



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024
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, Steven Engstran, Heidi Hughes, Bill Walsh, and Andrea West. Staff in attendance were City Manager Lindy Crawford, 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 Regular City Council Meeting on February 28, 2024

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

B. Minutes of the City Council Work Session on February 28, 2024

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

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Louismet reported the addition of the Shade Tree Bonding Grant Program under *New Business*. It was moved by Councilmember **Engstran**, seconded by Councilmember **Hughes**, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Accept minutes: November Park Advisory Commission, January Environmental Advisory Commission, January White Bear Lake Conservation District
- B. Resolution approving a temporary liquor license for Church of St. Pius X event **Res. No. 13328**
- C. Resolution authorizing White Bear Lake Lions Club to conduct charitable gambling at Washington Square Bar & Grill **Res. No. 13329**
- D. Resolution approving various annual business and liquor license renewals **Res. No. 13330**

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

5. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nothing scheduled.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 2024 Pavement Rehabilitation Project – ordering improvements, approving plans and specifications, and authorizing advertisement for bids

Public Works Director/City Engineer Kauppi provided an overview of the upcoming Pavement Rehabilitation Project in 2024. The general project area are portions of residential neighborhoods north of Birch Lake Avenue and west of Bald Eagle Avenue. The street leading into the Sports Center, and their connecting parking lots, will also be rehabilitated. Director Kauppi said the project scope includes pavement replacement, curb and gutter, sidewalk replacement on Wood Avenue, storm sewer repairs and additions, sewer/water service replacement program, watermain and sanitary sewer repairs, and private utility work. The total project cost is \$2,662,400, with the City funding \$2,097,400 and special assessments funding \$565,000. The City is covering costs for the project around the Sports Center. Director Kauppi gave estimated assessment amounts for a single-family home, with street reconstruction between \$3,300-\$5,500 or pavement replacement between \$2,000-\$4,000. He explained that assessments are determined by lot size and lot perimeter bordering the street. The City assesses project costs over a 15-year period and the interest rate is 2% over the bond rate, which will be determined when the project bid has been awarded and the City goes out for bonds. Assessments will be payable on 2025 taxes.

Director Kauppi reviewed the project timeline, which initially started in November 2023 with a neighborhood meeting. In April 2024, bids will be open and the Council will award a contract. Construction is expected between May and October 2024. After the public hearing, the Council will vote on resolutions ordering improvement, approving plans and specifications and authorizing advertisement for bids.

The following residents spoke during the public hearing:

- Terrence Berg, resident of 4754 Wood Ave, asked about accessibility into driveways. Director Kauppi explained that once a contractor is identified, a detailed schedule will be provided to property owners. Driveways will generally be accessible in the morning and evening hours, with most of the work occurring during the day. Individual properties being impacted more than others, such as a utility dig, will receive additional communication. He provided more detail about what property owners can expect.
- Mike Basich, resident of 1761 3rd Street, wondered why the street project was delayed from last year and asked what the budget was last year. Mayor Louismet explained that the Public Safety Building Renovation Project needed funding last year and the City couldn't go over its bond amount. Director Kauppi said the budget is similar to last year, accounting for a slight increase in construction costs. City staff will have more cost details when bids come in.
- Jordan Hann, resident of 1856 2nd Street, asked a series of clarifying questions, including whether property owners can pay the costs up front. Director Kauppi said they can pay off the amount any time. He answered her question about how the street and new curb and gutter will be constructed, and confirmed that driveway materials and turf will be repaired where disturbed. He provided information about utility disruption and said the City will work closely with property owners to communicate scheduled shut-offs.
- Sue Hildman, resident of 4711 Campbell Avenue, wondered if a sidewalk addition is being considered for Campbell Avenue. Director Kauppi said there is no

recommendation for a sidewalk addition during this project. He explained the City's Comprehensive Plan, developed every ten years, and Campbell Avenue was not identified as a priority for adding a sidewalk in the current plan.

- Katie Knudsen, resident of 1789 3rd Street, shared concern about drainage at the end of some driveways. Director Kauppi directed her to reach out to the Engineering Department, who can review individual properties further.

Mayor Louismet shared his support for this project, and the City's ongoing street rehabilitation projects in general. Councilmember Walsh inquired about service interruption and confirmed that utilities will be turned off only for a short period of time, not days at a time. Director Kauppi confirmed that utilities may be turned off and turned back on within the same day and homeowners will be notified ahead of time.

It was moved by Councilmember **Walsh**, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to approve **Res. No. 13331** ordering improvements, approving plans and specifications and authorizing advertisement for bids for the 2024 Pavement Rehabilitation Project, City Project Nos. 24-01, 24-08. Motion carried unanimously.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing scheduled.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. City of White Bear Lake Strategic Plan

City Manager Crawford presented a summary report of the Strategic Planning session, attended by councilmembers and staff leadership in January 2024. The group considered long-term strategies and short-term goals for the City. The process involved establishing organizational expectation and values, discussing and evaluating current conditions, and developing a plan for goals. She summarized seven core strategies that make up action statements and identify the long-term strategies and objectives for the organization and City as a whole:

1. A Safe and Welcoming Community – Encourage community connections, maintain welcoming presence, and maintain staffing levels in public safety departments.
2. Maintains Small-Town Feel – Refresh the downtown area, preserve the community's lake life identity, and maintain the historic character and charm.
3. Engaged Community, Responsive Leadership – Create engagement opportunities, utilize relevant communication tools, and ensure services are responsive to all.
4. Complete Community – Support housing opportunities for full life cycle, support thriving educational systems, and create community through arts and events.
5. Support Redevelopment to Revitalize Local Economy and Business District – Attract a diverse mix of businesses, ensure business districts are attractive and accessible, and attract and retain employment opportunities.
6. Excellent Services and Values – Emphasize proactive budgeting, maintain resources sustainably, and maintain long-range financial planning efforts.
7. Dedicated and Supported City Staff – Maintain a desirable workplace environment, ensure staffing levels are appropriate, and sustain employee retention.

City Manager Crawford summarized a list of high-priority goals, which were identified by the selection from at least three members of the elected body and the support for staff leadership. Similarly, opportunity goals were identified when selected by at least two members of the elected body and the support for staff leadership.

To implement the Strategic Plan, once adopted by Council, City Manager Crawford explained that staff will develop measurable action steps and identify benchmarks to track progress. To maintain Strategic Planning within the organization, staff leadership and councilmembers will meet annually, alternating years for goal setting and checking progress of said goals.

Mayor Louismet thanked City Manager Crawford for organizing the Strategic Planning session. He thought the discussions were valuable and the summarized report captured the high points of the session. He thanked Council and staff for collaborating and making great progress. Councilmember Walsh suggested adding the Zoning Code Update to the short-term goal list. Though already in progress, he would like it documented on the list. Councilmember Edberg asked City Manager Crawford when staff and Council would meet to discuss the measuring tools that would track progress of the goals. City Manager Crawford clarified that staff would identify these benchmarks internally and continuously meet throughout the year, then present an update to Council during an annual work session in the first quarter of each year. She invited Council to provide suggestions if they felt differently. Councilmember Edberg suggested there be an opportunity for Council to review the identified metrics.

It was moved by Councilmember **Edberg**, seconded by Councilmember **Hughes**, to approve **Res. No. 13332** adopting the 2024 City of White Bear Lake Strategic Plan. Councilmember **Walsh** made a motion, seconded by Councilmember **Engstran**, to amend the Strategic Plan to add the Zoning Code Update to the short-term goal list. Motion carried unanimously to amend the Strategic Plan. Motion carried unanimously on adopting the 2024 City of White Bear Lake Strategic Plan as amended.

B. Shade Tree Bonding Grant Program

Public Works Director/City Engineer Kauppi was pleased to share that the City received a grant from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through the 2023-2027 Shade Tree Bonding Grant Program in the amount of \$499,800. The City applied for the grant to receive financial assistance to help address over 2,000 trees infected by emerald ash borer (EAB) in its boulevards and parks. The number of infected trees was identified in 2018 and, since then, staff has seen a high death rate of trees due to the widespread infestation of EAB. Director Kauppi explained that the grant program is comprised of two parts—first, removal of infested trees and, second, replanting trees. The area that will be addressed with grant funds that has a high concentration of EAB trees is west of White Bear Avenue between County Road E and County Road F. Director Kauppi explained that certain items are ineligible for grant funding, including restoration costs, certain replacement tree maintenance costs, public outreach costs, staff time and any equipment purchases that the City may need to commit to funding outside of the grant proceeds. He said another required condition of the City is to execute a robust public outreach communication plan.

Next steps for the project include revising the City's tree-related ordinances, which would transfer full responsibility of boulevard trees to the City, and the adoption of an ash tree management plan. Staff would begin developing a detailed project scope and timeline to ensure completion of all activities within the specified grant timeline. Director Kauppi expects mass-tree removal to start in winter 2024-2025 and replanting in summer 2025.

Mayor Louismet shared his appreciation for staff's diligence in approaching this multi-million-dollar project and for their work in securing the grant. Councilmember Edberg asked about funding areas that aren't eligible for grant funding. Director Kauppi said while stump removal is part of the program, there is no grant match so it will be funded by the City. When asked by Councilmember Edberg if residents will be responsible for any costs for boulevard trees, Director Kauppi said no as they are within the City right-of-way. When asked about the approximate cost per tree for removal and replacement, Director Kauppi said it will be between \$1,000-\$2,000. Director Kauppi shared some strategies for keeping costs down, including removing as many trees as possible during a scheduled removal. He hopes the City will be able to remove and replace 450-500 trees.

Councilmember West asked what the communication plan entails, and recognized that the City doesn't have a communications specialist on staff. Director Kauppi explained it will require effort from various departments to carry out communications, including developing letters, postcards, and social media posts, some of which will be targeted towards impacted areas and some citywide for general information. Councilmember Hughes asked how City staff identified the area to be addressed. Director Kauppi said the area has a high concentration of EAB trees and the City reviewed census block data to review information on property owners, such as age and income, which gave the City an advantage for a successful grant application.

It was moved by Councilmember **Engstran**, seconded by Councilmember **Hughes**, to approve **Res. No. 13333** accepting a grant through the 2023-2027 Shade Tree Grant Program, administered by the Department of Natural Resources, for the removal of ash trees and replacement in kind. Motion carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION

Nothing scheduled.

10. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Crawford shared about the recent open house for the Downtown Mobility and Parking Study and said there was valuable discussion and feedback from attendees. Mayor Louismet noted that while the public input opportunities are winding down, the project components aren't yet finalized. He said the initial public feedback helps shape the recommendation for the project's Steering Committee, then the recommendation will be presented to the City Council for analysis.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilmember **Walsh**, seconded by Councilmember **Hughes**, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:08 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Dan Louismet, Mayor

ATTEST:

Caley Longendyke, City Clerk