

MINUTES

Regular Morning Meeting



10:00 AM - Thursday, June 20, 2024

City Hall Council Chambers

The City of Pine City Council met in Regular Morning Meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM in the City Hall Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Palmer called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

ROLL CALL

Councilors Sloan, Hill and Palmer Present.

Staff Present: City Administrator Marcy Peterson, Maury Montbriand, Tom Miller, Lara Smetana, Brock Bloomquist, Adam Zemek, Nicole Tricker, Tabitha Pickett and Melanie Bloomquist.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting agenda was updated to accommodate the requests from Councilor Hill and City Administrator Peterson. Item 7.6 regarding the Mayor Vacancy will be discussed at the start, before the public forum, while item 7.2 has been rescheduled to follow new business, in consideration of Andy's availability. Additionally, a new item, 8.7, has been added to discuss the Fire Department's Extrication Equipment with Chief Miller.

Councilor Hill made a motion to approve the agenda with above mentioned changes, Councilor Palmer seconded the motion, Motion was carried unanimously.

a) **MAYOR VACANCY**

Councilor Hill proposed the appointment of Kent Bombard as Mayor, which Councilor Palmer seconded. The motion was passed, with Councilors Hill and Palmer voting in favor and Councilor Sloan opposing.

PUBLIC FORUM

This is an opportunity for citizens to present items to the Council that are not on the agenda. Each presentation is limited to three (3) minutes and a maximum of fifteen minutes is set aside. If your item needs follow-up from the City, Staff will arrange for that.

a) **BROOKE LARKEN -**

She mentioned that she has resided in Pine City for five years and is worried about the rising traffic on 3rd Ave SE, which may escalate further due to docks/ice access on the same avenue. With young children, she fears this could pose a safety risk for

them and other local residents. Additionally, she informed the Council that the CAP committee failed to notify residents of the public meeting that took place on June 20th.

PUBLIC HEARINGS / PRESENTATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

a) BARB DOKKEN

The residents of 14th Street are interested in discussing the installation of noise barriers between their homes and the interstate. City Administrator Peterson informed the council that after speaking with MN DOT, it was clear that the city must submit an application for this project. She also mentioned that this matter should be referred to the Planning Commission initially. Peterson has announced that the topic will be on the agenda for the upcoming Planning Commission meeting on June 26th. Should it be approved, a 2-3 year delay is anticipated.

b) LAKESIDE CENTER TAX ABATEMENT - PUBLIC HEARING

Lezlie Sauter gave a presentation.

Jason Aarsvold from Ehlers informed the Council about the financial implications of tax abatement.

Councilor Palmer inquired whether other residents and business owners would be affected over the next 15 years. Jason responded that, in the long term, the business would contribute positively to the community's tax base. He does not anticipate any adverse impact on local residents and business owners.

Fred Steltzer, the developer of Lakeside, has stated that the tax abatement is crucial for him to proceed with the next phase of the project.

Councilor Hill inquired about the progress of the temporary certificate of occupancy. Fred responded that he is collaborating with the City to secure the certificate for the top level by this fall in time for the school year. He currently has 20 students registered to reside at the location and is aiming for full occupancy by fall 2025.

Councilor Sloan emphasized that housing is a significant mission for the City. She expressed her belief that we should assist him to foster development in the area.

Councilor Palmer is concerned about whether the students residing in this housing will contribute to the community; he wants it to benefit the city as much as the developer.

Councilor Sloan thinks these students will dine at our restaurants, shop in our community, and possibly work here as well. Councilor Hill inquired whether a policy should be established to extend this offer to all prospective developers. Lezlie mentions that while all developers can request this, there is an application process that some may be reluctant to complete, noting that it is mostly experienced developers who make such requests.

Troy Haug - 57780 Fairway Ave, Inquired whether this was a second attempt at tax abatement, Fred indicated that he had approached the City before beginning development and received a letter confirming the City's support and assistance for tax abatement, which led him to proceed with the development.

Mike Fissette - 315 14th Street SW, expressed that Pine City needs to draw in more businesses and housing. He pointed out that the project invites new residents who may choose to stay post-graduation, which he believes will be advantageous for the community in various ways.

Another audience member questioned whether the Childcare Center was exclusive to students or open to anyone in the community. Lezlie and City Administrator Peterson clarified that it is available to all community members and mentioned the addition of

two more rooms to accommodate additional children.

Mike Sauser - 105 10th Street, mentioned that the City Council should consider this matter seriously.

Councilor Palmer closed public hearing at 10:44.

Councilor Sloan moved to approve Resolution 20240620-30, Councilor Hill seconded the motion, followed by a discussion. The motion was carried with Sloan and Hill voting in favor, and Palmer voting against.

During the council discussion, Hill mentioned that he had not had the opportunity to review the HRA minutes when the matter was first discussed. Nevertheless, he believes the staff has prepared it well. Councilor Palmer expressed his concern, noting that he considers a 15-year term to be excessive.

CONSENT ITEMS

Councilor Hill made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Councilor Sloan seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

a) 10TH STREET SW - SIDEWALK/BIKING LANE

Greg Anderson (SEH Inc.) - Updated Council and Residents on the 10th Street SW project.

Councilor Sloan addressed a letter from a 10th Street SW resident who questioned the necessity of sidewalks. She argued that connected sidewalks encourage more usage and highlighted the importance of this particular connection, linking the beach, cemetery, and schools. She emphasized the city's growth by 522 residents since the last census, advocating for Pine City to be welcoming and prioritizing safe walkways for non-drivers or those who prefer to walk.

Councilor Hill inquired whether a bike lane could serve as a safe alternative to a sidewalk. He pointed out the existing sidewalks in Pine City that require maintenance, suggesting that this should take precedence over constructing new ones. He expressed doubts about the city's financial capacity to undertake such costs at the moment.

Councilor Palmer questioned the history of pedestrian incidents on 10th Ave SW. Chief Miller indicated there have been no such accidents to his knowledge. He also raised concerns about sidewalk maintenance, suggesting that imposing this responsibility on residents is not advisable, whereas a bike lane could be easily maintained with regular street plowing during winter.

Councilor Hill proposed a motion to implement a bike lane on 10th Street SW, which Councilor Palmer seconded. The motion was passed, with Councilors Hill and Palmer voting in favor and Councilor Sloan voting against.

b) ROBINSON PARK CHARGING STATION UPDATE

City Administrator Peterson provided an update to the council. Councilor Hill proposed

a motion to solicit bids for the removal of charging stations, which Councilor Palmer seconded. The motion was passed, with Palmer and Hill voting in favor and Sloan opposing.

c) NEXUS UPDATE

City Administrator Peterson updated council.

d) REVIEW CITY OF PINE CITY PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

City Administrator Peterson updated council.

NEW BUSINESS

a) ORDINANCE 20240620-05 - INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

Tabitha Pickett informed the council that the planning committee had approved the proposal. Councilor Hill made a motion to approve Ordinance 20240620-05, and Councilor Palmer seconded it, initiating the following discussion:

Councilor Palmer emphasized the need for a robust process to establish percentages and ensure safeguards for future staff to prevent resident exploitation. Adam Zemek noted that the new ordinance is clearer and more informative than the existing code, assuring that the city will continue to be complaint-driven without actively policing properties. Councilor Palmer advocated for a comprehensive policy and procedure to accompany this code, expressing concern over the potential for HOA-style governance and the impact on Pine City's diverse economic community, particularly on lower-income households.

Terry Neitzel - 720 2nd Ave SW, strongly recommends that the city adopt the International Property Maintenance Code.

Councilor Sloan sought clarification on whether the screens requirement in the ordinance applies solely to businesses or also to residential homes, expressing the view that screens should not be mandated for residential properties.

Councilor Palmer requested more precise definitions.

Councilor Hill withdrew his motion to approve the ordinance, requesting that it be revisited by the planning and ordinance committee's and brought back to the Council once finalized.

Dan Swanson - 118 6th Ave SE, informed the council that the ordinance, which mandates that homes and businesses be maintained to a usable standard, has been under consideration for the past year.

Councilor Hill moved to approve Ordinance 20240620-5; however, the motion failed due to lack of a second.

b) PINE CITY FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Pickett updated Council, this is needed for the Comp plan to become official. No action is required, this is just for review.

c) PINE CITY CIVIC CENTER - PARKING LOT REQUEST

City Administrator Peterson briefed the council on a letter received from the Pine City

Civic Center, which mentioned an undocumented promise made by our former administrator. Councilor Hill informed the council of the Civic Center Board's firm stance on the city repairing the parking lot. He proposed a meeting with the Council, Civic Center Board, and Hilltop Committee to further discuss and formulate an agreement, suggesting the inclusion of this matter in the Public Works Committee agenda. Greg from SEH offered to investigate the costs prior to the Public Works Committee meeting. Councilor Hill also expressed a desire to consider undertaking this project in the following year for budgetary inclusion.

Maury Montbriand inquired whether the school and civic center would share in the project costs, or if the city would bear the full expense.

Councilor Sloan believes that the city should rectify any construction-related damages. Councilor Palmer requested cost estimates to inform the council's decision-making process.

d) KWIK TRIP PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PLAT

Tabitha Pickett informed the Council that the action was to consolidate three plats into one. Councilor Sloan requested clarification on several errors in the agreement and expressed a desire for their correction before signing the documents. She also voiced concerns about the Council's follow-up, to which Pickett and Rum River assured that these issues would be addressed in the final review. Greg from SEH recommended that the Council be included in the final reports and reviews.

Councilor Sloan moved to approve Resolution 20240620-31, Councilor Hill seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

e) PLANNING AND ZONING CLERK POSITION

City Administrator Peterson informed the council that the job description for the Planning & Zoning Clerk has been updated and requested permission to advertise the position. Councilor Hill expressed a desire for increased staff participation and reduced reliance on MSA. Subsequently, Councilor Hill moved to approve and post the job opening, which Councilor Palmer seconded, motion passed unanimously.

f) ANDY - RUM RIVER CONSULTANTS UPDATE

Andy (Rum River) informed the council about the licensing requirements for construction and design, stating that changes of occupancy per state code clearly require design plans from a licensed architect. Councilor Sloan inquired about the different levels of architects and whether a designer could be considered as one, which is not the case. He noted that commercial requirements differ from residential ones, with architects needing state licensure in Minnesota. Councilor Hill questioned the resolution of a business's occupancy change; Andy replied that Rum River has yet to receive plans from a licensed designer, hence no change in status.

g) EXTRICATION TOOL PURCHASE

Chief Miller proposed to the Council a plan to acquire new extrication equipment. He mentioned that the company from which he intends to purchase offers demo equipment at a reduced price. These tools come with a full warranty and are available for half the usual cost. He is seeking permission to proceed with the purchase and is considering liquidating the existing equipment in the future.

Councilor Sloan made a motion to approve the purchase of extrication equipment, Councilor Hill seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

No concerns.

COUNCIL CONCERNS

a) SPECIAL MEETING TO SWEAR IN KENT BOMBARD AS MAYOR

Councilor Palmer asked if a special meeting should be held to swear in Kent Bombard as mayor. It was decided to do this at the next regular meeting.

b) SCHEDULE NEXT VISIONING SESSION

Councilor Hill would like to organize a tour of city buildings for current and prospective council members, to be scheduled after the completion of office filings. Councilor Palmer agrees that this is a beneficial initiative.

ADJOURN

Councilor Hill made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Councilor Sloan seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.


CAO


Mayor

Meeting Minutes Completed by: Melanie Bloomquist