

City of Robbinsdale
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 5, 2023
Meeting No. 17

CALLED TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

2. Present: Parisian, Wagner, Murphy, Mayor Blonigan
Absent: Webb
Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk; Rick Pearson, Community Development Coordinator

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

3. Mayor Blonigan opened the floor to members of the public.
4. Jeanne Johnson, Robbin Gallery Director, thanked the City for their generosity and invited people to come and see the exhibits. She noted the 2024 programs are already scheduled and the gallery is run by volunteers.
5. Several members of the SLR 81 coalition spoke on behalf of the other members and noted their stance on the Light Rail being routed down County Road 81 and stated there are better alternatives for the route.
6. Mayor Blonigan asked members of the audience to raise their hands if they agreed that an alternate route to County Road 81 would be better. 48 people raised their hands.
7. Mayor Blonigan closed the floor.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2023 MEETING AGENDA

8. Peterson-Etem noted the voucher disbursement report was provided to Council via email and in person.
9. **Member Murphy MOVED, second by member Parisian to approve the City Council agenda for September 5, 2023. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.**

CONSENT AGENDA

10. **Member Parisian MOVED, second by member Murphy to approve the consent agenda. This vote was unanimous and the motion carried.**
 - A. Motion to approve City Council Work Session Meeting minutes of August 8, 2023.
 - B. Motion to approve City Council Meeting minutes of August 15, 2023.
 - C. Accept Quotes for Replacement Pickup Trucks and Associated Equipment – City Projects 8156, 8157, 8159 and 8161
 - D. Approval of Licenses

- E. Recommendation for Charter Commission Reappointments
- F. Scheduling Public Hearing on October 3, 2023 to Certify the Assessment Roll for Forced Tree Removals
- G. Scheduling Public Hearing on October 3, 2023 to Certify the Assessment Roll for Emergency Water, Sewer, and Sump Pump Repairs
- H. Scheduling Public Hearing on October 3, 2023 to Certify the Assessment Roll for Delinquent Utilities
- I. Scheduling Public Hearing on October 3, 2023 to Certify the Assessment Roll for Unpaid Administrative Penalties
- J. SECOND READING of an Ordinance rezoning 3836 Hubbard Ave. N. from R-2, Single and two-family residential to R-1, Single family residential
- K. FIRST READING of an Ordinance rezoning 3826 West Broadway from B-2, Limited Community Business to B-4, Community Business.
- L. Access Agreement with North Memorial

PRESENTATION A: METRO BLUE LINE LRT EXTENSION (BLRT) UPDATES

- 11. Sandvik stated that throughout the past year, Council had listening sessions, open houses, and public meetings, and on March 30, 2023, directed staff to execute a letter to the project office for the Light Rail Extension project. He noted conversations continued with the public during that time, but also with the project office, and noted the project office is in attendance tonight to provide feedback and highlights in response to the letter.
- 12. Nick Landwer, Blue Line Extension Project Office, stated that he would be discussing themes from responses to the Council's letter, schedule, and next steps. He provided insight into the themes of the letter including, safety, loss of existing infrastructure, pedestrian and vehicular operations, property acquisition, grade separated LRT, ridership, and displacement.
- 13. Member Wagner asked if there are any stops or routes that have changed since 2019 and if that would be included as context. Landwer noted he could provide the specific changes.
- 14. Member Murphy asked about the length of the ride between stops and how that would change if there is an additional stop. Landwer stated travel time and ridership is being modeled and he will have that information later this year.
- 15. Landwer noted the park-and-ride structure, at this time, is set for 500 spaces, but said they want to work with the City to make sure it works for Robbinsdale's needs as well. Member Murphy stated he thinks that would be too many parking spaces, and questioned if Robbinsdale is the appropriate city for a park-and-ride station.
- 16. Member Wagner asked how many levels a park-and-ride with 500 spaces would

be, and if any of those spaces could be underground. Landwer noted that generally, about 120 parking spaces per level is a good basis and there could be options for underground spaces.

17. Mayor Blonigan asked if there was an elevated section of the light rail, would that improve the operating level. Landwer stated there is relatively no change in the level of service if the track is elevated or not and noted the modeling only added a few seconds to travel time.
18. Member Murphy asked about public safety vehicles and how they would interact with the Light Rail. Landwer stated if an emergency vehicle is using preemption, the Light Rail would need to stop at a red light produced by that emergency vehicle, the same way a car or bus would now.
19. Member Wagner asked about additional workload for the police department as there would be more people coming through the City, and if Metro Transit provided additional support for public safety. Landwer noted there is a professional services agreement currently between Metro Transit and Robbinsdale police, and stated he would look into fire support.
20. Member Wagner asked Landwer to speak about the anti-displacement work and noted that it is unique compared to similar projects. Landwer stated they try to create a plan that affects the least amount of people and properties as possible. He also stated the goal is that this project will benefit the people that are already there.
21. Mayor Blonigan asked about the amount of money that has been spent planning thus far. Landwer noted some specifications around funding that is allocated for planning, and mentioned other sources of funds.
22. Member Murphy asked about Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and why it's not being investigated for this route, particularly with the cost and timeline. Landwer stated this is an extension of the Blue Line, which is currently Light Rail, and that is why BRT isn't being looked into more. He also mentioned ridership projections forecast a need for Light Rail versus BRT.
23. Member Parisian thanked Landwer and asked about public safety as it relates to the park-and-ride structure and if that is included in the planning phase. Landwer stated yes, and noted when structures are built there are several cameras that would be used and monitored by a control center. He noted emergency buttons and phones, and also described how proper lighting is important so it doesn't cause shadows or dark spots.
24. Member Murphy stated he doesn't support the alignment down County Road 81 and that he wouldn't be able to justify to a resident why this should be done. He noted he wants to do what he feels is best for the residents of Robbinsdale. He also stated that he thinks there are better alternatives and would vote no for municipal consent if it stays as is.
25. Mayor Blonigan stated there are a significant amount of people that believe BNSF was the better option for this route, but noted the County Road 81 is already

divisive with or without Light Rail. He stated the change from the rail corridor to County Road 81 is significant for Robbinsdale and that he would be willing to talk either personally, or with the Council, to SLR 81. He also stated that accommodations are being made for other cities who tend to get more assets than Robbinsdale and asked that the same treatment be given to Robbinsdale when considering the significant changes that are being made. He reiterated that even if Robbinsdale didn't give municipal consent, Hennepin County and Met Council have the authority to move forward with the project. He understands Light Rail makes sense for the future and could provide positive impacts for the City and metro area.

26. Member Wagner stated he prefers Light Rail and prefers this route option as it doesn't go through neighborhoods and doesn't take away people's rights-of-way. He asked that if the rail is going to go down County Road 81 that his hope would be improvements for downtown Robbinsdale could be included in the plan, similarly to how the project office did for Minneapolis.

OLD BUSINESS A: WHEELS OF ITALY EVENT

27. Sandvik noted this item was brought to Council at the August 15, 2023 meeting and at that time Council decided to table the item as there had been limited time for staff to review the request. He stated the event proposal is to block off parts of West Broadway, and because of that, the City asked Wheels of Italy to reach out to affected business owners. He noted they have provided a list of support from the business owners, as well as a detailed map highlighting access points, safety barricades, restrooms, and other pertinent information.
28. Dan Schaefer and Phill Slavik from Wheels of Italy stated they have been doing this event over the last 18 years in other locations in the Twin Cities and it has been very successful in the past. They discussed logistics and details of the event and why they choose Robbinsdale.
29. **Member Parisian MOVED, seconded by member Murphy to approve the application for the "Wheels of Italy" event happening on September 24, 2023. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.**

OTHER BUSINESS A: MOTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT REQUESTS FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

30. **Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by member Murphy to approve disbursement requests for the period ending September 5, 2023. This vote was unanimous and the motion carried.**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

31. Sandvik noted on September 11, 2023, the Robbinsdale Chamber of Commerce will be hosting their annual Meet and Greet event in downtown Robbinsdale from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. He also noted the Robbinsdale Farmers Market is coming to an end and that the last market will be on September 23, 2023. He mentioned staff has implemented a new Agenda Management software which will improve productivity for staff and accessibility to the public. Finally, he noted the Council had a productive and thoughtful conversation about the 2024 budget and encouraged the public to reach out to staff with any questions.

COUNCIL GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

32. Member Parisian thanked staff for their work on the budget and appreciates their time as well as Council for the good discussion.
33. Member Wagner thanked the community members who participated in the meeting tonight. He also thanked Clare Housing and appreciates the work they are doing. He wished everyone a Happy Labor Day and shared a quote from Abraham Lincoln.
34. Member Murphy stated there are still trees available through the Robbinsdale Tree Sale and Thanked the City Manger for the time he spends working with community members to make events like Wheels of Italy happen.
35. Mayor Blonigan also recognized Labor Day and the people that fought for those rights. He noted two properties that had solar panels installed on their houses and encouraged people to look at Robbinsdale's Energy Action Plan. He mentioned that he received two letters stating our Senator Ann Rest and our Representative Mike Freiberg both were selected as Minnesota Legislators of Distinction for 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

36. **Member Wagner MOVED, seconded by member Murphy to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.**



Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk



William A. Blonigan, Mayor