



MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Blackledge, Greenberg, Sutton

Absent: Parisian

Staff: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Chase Peterson-Etem, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk; Richard McCoy, City Engineer

MICROPHONE CHECK

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

None.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 6, 2026, MEETING AGENDA

City Clerk Peterson-Etem noted one update and one addition to the agenda for tonight.

1. Update to Consent Item K, 2026 Meeting Dates and New Business Item 10A, Ward 4 City Council Vacancy.
2. Addition to Other Business Item 11A, Voucher Requests Pending Approval for Disbursement

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to approve the January 6, 2026, City Council agenda, as amended. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to approve the consent agenda. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

- A. Approve City Council Meeting minutes from December 16, 2025
- B. Approve City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes from November 12, 2025
- C. Approve City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes from December 9, 2025
- D. Renewal of Workers' Compensation Insurance for 2026
- E. Designation of Depositories for City Funds in 2026
- F. Authorization for Credit Cards
- G. Accepting donations during 2025 from various individuals, businesses, and organizations

- H. Authorizing Payment of Certain Claims
- I. Approval of City's Official Newspaper
- J. City Clerk & Deputy City Clerk Appointments
- K. 2026 Meeting Dates
- L. Records Retention Schedule
- M. Elected Official Out-of-State Travel Policy
- N. Deputy Registrar Appointment
- O. Deputy Registrar's Monthly Financial Statements
- P. Robbinsdale Wine & Spirits' Monthly Financial Statements
- Q. Affirm Fair Housing Policy
- R. Social Media Policy Review

PRESENTATIONS

- A. None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Permit – Quails – 4500 Orchard Avenue North

Sandvik discussed the history of the Item, noted the update to the Policy, and provided the Staff's recommendation.

Member Blackledge noted the thorough discussion the Council had surrounding this Item at a previous workshop.

Member Blackledge MOVED, seconded by Greenberg, to open the public hearing. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Member Blackledge MOVED, seconded by Greenberg, to close the public hearing. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to approve the request of ten (10) female quails, and up to two (2) males, at 4500 Orchard Avenue North, subject to the conditions listed. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

- B. Conditional Retail Cannabis Business Registration for Apex Strategy Group, Inc., dba Starlight Company

Sandvik discussed Statute guidance, Codes, and Staff recommendations. He noted that this license is conditional based on licensing approval through the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM).

Member Greenberg asked whether the Council is addressing zoning first so the applicant can obtain a license from the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and then complete registration, or whether the current action constitutes registration. Sandvik responded that this action would be viewed as a conditional approval for registration.

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to open the public hearing. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Nicole Rash, Attorney with Hellmuth & Johnson, spoke on behalf of her client, Apex Strategy Group Inc. She discussed the rationale behind the proposed plans and noted an amendment she would like to make to the application.

Mayor Sutton asked whether the City would have the ability to reverse course if the process takes longer than the Council is comfortable with. Sandvik stated he would address those questions following the public hearing. Rash added that there is typically a timeline established in advance, along with ongoing and thorough communication.

Member Greenberg asked whether this was the first time such an approach has been used in Minnesota or if it is common for Cities to issue conditional approvals. Rash explained that because OCM frequently changed its rules, the process was unclear, and she had encouraged OCM to create a standardized packet. As a result, many Cities are using conditional approvals when a Conditional Use Permit is not utilized.

Member Blackledge asked whether Apex Strategy Group Inc. operates any other businesses outside of Missouri. Rash stated she was not certain, but believed this would be the company's first business outside of Missouri.

Rash stated she would be happy to serve as a resource for the City as it navigates her client's application.

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to close the public hearing. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Sandvik stated that staff would work with the applicant if concerns arise, particularly if additional applicants apply, and confirmed that other Cities are proceeding similarly.

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to approve Conditional Retail Cannabis Business Registration for Apex Strategy Group, Inc., dba Starlight Company. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. None

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ward 4 City Council Vacancy

Sandvik provided an overview of the Item, detailed the history of the appointment, and discussed Staff recommendations moving forward.

Member Blackledge MOVED, seconded by Greenberg, to adopt Resolution No. 8200, A RESOLUTION DECLARING A VACANCY IN THE CITY COUNCIL AND ASKING THE COUNCIL TO DETERMINE A

PROCESS TO APPOINT THE WARD 4 SEAT FOR THE REMAINING TERM. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Mayor Sutton commented that none of the dates listed by the Staff work for him, aside from January 22.

Member Blackledge noted that January 22 would work for him and asked if they should consider Member Parisian as well. Sandvik pointed out that the staff communicated the dates with her, and she stated that all dates would work for her. Sandvik also suggested starting at 5:00 p.m.

Member Greenberg stated he has an event the evening of January 22, but this special meeting would take priority.

Member Blackledge suggested a start time of 6:30 p.m. to allow Member Greenberg to attend his event.

Mayor Sutton confirmed that the Council will meet on January 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Member Blackledge asked if they provide questions for applicants ahead of time. Sandvik stated the Staff will provide applicants with 3-4 high-level questions, but the meeting will be mainly conversational.

Mayor Sutton asked if any questions could not be asked, just like in a typical job interview. Sandvik stated that it is a reasonable assumption.

Mayor Sutton asked what would happen if none of the applicants were accepted by the Council. Sandvik stated that Charter requires the Council to fill the vacancy within 30 days, but that would be a better question for legal to answer.

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to set a special meeting on January 22, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

B. Commissioner Appointments

Sandvik provided an overview of the item by discussing term limits and the upcoming expiration of Commissioners.

Member Blackledge asked about a commissioner who is on two Commissions. Sandvik stated there is no issue of conflict in being on both.

C. Contract for Professional Services for the Design and Bidding Assistance for Proposed Tower 2 – Project 54824

Engineer McCoy provided an overview of the item and detailed the size of the tower, the necessity of the tower, a low-interest loan opportunity, the proposal request, the proposed consultant fee, and asked the Council to discuss and consider the additional lights add-on.

Member Greenberg asked if the City received pricing from other firms. McCoy stated that, given the eligible funding timeline, the Staff didn't have time to put together a proposal and present it to the broader engineering field. Sandvik reiterated the tight timeline to receive a low-interest loan for the project.

Member Greenberg stated the actual cost of the project is in the millions, and this loan would be at an interest rate of 1%. McCoy confirmed that information.

Member Greenberg noted the savings received from potentially finding a lower bidder would not be more than the savings from the low-interest loan. McCoy stated that with professional services, Staff do not always want to take the lowest bid anyway. McCoy also highlighted the intensive process in choosing a consultant for tower 1.

Sandvik also discussed the current consultant's familiarity with the Cities system and the cost savings that come from that aspect. Member Greenberg asked if any of this is quantifiable so that Council Members can justify and explain why the city didn't receive other bids for the project.

Mayor Sutton shared Member Greenberg's request for more concrete, quantifiable savings.

Mayor Sutton asked if the opportunity for a low-interest loan is rare. Sandvik stated he is unsure but knows that it is a competitive process and was surprised the city qualified. McCoy voiced that he was similarly surprised the city qualified and expressed that funding may become more competitive, and there would be a risk of not receiving this funding opportunity in the future.

Mayor Sutton asked if this tower is necessary. McCoy stated it is and highlighted a situation where one tower needs maintenance.

Mayor Sutton asked if the city anticipated this cost in the budget for this year. McCoy stated it is in the budget for this year.

Member Greenberg asked if Tower 2 is offline. McCoy stated yes.

Mayor Sutton commented that he is concerned about the lights being a distraction for residents.

Member Greenberg noted there are already a lot of lights in the area where the Council proposed to put the tower, but asked about the benefits of the lights. McCoy noted it is simply for looks and that Council could put conduits in for if in the future they want to implement lights.

Member Greenberg expressed concern over the cost, despite it being relatively low for something that isn't necessary.

Member Greenberg asked how much it would cost to add lights to the pedestal on tower 2. McCoy estimated less than \$100,000. Member Greenberg stated it would look nice but questioned if it's necessary.

Mayor Sutton discussed pushing that cost to light downtown over the holidays.

Member Blackledge recognizes that the beautification of Robbinsdale is still an important question to discuss.

Mayor Sutton supports including it, while recognizing the city does not need to move forward with it post-design.

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge, to approve the professional services proposal for design and bidding services for the proposed New Tower 2 as provided by AE2S in their submission dated 30 December 2025, for the amount not-to-exceed \$ 198,140.00 and to approve the alternate to include decorative pedestal lighting in the design of the new Tower for the amount not-to-exceed \$ 14,192,00. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Voucher Requests Pending Approval for Disbursement

Member Blackledge MOVED, seconded by Greenberg, to approve voucher disbursement requests for the period ending January 6, 2026. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Peterson-Etem provided an update that Republic did not pick up Christmas trees today due to inclement weather and will instead complete pickup tomorrow.

Sandvik wished everyone a Happy New Year and shared that the MLK breakfast hosted by the Human Rights Commission will be featured in the Birdtown Brief and on the City website. He also noted that the EV charger at LVT is now live. Sandvik discussed details regarding the Ward 4 vacancy and announced that Grazier Park has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, with a celebration forthcoming.

COUNCIL GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Sutton wished everyone a Happy New Year and noted that notifications for City meetings have been coming through after the meetings have already occurred. Sandvik responded that he is registered to receive the same notifications, but due to the high volume of emails he receives, he may have missed them. He added that he does receive an email when the agenda is posted and stated he would look further into the issue.

Member Blackledge wished everyone a Happy New Year, thanked the City for acknowledging MLK Day, and shared that he attended the Robbinsdale Police Department Reserves dinner, recognizing volunteers who contributed approximately 1,300 hours of service to the department. He noted that the department is looking for additional reserves, reminded residents to move vehicles during snow events, and encouraged people to apply for City Council.

Member Greenberg wished everyone a Happy New Year and encouraged residents to attend the January 19 MLK Day breakfast at Elim.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Greenberg MOVED, seconded by Blackledge to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Signed by:



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Chase Peterson-Etem, City Clerk

Signed by:



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Bradley Sutton, Mayor