City of North Saint Paul
July 16, 2024
Approved Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Monge called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Nordby
Council Member Schweer
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Monge

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to the City Manager Jennie Kloos, City Engineer Morgan Dawley, Finance Director Daniel Winek, Community Development Director Riley Grams and City Attorney Soren Mattick.

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

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

V. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Wong requested that Consent Agenda Item A be removed and addressed under City Business.

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Nordby, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the consent agenda, Resolution No. 2024-072 consisting of:

A. July 2, 2024 workshop meeting minutes **Moved to City Business**
B. July 2, 2024 regular meeting minutes
C. General Claims $1,704,130.31
D. HRA Claims $102.46
E. 2024-2026 Metropolitan Council Clean Water (Water Efficiency) Fund Grant ***Resolution No. 2024-073***
F. Public Works Surplus Items
G. Approve Fee Schedule Update (moved item to upcoming meeting)
H. Application for a Temporary On-Sale Liquor License AND an application for a Charitable Gaming for Exempt Permit for the Church of St. Peter, North St. Paul, September 21 & 22, 2024 ***Resolution No. 2024-074***

I. Application for a Special Event Permit for the Church of St. Peter, 2600 Margaret Street N., September 21 & 22, 2024 ***Resolution No. 2024-075***
J. Resolutions Accepting Donations – June 2024 ***Resolution No. 2024-076***
K. June Building Permit Report – June 2024

VI. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

John Schmahl expressed positive comments surrounding the security at Casey Lake Park on the 4^{th} of July.

David Nelson discussed pollinator gardens and noted the difference between pollinating gardens and weed gardens and suggesting ridding the weeds.

Stacy Maher expressed her desire to fund the community center and accept the grant money.

Mark Loe expressed his opposition to the community center and encouraged the Council to deny the acceptance of the grant money.

See Yang expressed her support for the revitalization of the community center.

Karrie Blees thanked all of the volunteers in North St. Paul and suggested a solid plan in order to move forward with the community center.

Mariah Quick recommended the continuance of information gathering regarding the acceptance of the grant money for the community center.

Ruthie Olmstead voiced her concern regarding the size of the community center, parking, lack of outside green space, price of continued maintenance, and the senior living units that have workout facilites.

Ethan Johnson thanked the Council for all of their work on this subject.

Sharon Clark-Williams recommended moving forward with the feasibility study and to accept the grant funds.

Tom Sonnek suggested tabling the vote and taking more time to understand all of the information and options.

Laura Strang advocated for the refurbishment of the community center.

Josh Nguyen thanked the City Council, especially Council Member Wong for their hard work on this issue.

Rob Sutherland with Ashland Productions expressed his excitement for the community center and suggesting Ashland Productions be a partner and operate the community center space. He encouraged City Council to table this decision, do more research, and reconsider the decision to deny the acceptance of the grant money

Caleb Brian described the many ways the community center could be used, expressed his support for the community center, and recommended tabling this item.

Jodi Barry recommended tabling this item until more research can be done and more information can be provided.

Jody McPhearson expressed his support for the community center and youth programming. He encouraged the City Council table this item, slow down the decision, and continue to gather information.

VII. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Approve Ordinance Rezoning Property

Community Development Director Riley Grams presented this item and noted the address is 2329 17th Avenue East. The request is a rezone from R1 to R2. He noted this is a clean-up item and had been previously approved by Planning Commission and City Council.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Nordby, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Ordinance No. 831 Amending Chapter 154 of the North St. Paul City Code Rezoning Property From R-1 Single Family Residential District to R-2 Mixed Residential District.

B. Approve Delaware Place for Final Plat, Final PUD, Stormwater Management Agreement and Contract for Development

Community Development Director Grams presented this item, provided background information, and recommended awarding the development contract to Andrus Built LLC to build 10 townhomes using approximately 1.5 acres with the remaining acreage used for stormwater management and recreational use.

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2024-077, Approving a Final Plat for Property Located at 2329 17th Avenue E., PID 01292233012, adopt Resolution No. 2024-078, Approving Final Planned Unit Development and Site Plan for Property Located 2329 17th Avenue E., PID at PID 012922330125, approve the Delaware Place Stormwater Management Agreement, and approve the Development Contract and Planned Unit Development Agreement for Delaware Place.

C. Accept and Approve the Tennis Sanitation LLC Agreement Extension Through August 31, 2026

City Manager Brian Frandle presented this item.

Council Member Wong inquired about the difference between a contract extension versus a contract renegotiation. Mr. Frandle stated the contract extension is for 2 more years at which time the City would begin the RFP process.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Nordby, with Mayor Monge and Council Members Cole, Schweer, and Nordby voting aye and Council Member Wong voting nay (4-1), motion carried to accept and approve the Tennis Sanitation LLC agreement extension through August 31, 2026.

D. Resolution to Not Accept the State and Federal Grants Related to the North St. Paul Community Center

Mr. Winek presented this item and explained a nay vote means the City would move forward with an RFP feasibility study and proceed with next steps.

Council Member Cole suggested a deeper look into the community center and expressed his concern with the rush decision and unsubstantiated cost estimates of running the community center (by the City). He also expressed his concern with the cost of not accepting the grant money and tearing down the community center. He noted this cost would be an approximate 20% levy increase to every resident in the City and these numbers have not been discussed.

Council Member Wong expressed her concern with the rushed decision. She recommended the need for a community gathering space due to 40% of the community being a community of color and suggested discussing the impact of a multi-cultural center. She also noted denial of the grant money could affect the status of future grant monies for other things.

Council Member Nordby explained his aye vote and noted the building and location are not the right fit for a community center.

