



City of Robbinsdale

City Council Meeting
Tuesday, May 7, 2024
Meeting No. 9

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Wagner, Murphy, Parisian, Mayor Blonigan

Absent:

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk; Richard McCoy, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Guy Dorholt, Fire Chief

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

Leo Fisher, 4309 France Ave., stated he is a high school senior and is here tonight to talk about reducing speed limits in Robbinsdale. He stated decreasing speed limits will make it safer for all users and lower speeds increase the survival rate if a person is struck by a vehicle. He noted he has experienced the fast speed of drivers along Bottineau Blvd. and that decreased speed limits on this road and on residential streets will make it safer and more user-friendly for all.

Mayor Blonigan noted the Council has discussed this issue in the past. Sandvik stated the city has done a traffic study and decided not to move forward with changing the speed limits and that most vehicles were moving at or under speed limits. He stated if the Council would like further discussion, they could ask for it to be brought to a work session.

Murphy stated he would be open to discussing it further. Member Parisian agreed and thanked Leo for voicing this.

Member Wagner stated he has been open to lowering speed limits city wide and increasing sidewalk infrastructure, and he would also want to keep having this conversation.

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 7, 2024 MEETING AGENDA

Peterson-Etem noted two additions to the meeting. The first was an updated ordinance to New Business Item A and the second was the added report to Other Business Item B.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Blonigan removed items G and H for further consideration.

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

- A. City Council meeting minutes of March 19, 2024
- B. Approval of Credit Card Charges and Payment
- C. Deputy Registrar's Monthly Financial Statements
- D. Quarterly Financial Information for General, Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Sewer and Solid Waste
- E. Robbinsdale Wine & Spirits' Monthly Financial Statements
- F. Investment Report
- G. Removed for further consideration
- H. Removed for further consideration
- I. Second reading of Ordinance 24-03 Adopting the Crystal Airport Zoning Ordinance
- J. Limited Use Agreement - 3918 Crystal Lake Boulevard
- K. Approval of Licenses
- L. Approve Co-operative Agreement for the Sochacki Park Water Quality Improvement Project (BC-14)

REMOVED CONSENT AGENDA

- G. City Investment Policy

Mayor Blonigan stated the policy noted the city could invest up to 5 percent, but legally the city could invest up to 15 percent and wanted that to be clear in the policy language. Sandvik noted that language could be added to the policy to make this clear.

Member Parisian stated she would also like to see this language added.

Mayor Blonigan Moved, seconded by Parisian to update the Investment Policy for the City of Robbinsdale with additional information added allowing future Council's the opportunity to adjust the percentage amount. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

- H. Hennepin County Fire Chiefs Association – City Membership

Mayor Blonigan asked how much it costs to have membership in the Hennepin County Fire Chiefs Association. Sandvik noted the cost is less than \$1,000.

Mayor Blonigan MOVED, seconded by Murphy to adopt Resolution No. 8100 "A RESOLUTION APPROVING MEMBERSHIP IN THE HENNEPIN COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION, INC." The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Proclamation of National Public Works Week

McCoy noted the important work that the Public Works staff provide, and this proclamation recognized their dedication to making Robbinsdale a safe and efficient place to live.

Mayor Blonigan summarized the proclamation and indicated the Council's appreciation of the Public Works staff.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisian to Approve Proclamation of National Public Works Week. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

B. Annual Robbinsdale Fire Department Report

Chief Dorholt provided an overview of the 2023 Annual Report including types of calls received, the amount of calls they responded to, education for firefighters, fire inspections, and community engagement. He noted there has been a higher volume of requests and hopes to have a more in-depth conversation about the future of the Fire Department. He also acknowledged how fire services will be affected by light rail and encouraged the Council to consider fire services during light rail discussions.

Member Wagner asked about the structure of the Fire Department. Dorholt noted the department consists of up to 30 paid on-call firefighters who must reside within a two-mile radius from the fire station.

Dorholt mentioned the resolution the Council adopted approving membership in the Hennepin County Fire Chiefs Association. He stated that the organization operates as a governance body and provides direction, education, and strategy for the Fire Chiefs in Hennepin County. He noted it also provides a forum to discuss and promote fire safety and to connect with other fire professionals.

