



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA  
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023  
7 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Dan Louismet called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The City Clerk took attendance for Councilmembers Kevin Edberg, Steve Engstran, Heidi Hughes, Dan Jones and Bill Walsh. Staff in attendance were City Manager Lindy Crawford, Community Development Director Jason Lindahl, Public Works Director/City Engineer Paul Kauppi, City Clerk Caley Longendyke, and City Attorney Troy Gilchrist.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Minutes of the City Council Meeting on March 28, 2023

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh**, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to approve the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Councilmember **Edberg**, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Accept minutes: February Park Commission Advisory, February Environmental Advisory Commission, February White Bear Lake Conservation District, March Planning Commission
- B. Resolution authorizing a special event application for Big Wood Brewery Flip Cup Tournament **Res. No. 13177**
- C. Resolution authorizing a special event application for Big Wood Brewery 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Beach Party **Res. No. 13178**
- D. Resolution authorizing issuance of a massage therapy establishment license to Pure Illumination Skincare Studio & Boutique **Res. No. 13179**
- E. Resolution authorizing issuance of massage therapist license to Christina Martin at Pure Illumination Skincare Studio & Boutique **Res. No. 13180**
- F. Resolution authorizing issuance of massage therapist license to Kelly Weisner at LifeSpa **Res. No. 13181**
- G. Resolution authorizing advertisement for bids for the 2023 Bituminous Seal Coating Project **Res. No. 13182**
- H. Resolution authorizing advertisement for bids for the 2023 Crack Sealing Project **Res. No. 13183**
- I. Resolution authorizing advertisement for bids for the 2023 Sanitary Sewer Lining Program **Res. No. 13184**
- J. Resolution repealing variances for 4556 Hwy 61 **Res. No. 13185**

It was moved by Councilmember **Engstran**, seconded by Councilmember **Walsh**, to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

## **5. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **A. Arbor Day Proclamation**

City Manager Crawford shared the importance of trees in the community. Mayor Dan Louismet read a proclamation recognizing May 18, 2023 as Arbor Day in the City of White Bear Lake.

## **6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Nothing scheduled.

## **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Nothing scheduled.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Conditional Use Permit Amendment Request – Stadium Seating for White Bear Lake Area Schools**

Community Development Director Lindahl presented an amendment request to an existing conditional use permit issued to the White Bear Lake Area Schools in 2021. The original request granted expansion of bleacher seating to 1,500, but the new request is to increase seating to 5,000. A condition of the original request was to complete an Environmental Assessment Worksheet, which involved a traffic study, and the applicant was required to conduct an updated traffic study as part of the amendment application. The Planning Commission and staff recommend approval. Lindahl showed various images of the stadium to describe the amendment. The home seating would increase from 1,500 to 3,500 seats and guest seating would go from 0 to 1,500 seats. As part of the conditional use permit process, the School District conducted a neighborhood meeting, where 14 attendees asked questions and shared concerns. Topics of discussion included current traffic and congestion, traffic mitigation, event attendance, size of bleachers and impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. Lindahl reported half of the attendees were generally opposed to the project. Opposition was also shared at the Planning Commission public hearing. Lindahl said the traffic study helped the parking analysis and their findings concluded that there was adequate parking in the parking lot and surrounding streets. He talked about the ambient noise from the increased stadium seating and said the noise from the occasional events wouldn't exceed standards set by the MN Pollution Control Agency. He reviewed other conditional use permit criteria. Lindahl said a number of recommended conditions generated from the traffic study were incorporated as required conditions of approval, including traffic mitigation strategies and direction from the fire marshal to allow for emergency response.

Lindahl said staff recommend approval of the amendment, and the conditions include that there will be no other major events during football games, all traffic study recommendations will be implemented, SAC Determination will be updated and roadway improvements will be completed. Mayor Louismet invited School District staff to comment. Assistant Superintendent

for Finance and Operations Tim Wald shared information about the bond referendum passed in 2019. He said there was an overwhelming statement by the community supporting the unification of the high school. He addressed the frequently asked question, "Why now?" He said in the pre-referendum work, the plan was to keep football at South Campus but would eventually move it to North Campus. Wald said it was explained in community presentations with Superintendent Wayne Kazmierczak that when there was opportunity to move high school football and large events to the unified high school campus, they would move forward with those plans. He said the School District was able to move forward earlier than expected, based in part on being able to obtain more space for expansion. Wold Architects and Engineers representative Maria Kennedy shared additional images of the site and the bleachers. She said the school additions would be completed in fall 2024.