Mayor Monge explained his aye vote, stating the building is not feasible for a community center and noted his concern regarding the lack of a plan.

Council Member Schweer expressed her feelings regarding this decision and explained her nay vote.

City Attorney Soren Mattick clarified that denying the resolution would allow the idea of the community center to remain alive and keep all options open including moving forward with an RFP.

The Council had a robust discussion relating to the definition of the resolution and what each vote means.

Motion by Council Member Schweer to table this item, failed for lack of a second.

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with Council Members Schweer, Cole and Wong voting aye and Mayor Monge and Council Member Nordby voting nay (3-2), the motion carried to neither accept or deny the grant funding at this point and to move forward the feasibility study.

E. Authorize the Issuance of an RFP for a Multi-Purpose Community Center Feasibility Study

Mr. Winek presented this item.

Council Member Wong expressed her concern with the timing and process of the resolution and suggested a project manager and taking more time to research a more robust scope of services.

Council Member Schweer suggested looking at a broad scope of community center needs and potential ideas.

Council Member Nordby inquired about the ability to create a subcommittee to look at a successful path forward with the least resistance.

Council Member Schweer agreed with the subcommittee idea to continue moving this forward and recommended that one of the three newest members of the City Council sit on the subcommittee.

After questions from City Council, Mr. Mattick asked whether the City Council is considering creating a different RFP from the one in the packet with a more in-depth look at the scope of services.

Council Member Wong suggested the RFP go back to a Workshop meeting to refine and detail the scope of services for the community center and then consider moving forward with an adjusted RFP.

Council Member Nordby clarified an aye vote would send the RFP back to a Workshop for more discussion and work.

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member Cole, with Council Members Cole, Schweer, Wong and Nordby voting aye and Mayor Monge voting nay, (4-1), motion carried, Authorizing staff to take the Issuance of an RFP for a Multi-Purpose Community Center Feasibility Study back to a workshop meeting.

F. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Ordinance Amendment

City Engineer Morgan Dawley presented this item and explained the MS4 protects water bodies from pollution. Those systems that hold an MS4 permit with the State have renewals every five years and potentially new requirements. Those new requirements include discussions surrounding animal waste, snow and ice removal pertaining to salt storage, erosion control, and construction activities.

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Ordinance No. 828, Amending Chapter 95 of the North St. Paul City Code, Ordinance No. 829, Amending Chapter 94 of the North St. Paul City Code, and Ordinance No. 830, Amending Chapter 154 of the North St. Paul City Code.

G. McKnight Watermain Improvements (City Project No. 22-04) – Accept Project and Approve Final Plat

Mr. Dawley presented this item and stated this is a final payment of $25, 896.70, noting the project total was under budget.

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2024-079, Authorizing Final Payment for the McKnight Watermain Improvements (City Project No. 22-04).

H. July 2, 2024 Workshop Meeting Minutes (previously Consent Agenda Item A)

Council Member Wong requested a correction to page 4, paragraph 6, to indicate: "Council Member Wong wanted to express concern that the economic and community impact is not measured in the existing information and needed to be sought out as part of the study."

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the July 2, 2024 workshop meeting minutes as corrected.

VIII. REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Frandle noted the yearlong option for live/work units on the ground floor of the Lille Building is up and Mr. LaValle is requesting to open it up for live units. Mayor Monge inquired about the start date of such agreement. Mr. Frandle noted he will discuss this with Mr. LaValle on Thursday and get that information to the City Council. Council Member Wong also inquired about how many leases have been signed ahead of time for the Lillie Building.

Mr. Frandle announced the Hause Park ribbon cutting ceremony on August 22, 2024, and the future fall movie night. The Electric Department completed updates to the Weber building. He also noted the quick return of power during a recent outage. The Safety Committee received training on fire extinguishers. The Finance Department received CIP plans from department heads. Community Development is discussing the potential of Rum River Consultants taking over the permitting process and the continual work on the student-built house lot across from Webster School. The Public Works Department continues to patch roads and grind stumps, benches are out at Casey and Southwood Park, and a contractor will repaint Snowy. The Fire Department has been busy with trainings and inspections with the Lillie Building.

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Council Member Cole stated the July EDA meeting was cancelled and the next meeting is scheduled for August 14, 2024.

Council Member Nordby noted he did not attend the special Planning Commission meeting and the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 1, 2024

Council Member Schweer stated the next Park and Recreation Commission meeting is Wednesday, August 24, 2024.

Council Member Wong noted the Arts and Culture Commission is considering making Snowy more interactive, creating a digitized picture of hands for a utility box around Casey Lake, and looking at next year's plan.

Mayor Monge noted there is one open spot left on the EDA.

X. GENERAL BUSINESS

Council Member Schweer thanked the Bleeses for their continued support of the City Council and first responders and City staff for keeping the City safe.

Council Member Cole thanked Council Member Nordby for his comments regarding the people who spoke about the community center. He suggested a potential special workshop to discuss the feasibility study and hopefully bring it back to City Council at the end of August. He also noted a new bakery is opening soon.

Council Member Nordby noted there will not be a City Council meeting the first Tuesday in August as it is National Night Out and thanked the Council for the difficult conversation regarding the community center.

Council Member Wong inquired about the loss of a Zoom option for people to voice their opinions. Mr. Frandle discussed the cost of Zoom and noted it is not required after the pandemic. He estimated a yearly savings of $3,500 and noted he will make sure to get everyone's input on this matter.

Council Member Wong commented the few new businesses in North St. Paul.

Mayor Monge thanked the Police Department for the Casey Lake Park security camera from Ramsey County and everyone for their input tonight.

XI. 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 Monge adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

/s/ John Monge, Mayor

Attest:
/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk