



City of Robbinsdale

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Kayla Kirtz, Sustainability Coordinator; Heather Rand, Community Development Director; Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator

DISCUSSION

A. Sustainability Commission

Kirtz provided background that University of Minnesota students presented to City Council in May, which led to conversations about a new Sustainability Commission. Kirtz discussed how a Sustainability Commission would align with the City's environmental goals. Kirtz explained that there is clear residential interest in engaging with sustainability topics, and that there is currently a sustainability committee for City staff. Kirtz recommended starting with a monthly Sustainability Committee instead of a more formal Sustainability Commission.

Member Parisian supported a Sustainability Committee so that the Council can evaluate progress after 12 months before moving forward with a commission. Mayor Blonigan agreed and asked if the new Sustainability Committee would be made up of City staff or members of the public. Kirtz confirmed that it would be made up of members of the public.

Member Murphy asked if City Council would need to establish a commission by ordinance. Sandvik confirmed and explained that an ad-hoc committee or a working group could be established by formal recommendation. He explained that a committee would post an agenda and minutes, whereas a working group would have less formality. Sandvik shared his opinion that a committee is a good starting option.

Member Murphy supported creating a Sustainability Commission instead of a committee. Member Parisian clarified that creating a commission would require more staff hours. Kirtz clarified that her recommendation is to create a Sustainability Committee, not a commission to start. Sandvik explained that it would take two to three months to get a permanent commission established, and that a committee can advise the Council as well as a commission can.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner questioned if staff would appoint members to a committee. Sandvik clarified that the Council can provide staff with direction on how members are appointed. Mayor Blonigan asked how many community members are currently interested, and Kirtz explained that there are at least ten residents involved in sustainability initiatives. Member Murphy expressed that he wants representation from each Ward on the Sustainability Committee. Sandvik explained that he wants to update commission makeup code, because makeup of current City Commissions are not uniform.

Kirtz inquired if there are items that the Council envisions the Sustainability Committee working on in addition to the Energy Action Plan. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner suggested that the Sustainability Committee make plans for a future Sustainability Commission. Member Parisian agreed with focusing on the Energy Action Plan, as well as working on the GreenStep Cities program. Member Parisian also suggested that committee members provide assistance with day-to-day work of the City sustainability team.

Sandvik suggested not limiting Sustainability Committee membership to just ten members or requiring more than one member per Ward. The Council agreed to not limit membership.

Kirtz confirmed that she will establish a Sustainability Committee with no membership limit, with permission to recruit business community members as well.

B. Organized Collection - Request for Proposals

Sandvik explained that the current organized collection does refuse and yard waste, but organics is done through a separate agreement. Sandvik informed Council that the current contract expires in April of next year. Sandvik explained that there have been issues with Waste Management over the past two years, especially with labor shortages and technology. He expressed the goal to have a RFP out by July so that a recommendation can be brought to Council by the end of the year. Sandvik asked for feedback from Council on what they want to keep or omit in the initial RFP draft.

Sandvik asked if Council would be open to vendors that do individual services instead of a vendor that does all four services. Member Murphy expressed that he is in favor of having one vendor who does all four services. Member Murphy asked which vendors might be able to accomplish what Waste Management currently does. Sandvik explained that Republic would be able to accommodate to the same level as Waste Management, but it may come at a higher cost.

Member Murphy inquired if a JPA could be formed between neighboring cities for organized collection. Sandvik explained how a municipal consortium would need to involve many cities in order to hire staff to do waste collection.

Mayor Blonigan agreed that there should be one garbage hauler, but he would not exclude a vendor if they are unable to do organics collection. He expressed that his main priorities are cost and quality of service. Member Parisian agreed and identified the importance of clear communication to residents on these decisions. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner agreed and explained this his top priority is for alley-way service to continue.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner inquired whether a new agreement would include more protections for residents if there is poor service. Sandvik agreed that greater protection for residents are necessary.

Sandvik asked Council to consider if they want to prioritize alley-pickup, since it may prevent some companies from bidding. The Council agreed that City staff should look into keeping alley-pickup, but price out all options.

Sandvik explained the goal of getting the RFP in front of Council by the second meeting in July. He confirmed that price and customer service capabilities are top priorities.

STAFF UPDATES

A. Potential County Highway Turn-back

Sandvik explained that the City has been meeting with the City of Crystal and Hennepin County to discuss a jurisdictional turn-back of West Broadway from County Road 9 to Douglas Drive. Sandvik expressed that an

offer from the County may come within six weeks. He stated that staff would take the road back under certain conditions since the road would need to be rebuilt. He explained that staff would not advocate for turn-back until after the Blue Line extension is complete, since there will be wear and tear on the road while the Light Rail is being built. Member Murphy asked if they could update pedestrian-friendly infrastructure for bikers and walkers in the meantime. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner and Member Parisian agreed.

B. 2025 Calendar Budget Discussion

Sandvik informed Council that there is a Class and Compensation study taking place, which could impact budget discussions regarding salaries.

Sandvik updated Council that the budget calendar's next major milestone will be a preliminary not-to-exceed levy in September. Sandvik reminded Council of last year's budget process, and asked if Council wanted to do anything in addition to last year's process. Council agreed to repeat the same process.

C. Legislative Updates

Sandvik provided the Council with updates from the legislative session regarding housing, taxes, the lack of a bonding bill, the omnibus elections bill, and Metropolitan Council Comp Plans. He discussed how early cannabis cultivation may require some City action in terms of land use. He also explained that if a City is seeking to establish a municipal cannabis store, there is a threshold per population, with one store per 12,500 people. He discussed updates to Earned Safe and Sick time, which includes clarification that volunteer paid-on-call firefighters and elected officials cannot collect it. Sandvik highlighted the anti-displacement work group funding, which consists of \$10 million for one-time anti-displacement efforts in Minnesota.

D. Problem Properties

Rand updated the Council on problem properties and code enforcement procedures. She provided Council with six example warning letters that are sent out to properties in violation. Rand highlighted common code violations such as grass length, vegetation in alleyways, exterior storage issues, fence maintenance, and a lack of rental licenses. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner asked if vegetation issues in alleyways are eventually addressed by City staff, and Rand confirmed that the City sends a contractor to cut the vegetation. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner inquired whether Council wants more continuous updates from staff on problem properties. Member Murphy expressed that he only needs to be in the loop on certain problem properties that other residents are concerned about. The Council and City staff agreed to discuss future problem properties as needed.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Mayor Blongian asked if the City should put a Minnesota flag up somewhere. The Council supported the idea.

Mayor Blonigan asked for an update on the new investment situation, and Sandvik reported that he does not have an update yet.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.


Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator


Aaron Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem