murphy asked about them being on during the day as well. McCoy stated they are aware of this, and it will be looked into.

Miles Toth asked if there is a way the lights could be turned off until this is figured out. McCoy stated he will look into this.

McCoy addressed the trash coming into Crystal Lake. He noted he has recently been in contact with Minneapolis and Hennepin County and that Minneapolis is seeking grant money to fix any flooding issues that may be increasing water flow into Crystal Lake. He noted Minneapolis is looking into underground storage tanks, which could help with the amount and quality of water going into Crystal Lake and that Robbinsdale continues to work with Minneapolis and the Park Board to come up with a solution to this.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 2, 2024 MEETING AGENDA

Peterson-Etem noted two items that were being updated. The first is an updated resolution for Consent Item G and the second is the inclusion of the voucher disbursement report for Other Business Item A. He noted the Council also received these items earlier in the day.

Member Parisian MOVED, seconded by Wagner to approve the April 2, 2024, meeting agenda. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Member Murphy removed Consent Item J for further consideration.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Murphy to approve the Consent Agenda. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

- A. Approve City Council meeting minutes of March 6, 2024
- B. Approve City Council Work Session minutes from March 12, 2024
- C. Receive Planning Commission meeting minutes from December 21, 2023
- D. Approval of Licenses
- E. Deputy Registrar's Monthly Financial Statements
- F. Robbinsdale Wine & Spirits' Monthly Financial Statements
- G. Adopt Resolution Amending the 2023 General Fund Budget
- H. Establishment of the 2025-2026 Budget Calendar
- I. Approval of 2024 Fiber Route
- J. Removed for further consideration

REMOVED CONSENT AGENDA

- J. Vapor Bunker THC Sales License

Member Murphy stated he is curious if the City is going to look into having a municipal license to sell THC, once the state sets those regulations, similar to the liquor store. He stated he doesn't want to keep approving these licenses if the Council decides to have a municipal cannabis store. Sandvik noted these licenses cover low potency THC and not a full-scale operation. He continued that the state is still working on regulations around existing legislation for a licensing process and staff would be happy to bring this back to Council once more is known.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Parisian to approve the THC sales license submitted by Vapor Bunker, subject to a background investigation. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Hennepin County Commissioner Lunde - Updates from the County

Commissioner Lunde provided an overview of the things he and his staff are working on and focused on the areas of public safety, working with youth, and transit.

Member Wagner asked about North Memorial Hospital and what the future looks like. Commissioner Lunde noted they continue to talk with North Memorial and that the County Board did support their bid to get a higher level of reimbursement.

Member Murphy thanked Commissioner Lunde for presenting and asked what Robbinsdale could do to help advocate for North Memorial.

Member Parisian also thanked Commissioner Lunde and asked if this was the first Safe Community Summit. Commissioner Lunde stated yes.

Mayor Blonigan noted folks can reach out to Commissioner Lunde and his staff, as they are very accessible. Mayor Blonigan also mentioned safety in regard to the Light Rail and hoped they are focused on this at Hennepin County.

B. Robbinsdale Forestry/Natural Resources Annual Report

Papiz provided an overview of the annual forestry report and covered the many programs that are being used to maintain healthy natural resources in Robbinsdale.

Mayor Blonigan asked about a food forest and if that was being pursued. Papiz stated he is open to the idea, and it can be looked into further if the Council wants. He also noted there could be many challenges to this, including the limited space in Robbinsdale.

Member Murphy noted the success of our Emerald Ash Borer program and thanked Papiz for his work on this and for the city.

Member Parisian also thanked Papiz for his presentation tonight and the work he does throughout the year. She asked about resources for residents that suspect they have a diseased tree on their property. Papiz noted the city website has information about this, but more information could be added.

Member Wagner also thanked Papiz for his work.

C. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Annual Report

Wolf provided an overview of the annual report and discussed the requirements for our Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. These include public education and outreach, public participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site stormwater runoff control, post-construction stormwater management, and pollution prevention and good housekeeping. She also provided information related to the Flocculation plant and focus areas for 2024.

Mayor Blonigan asked about the requirements for inspecting oil tanks and what systems are in place to protect against spills. Wolf stated the city doesn't have an inspection process for these types of businesses. McCoy noted the city isn't involved in the structural integrity of containment units and property owners would need to work with other agencies on this. He noted property owners would be responsible to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and they would regulate this.

Member Wagner asked if the city receives any reporting from the MPCA on oil spill issues, or if they provide a list of facilities that contain materials like this. McCoy stated there are inspection schedules the PCA follows, and the city is also required to report hazardous material spills to the PCA. Member Wagner asked if agencies like the PCA help to formulate mitigation plans. McCoy stated taking immediate action when something hazardous is suspected is something the city does to help with mitigation and noted the City has purchased a response trailer to help in these situations. Member Wagner asked when the city is required to report an event. Wolf stated the city must report to the PCA any time a spill is over 5 gallons.

