



MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge called the meeting to order at 7:26 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge, Mayor Sutton, Member Greenberg, Member Parisian

Absent: Member Wagner

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Richard McCoy, City Engineer/Public Works Director; Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator

DISCUSSION

A. Preliminary Discussion on 2026 Budget

Sandvik introduced the 2025 budget conversation and emphasized that staff are looking to Council to understand what a successful budget looks for them. Sandvik reminded Council of the timeline — Council must approve a preliminary not-to-exceed budget in September and must approve a formal levy in December. Sandvik explained that Local Government Aid (LGA) and Fiscal Disparities are established by outside entities, where LGA is decided via a formula on housing stock and age of infrastructure, and Fiscal Disparities are based on tax-base in surrounding communities. Sandvik emphasized that the primary role of Council is to give direction on the levy increase from year to year. He advised Council to keep the County levy and school board levy in mind when discussing the City's budget, but to also make decisions focused on what the City needs.

Member Parisian asked what the biggest items are for the 2026 budget. McCoy shared that the biggest item on the schedule for next year is the Public Works building, as well as a few street reconstruction projects. Member Parisian asked how the big-ticket items scheduled in quick succession impacts our budget strategy. Sandvik reminded Council that the ten-year Capital Improvement Plan is a living and flexible thing, so items could get pushed back if needed. He shared that the strategic planning for the budget includes trying to keep the budget steady, as well as avoiding huge highs and huge lows.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge asked for advice on how to communicate the need for big budget items to the public. Sandvik shared that being proactive with aging infrastructure instead of reactive is far better in terms of cost and provided examples to share.

Sandvik explained that if Council shares a levy increase number, staff will come back with a budget at that number based on Council's top goals and priorities. Member Greenberg shared that with a potentially bad levy outlook from the county and school board, he wants to focus only on the big-ticket necessary items instead of our wish list items. Member Parisian asked if there are any new positions being added to City staff next year. Sandvik answered that there will likely not be new positions added, but there may be slight adjustments to staff, such as rearranging police leadership positions. Mayor Sutton shared that his primary focus for next year's budget is prioritizing safety. He highlighted the new public safety facility as a priority since it is a hazardous workplace. He emphasized his focus on ensuring the nuts and bolts of the City are functioning properly before adding wish-list items.

Member Parisian emphasized the importance of communication in relation to the budget. She stated that we need to explain the "why" very clearly to residents and businesses, and that she wants to be proactive and forward with communication that features storytelling.

B. Parks Naming Policy

Sandvik explained that former Mayor Blonigan raised the idea to rename Sanborn Park a few years ago due to conversations with Just Deeds, which led to the need for a policy for renaming parks. He explained that the former Council took a few nominations for Sanborn Park last year based on the policy — one name did not pass, and another name was not voted upon. The former Council then passed a resolution stating the desire to rename Sanborn Park but recommended restructuring the policy. Sandvik asked for recommendations from Council on how they would like to move forward with the policy.

Member Parisian mentioned that an issue with the previous policy is that it was open to residents to submit name changes for any park at any time. She suggested that a name change of a specific park should first be declared by Council, and then submissions could be accepted. Council agreed. Member Greenberg emphasized that the new policy should focus on getting as much community involvement as possible. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge highlighted the importance of education about why Council is suggesting a name change for Sanborn Park.

Sandvik recommended that Council set specific parameters for the new policy centered around their goals of engagement, inclusivity, and accessibility. He asked for specific direction on how Council would like to collect community engagement. He also noted the importance of involving the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Commission in the process.

Member Parisian suggested that a one-month submission window would be appropriate and put forward that PRFC could first evaluate submissions and then bring their top 3-5 names to Council. Member Parisian stated that there should not be a fee associated with submitting a name, but that a name submission should require a certain number of signatures of support to be viable. She also proposed that members of staff or members of Council should not be eligible to submit a name. Member Greenberg asked if commission members should be limited from submitting names to Council as well. Mayor Sutton supported not having staff, Council, or commission members able to make submissions.

Member Greenberg shared his opinion that we should not name parks after people. The rest of Council did not support this limitation.

Sandvik summarized that community participation is a priority, and shared that staff will draft a resolution declaring the intention to rename the park and provide more parameters about submission procedures.

STAFF UPDATES

A. Bassett Creek Watershed 10-Year Plan Update - McCoy

McCoy started his presentation by noting that Bassett Creek Watershed is focused on integrating use of the native name, *Háña Wakpadañ*, into various materials. McCoy provided background that the City of Robbinsdale is in two watersheds — Bassett Creek and Shingle Creek. He explained that Bassett Creek Watershed is currently working on its 10-year watershed management plan and is looking for feedback.

McCoy shared background information on Bassett Creek Watershed, including how their primary purpose was once to minimize flooding along the creek, but now they have moved into focusing on water quality issues. He shared some of their high priority issues, which included tackling impaired water issues, reducing chloride pollution, evaluating climate change's impact on the watershed, working to reduce flood risk, improving organizational capacity and staffing, looking into other funding mechanisms, pushing to address AIS challenges, improving equity, and generally reducing the carbon footprint of the watershed.

McCoy mentioned his concern with their goal of changing organizational structure. He explained that one of

the voting members last year wanted to shift to a Watershed District instead of a JPA, which did not garner support. However, he expressed concern that some folks are still interested in the concept of becoming a Watershed District, and he urges Council to refrain from agreeing to that idea since we would lose our control as a City.

McCoy noted that Bassett Creek will gather feedback from cities, neighborhoods, and interested parties on the management plan, and it will be officially published at the end of the year.

Mayor Sutton emphasized the importance of getting lakes in surrounding communities off the impaired lakes list. McCoy agreed and emphasized that Ryan Lake and Lower Twin are off the list, and that he has a goal to get Crystal Lake off the list someday too. The Council thanked McCoy for the update.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Member Parisian shared that she has spoken with a resident who is concerned with a previously approved limited-use agreement for lights on trees in the boulevard in front of a home on Orchard Ave. She explained that the former Council and staff looked through any safety concerns and decided to approve the limited-use agreement, but the resident is concerned about the bright lights and tree health. She asked whether Council wants to reassess the limited use agreement.

Sandvik added that he would be happy to have more conversations with residents in the area. He mentioned that staff have offered to have conversations to come to a resolution with the resident, but those offers have been turned down.

Council discussed and agreed that they do not want to reevaluate the limited use agreement.

A. Commission Application Process

Sandvik shared that a few HRC commission member applications came through a May Council meeting, which led to some questions from Council about the commission applications. He explained that Council and staff support removing complications and barriers when applying for commission positions. He clarified that some of the questions on the HRC application may require people to share very personal information. He explained that staff are looking for direction on how to make the process easier.

Mayor Sutton asked why the HRC is appointed by the Mayor, which is different from how the rest of the commissioners are appointed. Sandvik shared the history and mentioned that Council could update it to be more consistent if desired. Mayor Sutton put forward the idea of staggering terms on the HRC, but Sandvik shared the opinion that it would not likely make much of a difference in turnover, since the end of a term is not typically the reason why folks leave.

Sandvik urged Council to be more direct with commissions about what they would like to see them work on going forward. He suggested that Council could appoint liaisons to various commissions to attend meetings and give explicit direction. Council agreed that they should utilize the relationship with commissions more.

Mayor Sutton summarized that he supports toning down the HRC application and that he is fine to continue appointing HRC members if Council is comfortable. Council agreed and emphasized that they are always here to support the Mayor.

Member Parisian mentioned that she would like to keep #3 and #4 on the HRC application, which pertains to planning events and creating ideas for the HRC. Sandvik suggested looking into options such as a letter of interest for the HRC, which is what other commissions do. Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge spoke to the value of

#7 on the application, which pertains to advocating for human rights. Staff shared that they are comfortable putting together a new application based on the language in #3, #4, #7, as well as a letter of interest.

B. Comprehensive List of Recent and Proposed Proclamations

Sandvik shared that a list of recent and proposed proclamations was requested based on recent discussions with the HRC about use of proclamations versus resolutions. He highlighted that the internal staff DEI committee is recommending passing proclamations for a few federally recognized month-long celebrations.

Mayor Sutton asked which of these proclamations were recommended by the HRC. Sandvik shared that HRC brought the PRIDE suggestion forward a few years ago, and that the staff DEI committee put together many of the recent proclamations for the federally recognized months.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Blackledge adjourned the meeting at 10:17 PM.

Signed by:



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Rachel Leen, Communications Coordinator

Signed by:



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Raymond Blackledge, Mayor Pro Tem