Mayor Blonigan asked where folks could view the annual report. Dorholt stated it would be on the city website.

Mayor Blonigan noted he would be open to a discussion about updating the fire department model of paid on-call staff to potentially include some full-time fire staff.

Member Murphy also commented on the number of hours that go into training and gave his appreciation for the work they do.

Member Parisian thanked Chief Dorholt for the presentation and provided her appreciation to all members of the fire staff for their dedication to keeping the community safe.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Improvement and Assessment Hearing for Project 44123 - 41st Avenue between Railroad Avenue and Regent Avenue

McCoy provided a brief overview of the item. He noted there will be replacements and new infrastructure added, including a 12-inch diameter water main and potentially adding underground infiltration chambers, which could help with drainage issues. He also stated there would be a sidewalk added to help with pedestrian access to parks. McCoy noted elements of the feasibility report, correspondence detailing residents' concerns, and a cost analysis breakdown. He mentioned the residents along this corridor would be assessed a portion of the project based on our Assessment Policy, which has been the practice of the city for many years.

Member Murphy asked about the water main and why that needed to be done. McCoy explained this will connect to another 12-inch water mains and replace a large diameter pipe that was on Country Road 9 that had failed.

Mayor Blonigan reiterated that the Council is being asked to adopt two different resolutions. One that would allow the work to be done, and one that assesses a portion of the project to property owners.

Mayor Blonigan opened the public hearing.

Jennifer Creary, 4100 Regent Ave. N., stated it doesn't seem reasonable to ask residents to come up with \$10,041 in six months, or they will be assessed the cost and be subject to additional interest with the assessment. She noted the increase in inflation over the next 10 years and this is only adding to other increased costs. She noted the amount should have been communicated to residents further back, so they could start saving to pay this without interest.

Judith Kilian, 4100 Quail Ave. N., stated she loves her home and the city, but her property taxes continue to increase. She asked what portion of her property taxes pay for work like this. She recalls that another city she had lived in discussed projects like this several years prior to the project happening, not six months. She asked if this could be paid over a few years without interest. She also stated the interest rate seems high for this and wondered how necessary this project is to do now. She asked how long it would take and how residents could get in and out of their houses during the construction.

Josh Campbell, 4105 Perry Ave. N., noted he appreciates the other speakers and that the potential \$120 dollars a month is substantial for residents and that could be equivalent to a week's worth of groceries.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Wagner to close the public hearing. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Mayor Blonigan asked about the timeline and wondered if we could consider increasing the time we notify residents of expected work to be done. McCoy stated the city has a ten-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which is available to residents, but stated he would look into ways to improve this communication.

McCoy stated he believes the project is necessary this year and noted the pipes in that area have been there a very long time and the material used to make them is outdated and could cause issues. He also mentioned potential ponding in that area, and stated the infiltration system would help with this.

McCoy noted the exact timing of the work would need to be determined by a contractor, but generally it should go quickly compared to other street projects. He also noted there may be disruption to residents needing to get in and out of driveways and stated the city would work with them to make sure this is addressed.

Mayor Blonigan asked what types of bonds would be used. Sandvik noted it would be a collection of publicly available bonds.

Member Wagner asked about the assessment and if that could be pushed out to the next year. Sandvik stated the assessment date follows the same timeline of other assessments in the city. Sandvik also stated the Assessment Policy has had very few changes in the last couple of decades and only certain types of work can be assessed under this policy. He noted that a November deadline allows the city to have this processed and ready to start the following year.

Mayor Blonigan asked about reducing the interest rate and wondered if that was an option, since interest rates are high right now. He is also interested in extending the timeline of when we communicate these projects to residents and wondered how the assessed cost is determined. McCoy stated it's linked to the construction cost index which is determined by an outside agency.

Member Murphy noted he met with a few of the residents, and they shared that they were shocked to see this high of an assessment, and they could not afford this. He questioned if we should continue to use this Assessment Policy or if there were a better option that would spread the cost of these types of projects over the entire city.

Mayor Blonigan noted recent assessments that were issued to residents within the last year or two, and that it may be unfair to those folks if we made a decision to abruptly stop using our Assessment Policy.

Sandvik noted his advisement would be to not move away from the Assessment Policy on this project tonight. He noted staff could provide some information on what phasing out the Assessment Policy could look like if the Council wants to go in that direction in the future.

Member Wagner stated he would like to know more about other assessments around the city and is hesitant to get rid of an Assessment Policy at this time. He noted he would prefer to allow residents more time to make the payment before interest is added. Mayor Blonigan noted the Council could update the resolution extending the timeline of the assessment.

Member Parisian noted she would be open to discussing the Assessment Policy at a future Work Session but isn't comfortable doing that at tonight's meeting. She noted her agreement with Member Wagner and would be open to extending the timeline in which the project would be assessed to the residents. She asked why that wasn't brought up as a possibility or a potential recommendation. Sandvik noted the timeline is consistent with Assessments done in the past and the Assessment Policy and asked the Council to think about what ramifications adjusting the timeline or policy could have. Member Parisian stated she is still inclined to provide these residents with an extended timeline while discussing a policy to improve communication around this.

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Parisian to adopt a Resolution ordering the improvement of 41st Avenue Between Railroad Avenue and Regent Avenue - City Project 44123.

A roll call was taken.

Ayes: Wagner and Parisian.

Nays: Murphy and Mayor Blonigan.

That vote was split, and the motion did not pass.

A vote was not taken on the assessment roll resolution as the Council voted to not move forward with the project.

OLD BUSINESS

A. None

NEW BUSINESS

A. First Reading of an Ordinance amending City Code Section 400.01, Subd. 2

Sandvik provided an overview and noted this ordinance adds language that is required by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. He continued that our city had referenced these requirements in an overarching way, but specific references are now needed.

Member Wagner asked if this was being done proactively. Sandvik stated the city is following the guidelines provided by the Department of Labor and Industry and that the city has remained in compliance and was able to finish this once the new Building Official was hired.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisin to hold the first reading of An Ordinance Amending City Code Section 400 by Adding Specific Statutory References as Required by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Schedule Canvass Board Meeting

Peterson-Etem gave a brief overview and noted the city is required to hold a Canvassing Board Meeting to certify the results of local elections. He noted the Council serves on the Canvassing Board and recommended they set the meeting for May 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by Parisian to schedule the Canvassing Board Meeting for May 21, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

B. 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 stated the Ward 2 Special Primary Election is still open, and Ward 2 residents can vote early at City Hall before election day, which is on May 14, 2024. He also noted the filing period for Mayor, Ward 1, and Ward 2 candidates will be open May 21 - June 4, 2024. He encouraged folks to visit the city website and social media for more information. Lastly, he noted next week's REDA and Work Session meetings will be held on Wednesday, as the city cannot hold public meetings on the same day as elections.

Sandvik thanked those who attended the Bike Rodeo and the inaugural Shelley Day event. He noted the annual community survey is now open and serves as a benchmark for core services year-after-year. He mentioned summer recreation programs are upcoming and encouraged people to register for activities. Lastly, he noted seasonal positions that are open and that the Lakeview Terrace Farmers Market will open on May 18.

COUNCIL GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

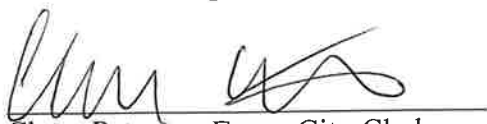
Member Wagner thanked all that attended Shelley Day and Arbor Day celebrations and the folks that coordinated those events. He also thanked everyone who attended the candidate forum for the open Ward 2 Council seat. He asked about the classification and compensation study and where the city was at with that. Sandvik noted that staff have executed a contract and are in the initial stages. He stated there should be some information ready for budget discussions.

Member Parisian thanked the folks who organized the Shelley Day event and the people who attended. She noted some emails she has had with the Robbinsdale Climate Collective and that it has been great to see the energy and momentum around the work they are doing.

Mayor Blonigan also thanked the Human Rights Commission and organizers of the Shelley Day event and noted there is work being done to map out where the racial covenants are in the Twin Cities. He recognized Jeannine McDonald and the community work she had done in Robbinsdale and provided his condolences to her family. He also encouraged people to watch the Ward 2 Candidate forum.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Murphy MOVED, seconded by Wagner to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.



Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk



William A. Blonigan, Mayor