

**City of North Saint Paul
March 3, 2020
Adopted Regular City Council Meeting Minutes**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen ABSENT AND EXCUSED
Council Member Walczak
Council Member Sonnek
Mayor Furlong

Staff: City Manager Scott Duddeck, City Planner Erin Perdu, City Attorney Soren Mattick, Deputy Clerk Mary Mills, Finance Director Jason Zimmerman.

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Walczak, seconded by Council Member Sonnek, with all present voting aye (4-0), Council Member Petersen absent, motion carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

V. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

VI. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Sonnek, seconded by Council Member Walczak, with all present voting aye (4-0), Council Member Petersen absent, motion carried to approve the consent agenda, Resolution No. 2020-032 consisting of:

- A. February 18, 2020 workshop meeting minutes.
- B. February 18, 2020 regular meeting minutes.
- C. General accounts payable: \$510,185.93
- D. HRA accounts payable: \$8,237.06

VII. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

There were no comments.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no scheduled hearings.

IX. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Authorization to reject cable franchise recommendation

Terre Heiser, Cable Commission representative for the City of North St. Paul, reviewed the Cable Franchise Agreement and a proposed Resolution for denial of the agreement. He added other member cities have also recommended this action. He noted several issues have not been resolved, including what the franchise fee covers in terms of gross revenue; questions regarding the institutional network; and how to address different service requirements of each city.

Mr. Heiser stated another issue is the distance of the Customer Service Center, which is a 15-minute drive from North St. Paul. He added the franchise agreement is not specific about billing practices. He noted there is a disparity between the PEG fee and how it has been derived, as equipment needs assessments and capabilities are still being reviewed.

Mr. Heiser expressed his commitment to continuing the process to try to come up with a proposal that is acceptable. He requested feedback and comment from the City Council regarding whether to move forward with the process or find an alternative solution. He stressed the importance of clarification of this issue by June 2020, as the City moves forward with the 2021 budget review process.

City Manager Scott Duddeck stated the City had decided not to renew the Cable Franchise Agreement in 2019. He added the City Council agreed to review this issue again, to provide enough time for consideration before the budget review process begins.

On motion by Council Member Sonnek, seconded by Council Member Walczak, with all present voting aye (4-0), Council Member Petersen absent, motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2020-033 to approve a preliminary assessment that Comcast of Minnesota Cable Franchise Agreement should not be renewed.

B. Anchor Commons Self-Storage variance and site plan review

City Planner Erin Perdu reviewed the site plan and a variance request for Anchor Block Commons Self-Storage, located on approximately 2-acre property with frontage on 3rd Street N and Anchor Drive, with access from Anchor Drive. The property is zoned MU-3, Corridor Mixed Use, and the proposal is for a 3-story self-storage facility with approximately 700 storage units.

Ms. Perdu stated the variance request relates to language in the City Code which states that warehousing and storage space shall not exceed 60% of the principle building area. She added, in this case, the storage space accounts for approximately 73% of the building. She noted this is

the standard allocation of use within the building, and City Staff recommends approval of the variance request.

Ms. Perdu stated the applicant is proposing 2 spaces for customers to pull into the building to unload and load their belongings, but there is no loading dock. The landscape plan meets open space area requirements. According to the square footage, 101 trees are required on the site, and the applicant is providing 36 trees. There is flexibility in the Ordinance, if it is determined that trees would overcrowd the property, but City Staff recommends that more trees should be required than what they have included in their site plan.

Ms. Perdu stated the site plan does not meet the mini-warehouse use parking requirement of 25 parking stalls. The applicant has provided documentation which shows that the required amount of parking is not necessary, and the Ordinance allows a reduction in parking based on demonstrated demand. The applicant is proposing 11 parking spaces including accessible parking along the south side of the building, and the interior bay for loading and unloading.

Ms. Perdu stated the site plan meets architectural standards, with a variety of exterior materials including textured metal, brick veneer, glass windows, and articulated façade.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff recommends approval of the requested variance and conditional approval of the site plan. She added conditions have been added to approval including engineering requirements related to fire safety; landscaping requirements related to drainage and utility easements; a requirement for a sidewalk connection to Anchor Drive; and modifications to the exterior lighting plan. She noted City Staff recommends that these requirements can be reviewed and addressed administratively.

Council Member Walczak asked whether there will be signage on the building. Ms. Perdu stated City Staff has not reviewed a signage plan, which would need to be submitted and approved.

Council Member Sonnek stated, with regard to the variance request, this is an opportunity to address the Code which is not sufficient as written. He added the maximum amount of building space that can be used for storage would not allow for any kind of storage building. He noted the business itself is not using any of the interior space for their own storage.

Council Member Thorsen questioned why a variance is even required for a warehouse use, as there is a limited amount of that type of use in North St. Paul. He stated he is glad that this came up in the Planning Commission's discussion, and changes can be considered.

Council Member Sonnek stated there are opportunities to allow for greater flexibility in the variance process. He added he would support a review of parking requirements to allow for flexibility. He stressed the importance of erring on the side of keeping more green space, and reviewing tree plans, when taking parking requirements into consideration. He noted the number of trees should be related to green space rather than the square footage of the structure.

Mr. Duddeck stated keeping trees in the site plan is important but agreed the number of required trees should be realistic and fit with the property, so they do not have to be removed in the future. He added businesses also want their facilities and signage to be visible.

Max French, Adams French Properties, stated he is the Development Manager for the storage facility. He introduced Architect Todd Mahagan and Engineer Rob Latta. He added the company has been building self-storage facilities for 20 years, and they are excited about this project in North St. Paul. He noted the facility will be a fully enclosed, climate-controlled facility with 24-hour security.

Mayor Furlong asked whether there will be additional spaces inside the building other than storage units. Mr. French stated there will be an office on the southwest corner of the facility, with stand-up tables for managers to meet with customers.

On motion by Council Member Sonnek, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with all present voting aye (4-0), Council Member Petersen absent, motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2020-034 approving a variance from Section 154 for a self-storage facility at 2300 McKnight Road N.

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Walczak, with all present voting aye (4-0), Council Member Petersen absent, motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2020-035 approving a site plan for a self-storage facility at 2300 McKnight Road, at the northeast corner of Anchor Drive and 3rd Street.

Council Member Sonnek stated there will not be a fence around the property but individual clients will have a gate code that will allow them access through loading bays during controlled hours. He added the exterior style of the building, without a fence, will fit in with the community.

X. REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Duddeck stated seasonal road restrictions will go into effect on Friday, March 6, 2020, which is a good sign that spring is on its way.

Mayor Furlong asked whether Eldridge Avenue is closed. Mr. Duddeck stated the road was closed due to a sewer line break that was repaired. He added the restoration was completed by a private contractor.

Mr. Duddeck stated the Business Association's March 10, 2020 meeting will feature presentations and discussion regarding energy efficiency and conservation, and energy audits for local businesses. He added a Franklin Energy consultant will be present.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff have been contacted by Ramsey County regarding continued operation of the aerator at Silver Lake. He added Ramsey County is looking to relinquish operations and maintenance of the aerator, to be transferred to another entity.

Mr. Duddeck stated the Casey Lake outlet is in the process of being cleaned out. He added the contractor damaged one of the nearby memorial park benches. He noted City Staff are working with the contractor and the Watershed District to ensure that the bench is replaced, and the situation is handled respectfully.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff are working with the United States Postal Service (USPS) to obtain approval to return Seppala Boulevard to a 2-way traffic roadway, with mailboxes re-located to the municipal parking lot, where they had previously been located.

XI. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Council Member Sonnek reviewed the Planning Commission's February 27, 2020 meeting, at which the self-storage facility was discussed, that was approved at tonight's meeting. He added the Planning Commission's March 5, 2020 meeting will include a review of the adjacent Anchor Commons apartment complex. He noted there will also be a discussion regarding an Ordinance amendment to include regulations for keeping of chickens and bees.

Council Member Thorsen stated he is glad to hear that Seppala Boulevard is planned to be reverted to a 2-way roadway.

Council Member Thorsen stated winter parking restrictions will be in place until March 31, 2020. He added, in the past, restrictions have been suspended depending upon weather conditions.

Mr. Duddeck stated, with regard to the traffic change at Seppala Boulevard, the Business Association meeting attendees expressed their support. He added it was also discussed at last week's meeting of the Historical Society, and comments and feedback were positive. He noted he believes it will be received well by the general public.

Mayor Furlong stated many businesses have concerns about traffic safety if Seppala Boulevard becomes a 2-way street. He stressed the importance of implementing safety measures. Mr. Duddeck agreed, adding a new striping layout is being designed.

Mayor Furlong stated a family skating event will be held March 21, 2020 at Polar Arena from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Skate rental will not be available, and complimentary hot chocolate will be served. He added Polar Arena is donating ice time for this event.

Mayor Furlong thanked Council Member Walczak for sitting in for him during Mayor Open Hours.

XII. GENERAL BUSINESS

There were no general business items.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Walczak, Seconded by Council Member Sonnek, with all present voting aye (4-0), Council Member Petersen absent, Mayor Furlong adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest: /s/ Scott A. Duddeck, City Manager/Clerk