Mayor Louismet opened public comment at 7:28 p.m. Jeff Taylor, resident of 5211 West Bald Eagle Boulevard, recalls multiple statements made before the passed referendum that football would stay at South Campus. He noted the disruption in the neighborhood already and questioned why a 5,000-seat stadium is needed based on average number of attendees, limited parking in the parking lot and the low number of home games. He expressed concern for rushing this plan through and noted the already-existing traffic congestion and speeding in the area. He proposed delaying the amendment. Mary Pollard, resident of 2321 5<sup>th</sup> Street, requested the school district gets the traffic under control before bringing more people into the neighborhood. Jeremy Post, resident of 2068 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, works in the school district and is a coach for football and basketball. He acknowledged that change is hard for the residents near the campus, but emphasized the importance of this particular change for the community. He said the increased traffic is already imminent with combining the high schools, and the football game traffic will be separate and limited to a handful of evenings. Jim Galvin, resident of 4702 Wood Avenue, is a retired teacher and assistant football coach of the school district. He shared the history of high school football in the area and the positive impact on the community and student athletes. He noted the importance of bringing people together and supporting local businesses and talked about the value of students being able to play games in the same facility during their 4-year high school track. Alastair Downie, resident of 1988 Campbell Circle, inquired about plans for widening roadways and adding parking restriction signage. Mayor Louismet closed public comment at 7:47 p.m.

Mayor Louismet shared his thoughts on the proposal and was concerned that the message from the school district was that football was going to remain at South Campus. He wondered if delaying the process would help get the neighborhood acclimated to the new high school and agreed with the concerns about traffic and parking. He asked school district staff to explain the need to move forward so quickly and not wait. Assistant Superintendent Wald said the decision to move forward was based on being able to capitalize on reasonable construction costs, the opportunity to expand the school ground footprint sooner than expected and the need to use bond referendum funds on time. Superintendent Kazmierczak clarified that the message has always been that football would eventually move to the new site. Councilmember Edberg wondered what large events would be an issue for congestion and Wald said the homecoming football game is the largest event that could pose operational issues. There was conversation about street parking and how the school district will be working with White Bear Lake Police Department and Ramsey County Sheriff's Office on traffic mitigation. Councilmember Jones

asked about other events and Wald said there will be girls' and boys' lacrosse and track and field events. Councilmember Jones brought attention that there are more events requiring lights and the PA system. There was discussion about the traffic study with high school arrival and dismissal time and how it compares to football games. Councilmember Jones acknowledged that there will be a lot of requests to use the stadium and advised that the school district not say "yes" to all of the requests, keeping the nearby residents in mind. Councilmember Hughes asked about the growing enrollment at the school district. Councilmember Edberg inquired about parking limitations in the area. Director of Public Works/City Engineer Kauppi provided information about parking restrictions on the streets surrounding North Campus and how it compares to South Campus. He said the parking restrictions will allow for more efficient and safer traffic flow after games.

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh**, seconded by Councilmember **Jones**, to approve **Res. No. 13186** approving granting an amendment to the conditional use permit for White Bear Lake Area Schools Senior High School campus expansion. Councilmember Walsh was surprised that the plan to move football to North Campus is happening so soon, but was aware that there were plans to move it eventually. He was pleased that the traffic study was updated post-pandemic with more accurate data. He expressed support for the move and sees it as an amenity and benefit to the downtown area. He trusts the traffic mitigation strategies will help address the concerns and says there will be opportunity for improvement. Councilmember Hughes suggested installing parking restriction signs ahead of time so people can become familiar with them. Kauppi said that will be considered once the school district construction is done and there is more understanding how traffic flows and moves around the campus. The school district will have to complete the required conditions of the road improvements before it can host an event on the expanded bleachers.

Councilmember Jones acknowledged it will be easier for attendees to leave events with the multiple exit options. He asked the school district to be respectful with the number of large events scheduled at the stadium. Councilmember Edberg expressed support for the resolution with the conditions to be met and would direct any feedback about being misinformed about the school district's plans to the School Board. Councilmember Hughes reemphasized that the volume of street parking for these events is a big deal, and encouraged residents to reach out if there are issues so the City has an opportunity to find solutions.

Motion carried 4-0. Councilmember Engstran abstained due to a potential conflict of interest.

#### B. Variance Request – Monument Sign for McNeely Music Center

Community Development Director Lindahl presented a variance request submitted by MSR Design, on behalf of McNeely Music Center. The applicant is requesting a monument sign setback variance from the required 10 feet to three inches. The request is to reorient the sign so it is perpendicular, not parallel, to Highway 61 to increase the sign's visibility. The site was already granted a setback variance from 10 feet to two feet. As part of the application process, nearby signs along Highway 61 and the respective setbacks were reviewed. Lindahl explained that staff had already approved a setback variance and the variance review that is outlined in Minnesota State Statute 462.357, subd. 6 for the new request did not conclude there to be

practical difficulty. The Planning Commission and staff recommended denial for the variance request.

Mayor Louismet invited comment from the applicant. MSR Design Project Manager Sean Higgins shared information about the project. He said the variance request is to support public safety by making the sign more visible for drivers from the highway. The attorney representing the property owner, Manitou Fund MMC LLC, referenced the previously approved variance and explained that the new request was an extension of the existing variance. He brought attention to the unique lot shape and said the lot shape is still relevant for the new request. The property owner's attorney noted that an approved setback variance would still allow for 31 feet between the sign and the highway and a number of feet away from the sidewalk.

Mayor Louismet was skeptical that not being able to move a sign 21 inches closer to the property line would create practical difficulty. Councilmember Heidi Hughes asked about reorienting the sign closer to the building. Higgins explained the need for a driveway between the sign and the building for emergency vehicle access, as directed by the City's fire marshal. Councilmember Jones disagreed with staff's findings and noted other signs in the area. He complimented the design of the proposed sign and didn't believe approving this setback variance would set precedence for other variances. Councilmember Hughes asked if staff would've approved this request had it been part of the original variance request in 2022. Lindahl recalled significant discussions about the original variance request, which was prior to his hiring, and believes staff would've had the same analysis as what is presented and would recommend denial. City Attorney Gilchrist advised the Council in determining whether or not to grant a variance and how the applicant must prove a practical difficulty. He said the Council has discretion to say "no". On the other hand, if the Council approves the variance, he explained that it doesn't necessarily set legal precedence for other variances, but warned that other applicants will still use it as leverage for their own requests. Gilchrist explained that if Council wants to approve the variance, they should direct staff to prepare a resolution that includes proper findings supporting this specific setback variance request to the specific property.

It was moved by Councilmember **Edberg** to approve the resolution that would deny the sign variance request. The motion was not seconded and therefore failed.

It was moved by Councilmember **Jones**, seconded by Councilmember **Hughes**, to direct staff to prepare an alternative resolution approving the variance request for consideration at an upcoming regular Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

## 9. DISCUSSION

### A. Concept Plan Review for 2687 County Road D

Community Development Director Lindahl presented information on the concept plan review for an undeveloped property located at 2687 County Road D. The concept plan involves developing a 14-unit nursing home. Lindahl reported that the Planning Commission is in general support of the plan. The current zoning doesn't support nursing home facilities, but rezoning the property from B-2 Limited Business to R-B, Residential-Business would allow the use. There will also be a setback variance request to allow for the building to be closer to the property line.

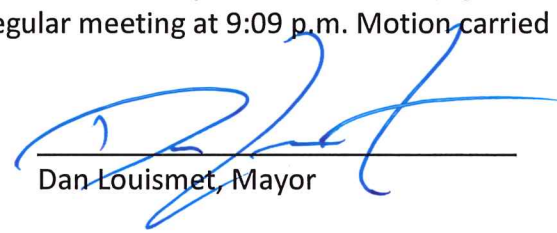
Mayor Louismet invited comment from the applicant. Brian Wings of WBL DigniSuites RE LLC shared information about the small-model care home for elderly citizens in need of memory care and assisted living services. He described the smaller site and explained that fencing will be installed behind the facility where the setback is reduced. He also explained the low need for parking with the type of facility. Mayor Dan Louismet and the Council expressed general support for the concept plan.

**10. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Crawford had no announcements.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

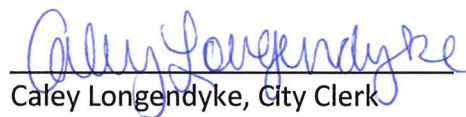
There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilmember **Engstran** seconded by Councilmember **Jones** to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:09 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.



---

Dan Louismet, Mayor

**ATTEST:**



---

Caley Longendyke, City Clerk