

**City of North Saint Paul
October 5, 2021
Approved Regular City Council Meeting Minutes**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Furlong

Staff: Interim City Manager Brian Frandle, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos, Finance
Director Daniel Winek, Communications Staff Kari Erpenbach, City Attorney
Soren Mattick.

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

V. PRESENTATIONS

A. Eagle Scout Project – Wood Duck Houses – Rahul Faizer

Eagle Scout Rahul Faizer, a member of Troop 462, gave a presentation on a proposed project for construction of wood duck houses to be placed in Casey Lake Park. He reviewed wood duck nesting habits. He noted the wood duck population is nearing extinction due to loss of habitat.

Rahul reviewed his plans to build five wood duck houses in Casey Lake Park and one replacement wood duck house in Southwood Nature Preserve. The wood duck houses would be 11” x 12” x 29”, and the design would emulate those currently installed at Southwood. Any leftover materials will be used to create additional wood duck houses that could be used at other locations. The proposed locations of the wood duck houses in Casey Lake Park were chosen due to their proximity to water, placed 50 feet apart and 25 feet from any docks, piers, or paths that meet the water.

Rahul stated the cost estimate for construction of the wood duck houses is approximately \$70 per house for a total of \$430. He added he intends to do fundraising through a “GoFundMe” webpage. He noted the wood duck houses will require relatively low annual maintenance.

Council Member Wong requested that Rahul forward the GoFundMe link to the City Council. Rahul agreed.

Council Member Cole thanked Rahul for his presentation and proposal. He added Rahul did an awesome job, and he commended Rahul for his preparation.

Council Member Cole stated this project was reviewed at a recent Parks & Recreation Commission meeting, and the Commission discussed the possibility of educational signage in Casey Lake Park. He added the Commission is considering a recommendation for funding for signage.

Motion

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Petersen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve a Project at Southwood Nature Preserve and Casey Lake Park for the Building of Six Wood Duck Houses.

VI. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Wong requested that Consent Agenda Item J be pulled for further discussion and review.

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the consent agenda as amended, Resolution No. 2021-096 consisting of:

- A. September 14, 2021 special council meeting minutes – 2022 budget
- B. September 15, 2021 special council meeting minutes
- C. September 21, 2021 workshop meeting minutes
- D. September 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes
- E. September 21, 2021 HRA meeting minutes
- F. General claims \$2,874,812.19
- G. HRA claims \$1,004.13
- H. Application for a Temporary On-Sale Liquor License and Application for a Charitable Gambling for Exempt Permit for the North Star Scouting Memorabilia, Inc. Resolution No. 2021-097.
- I. Approve Ordinance No. 801 Amending Title XI, Chapter 112, Pertaining to Bingo and Charitable Gambling
- J. Set Public Hearing Date for Special Assessments for Unpaid City Bills on October 26, 2021 **Moved to City Business**
- K. CSAH 68 (McKnight Road) Intersection Improvements (City Project No. CP 19-02; SAP 151-020-033 / 151-268-001 / 062-668-057, Final Project Payment. Resolution No. 2021-099.

VII. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

R.T. Luczak, Kokoro Volleyball, expressed his appreciation to Mr. Frandle for getting the elevator fixed and for all the time that has been spent on the community center. He added there have been times when they have been disappointed and frustrated. He noted he wanted to review some of the things they have gone through with the City.

Mr. Luczak stated, in Spring 2020, he overheard the former City Manager tell food shelf staff that the direction from the City Council was to sell the building. He added there was a deadline of June 30, 2020, for the food shelf to enter the facility. He noted the former City Manager mentioned that it was his idea to have the food shelf there but indicated that he had not taken any action.

Mr. Luczak stated this has been their experience, and he wanted to express how frustrating it has been. He added he would like the City Council to know that they are asking for open communication and clear process.

Mr. Luczak stated he received an email yesterday from City Staff stating that he had not indicated an intent to move forward with lease negotiations and has not responded to City communication. He added he has come to many Council meetings and made it very clear that Kokoro wants to sit down with the City Council to discuss the Center's future in North St. Paul. He noted the Mayor instructed Council Members Cole and Wong to enter negotiations on the City's behalf.

Mr. Luczak stated it was upsetting to receive an email accusing him of not participating in a process that they have already engaged in and have been asking to be a part of. He added Kokoro Volleyball wants to stay in North St. Paul and continue to be a valuable community member.

Mayor Furlong requested that Mr. Luczak work with City Attorney Soren Mattick and Acting City Manager Brian Frandle to move forward, which has been the direction of the City Council.

Mr. Luczak asked whether Council Members Cole and Wong will be part of the process.

Mayor Furlong stated the intent of the City Council was that Council Members Cole and Wong would work with City Staff, including the City Manager and City Attorney, but not to work directly with Mr. Luczak.

Gabriel Bosquez stated he is starting a new business in town called Gabriel's Fallen Angel Tattoo Studio, to be located at 2583 7th Avenue. He added he has worked for Acme Tattoo for 25 years and is excited to have the opportunity to open his own studio. He encouraged the City Council and residents to stop by and see what is going on at his studio. He noted he hopes to bring something new and fresh to North St. Paul and be a part of the community.

John Schmahl asked whether it is possible for audience members to receive a paper meeting packet for review, rather than relying on the online version. He added that would be easier and more helpful, as the screen is not visible from various parts of the room. He noted the online meeting agenda and packet in CivicPlus is not user-friendly, and very difficult to use on a device.

Mr. Schmahl stated the 2022 CIP document, which was discussed at a recent workshop, was laid out with color-coded subjects, but the corresponding areas were not color-coded on the map.

Mr. Schmahl stated it is not cool to blow your leaves into the street. He suggested that City Staff should put something in the City e-newsletter.

Dave Nelson stated he has been a master naturalist for over 14 years and has worked hard to restore the pollinator garden. He added he is frustrated with the company that is spraying the pollinator garden, and he asked the company's owner to stay out of certain areas. He noted he and other volunteers spent over \$500 on pollinator plants that were destroyed by the sprayer. He asked who is paying the spraying company, and how they can be informed that they need to stop spraying.

Mayor Furlong stated the Southwood Nature Preserve Task Force is responsible for any spraying that is done. He requested that City Staff work to ensure better communication between the Task Force and the volunteers. He added this has been going on for 4-5 years. He noted he can also reach out to the Task Force.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no scheduled hearings.

IX. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Council Member Wong requested clarification regarding how special assessments are addressed throughout the year before property taxes are considered.

Finance Director Daniel Winek stated residents will see outstanding balances on their utility billing throughout the year, along with information for contacting City Staff to make payment arrangements. He added some residents do not contact the City, and State Statute 429 allows the City to hold a public hearing to have residents assessed for overdue balances on their property taxes.

Council Member Wong asked whether there is any information to indicate why residents do not respond, and what types of barriers there may be to prevent them from making payment arrangements.

Mr. Winek stated he does not have that information but agreed to follow up and provide a review at the public hearing. He added there are relatively few properties on the list.

Council Member Wong stated eligibility for repayment of utility benefits was expanded during the pandemic. She added there may be a related solution for delinquent assessments.

Mayor Furlong asked how 2021 special assessments compares to other years. Mr. Winek stated there are only 12 properties on the list. He added most residents contact City Staff and make payment arrangements, and the City has not had any penalties during the pandemic. He noted this is a method for resolution of delinquent charges.

Council Member Wong thanked Mr. Winek and his team for their hard work. She added language could be a barrier.

On motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-098 to Set Public Hearing Date for Special Assessments for Unpaid City Bills on October 26, 2021.

X. REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Frandle stated flu shots are being scheduled for City employees.

XI. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Council Member Cole stated the Parks & Recreation Commission met in September 2021, and recommended guidance for the City Council to amend the parks facilities' rental rate structure, as well as a recommendation to reinstate the damage deposit. He added action is require by December 1, 2021, which is the same day that residents can begin renting parks facilities in 2022.

Council Member Cole stated the Parks & Recreation Commission will meet October 20, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall. He added there was some confusion on the commission regarding park dedication funds. He noted Dan Winek will be present to review the differences between the two park funds.

Council Member Cole stated the Economic Development Association is scheduled to meet on October 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Council Member Wong stated the Arts & Culture Commission is scheduled to meet October 6, 2021 in the Sandberg Room.

Council Member Wong stated the Planning Commission is in the process of reviewing the CIP plan and Sign Code update. She added the Sign Code will have some ramifications for arts and culture, as well as the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Council Member Petersen stated she attended the League of Minnesota Cities annual retreat in Winona, and the Minnesota Women in City Government meeting.

XII. GENERAL BUSINESS

Council Member Cole stated the Fall Round-Up Parade was a great success. He thanked Communications Staff Kari Erpenbach for spearheading the event, which drew approximately 100 parade units.

Council Member Cole stated he attended a meeting of the Friends of Casey Lake Committee, at which issues related to invasive and native species were discussed, as well as DNR guidance for hybrids. He added there was continued discussion regarding aesthetics of the lake, including silt build-up along the shoreline, and management of the spillway under 17th Avenue, which is a County road. He noted the Committee plans to attend a City Council workshop after January 1, 2022, that would include the Watershed District, MN-DNR, legislative water hydrologist, City Council Members, and a few members of the Committee.

Council Member Cole urged residents to submit their advanced sale orders for Booya. He added he looks forward to seeing everyone next Sunday.

Council Member expressed her appreciation for City Staff, including Ms. Erpenbach, for all their hard work in planning the Fall Round-Up Parade.

Mayor Furlong stated the Fall Round-Up Parade was a big success. He expressed his appreciation for the hard work of Ms. Erpenbach and City Staff, as well as the Business Association and many other people. He thanked the Parade sponsors: Amcon Construction, American Legion Post 39, Berwald Roofing, Caring for Cats, Gary Insurance Center, Great Lakes Management, Luther Auctions, M/I Homes, Old National Bank, Premier Banks, Salvation Army, T.A. Schifsky & Son, Tennis Sanitation And WSB.

Mayor Furlong stated he attended the ribbon cutting at Thor Vang and Lea Lang's adult day care center. He added the grand opening was delayed by Covid and construction issues. He thanked City Staff for their assistance with the grand opening celebration.

Mayor Furlong stated a ribbon cutting will be held on Saturday, October 9, 2021, at Rotary Park from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., to commemorate the opening of the new year-round restroom facilities. He added there will be refreshments and live entertainment.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Cole, Seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, Interim City Manager / Clerk