Member Parisian noted the report a problem tool on the city website and wondered if there could be additions to this, like reporting when there is excess salt in places.

Member Murphy asked about the Flocculation Plant and why there was less phosphorus being removed. Wolf stated that there isn't as much phosphorus that needs to be removed because the Flocculation plant has been doing its job, so the lower number is a good thing and means the lake is healthier.

Mayor Blonigan reiterated that winter salting education should continue as he sees oversalting. He also noted the funding for Sochacki Park and thanked Representative Omar and her team for securing that funding.

Mayor Blonigan invited anyone from the public to comment on this report.

Bob Rausch, 3815 Crystal Lake Blvd., noted there is already an algae bloom on Crystal Lake.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. None

OLD BUSINESS

A. None

NEW BUSINESS

A. First Reading of an Ordinance adopting the Crystal Airport Zoning Ordinance

Pearson provided an overview and noted new legislation changed ordinance standards for airports, and particularly this affected the runway at Crystal Airport. He provided information on land use and height restrictions, noting updated development restrictions for Robbinsdale. He stated the new water tower was well within the height restrictions of this ordinance and that the planning commission reviewed this ordinance and is recommending approval.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Wagner to Approve First Reading of an Ordinance Adopting The Crystal Airport Zoning Ordinance.

A roll call was taken.

Ayes: Parisian, Murphy, Wagner, Mayor Blonigan.

Nays: None.

The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

B. 2024 Street Improvement Program Feasibility Report – 41st Avenue

McCoy presented the feasibility report and noted this project will allow increased water main sizes that will connect with the water tower and downtown area and that underground stormwater basins will also be installed. He noted infrastructure that would be added or replaced, funding sources, and a timeline of the project.

Member Parisian asked if there are any future plans for connecting sidewalks and also connecting to Triangle Park. McCoy stated that connection isn't included in the scope of this work but could potentially be a stand-alone project.

Member Murphy asked about aprons and if they would be replaced as well as if people could have their driveway resurfaced at their expense, if they wanted. McCoy stated yes, the aprons would be replaced and that folks would have to work with the contractor if they wanted their driveways done at the same time.

Member Murphy asked about a half block of sidewalk on the south side and if that would be replaced. McCoy stated he didn't believe that would be replaced. Member Murphy also asked about curbs and gutters on the south corner. McCoy stated he would look into it.

Mayor Blonigan asked if adding connecting sidewalks could be part of the bid. McCoy stated yes, but he will need to investigate it.

Mayor Blonigan stated the road itself seemed to be in fair condition and wondered why this needs to be replaced now. McCoy stated underground infrastructure needs to be replaced and is a main factor when deciding which parts of the city need to be done.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisian to Approve 2024 Street Improvement Program Feasibility Report – 41St Avenue. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Voucher Requests Pending Approval for Disbursement

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

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Peterson-Etem noted early voting for the Ward 2 Special Primary Election started last week and Ward 2 residents can come to city hall to vote early. He stated the Ward 2 candidate forum is also scheduled for April 24 at 7 p.m. at city hall. Mayor Blonigan asked if any of the 5 people who filed withdrew their candidacy. Peterson-Etem stated no and outlined upcoming elections for the year.

Sandvik thanked the people who attended the Eggstravaganza hosted by the Robbinsdale Chamber of Commerce and noted that about 350 children attended. He noted summer programming is open for many recreation opportunities and that the city is also accepting applications for seasonal job opportunities both in recreation and doing field work. He stated the Hennepin County Assessor's office is hosting several meetings for people to appeal property valuations and those would be taking place from April 15 through April 25. He noted we continue to work with our Legislators on upcoming legislative changes, including the Broadband for All Bill that the Council discussed. He mentioned full-time job opportunities in the city and directed people to the website for more information. He stated that proposals for the Public Works Facility Space Needs Analysis and the Parks Master Plan are moving forward. He noted that next Tuesday, April 9, there is an LRT open house at Elim Church at 5:30 p.m., as well as the Robbinsdale Economic Development Authority meeting and Council Work Session. Lastly, he thanked the Council for their support and allowing staff to make investments in the future of the city.

COUNCIL GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

Member Wagner thanked the staff for their presentations tonight and the work they do in the city. He also thanked the residents for sharing photos of the new water tower.

Member Murphy also mentioned the water tower and appreciates staff looking into the lighting issues with it.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Parisian to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 p.m. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.


Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk
William A. Blonigan, Mayor