



**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024
6:00 PM
BOATWORKS COMMONS COMMUNITY ROOM**

Mayor Louismet opened the meeting at 6:05 PM. Councilmembers in attendance included: Bill Walsh, Kevin Edberg, Andrea West and Heidi Hughes. Councilmember Steve Engstran was absent. Staff members in attendance included City Manager Lindy Crawford and Assistant City Manager Rick Juba.

1. CITY BOARDS & COMMISSIONS CHECK-IN

Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) members in attendance included Gary Schroerher, Bryan Belisle, Bonnie Greenleaf, Sheryl Bolstad, Chris Greene, and Jeff Luxford. Staff members present included Environmental Engineer Connie Taillon.

Chairperson Schroerher provided an overview of the work the EAC conducted in 2023 including the environmental resource expo at Marketfest, a joint meeting with the Park Advisory Commission to discuss environmental initiatives, adopt-a-drain, pollinator friendly initiative, efforts to enhance food scrap collection, zero waste events, and participation in several other local projects.

Moving forward the EAC requested Council support on the following initiatives: removal of invasive species such as buckthorn, increasing pollinator habitat, tree planting plan for downtown, removal of dead and dying ash trees and replacement with native species, water conservation, and encouraging the City and residents to switching to electric powered outdoor equipment.

The group discussed the EAC's role in the Downtown Parking and Mobility Study. Bolstad represented the Commission on the working group for the study. There was also further discussion about the future food scrap collection program, downtown tree planting strategies, how to plan for volunteer buck thorn removal events, the level of involvement/engagement done by the commission, leveraging volunteer groups to help with buckthorn removal, reforestation/lawn care education and water quality management.

Parks Advisory Commission (PAC) members present included Bryan Belisle, Mark Cermak, Victoria Biehn, Mike Shepard, and Anastasia Davis. Staff members present included City Engineer/ Public Works Director Paul Kauppi and Parks/ Facilities Foreman Andy Wietecki.

Vice Chair Shepard highlighted the work that the PAC did by attending Marketfest and soliciting feedback from residents regarding the parks throughout the year.

Davis discussed priorities for 2024 including attending Marketfest again to talk to residents about the park system. A request they continue to frequently hear is for more pickleball courts. In 2024 there will be some additional paving of trails in the parks and a monument study for new park signage to help with branding. Community members continue to request newer amenities at the parks and the Commission recommended that the City begin to plan strategically for enhancements and begin to budget for those investments.

The Council and the PAC further discussed partnership opportunities to add pickleball courts and signage in the parks.

Planning Commission members in attendance included Ken Baltzer, Mike Amundsen, Scott Bill, Pamela Enz and Mark Lynch. Staff members present included Community Development Director Jason Lindahl, City Planner Ashton Miller, and Planning Technician Shea Lawrence.

Community Development Director Lindahl gave an overview of the projects that the Planning Commission reviewed in 2023 including changes to the roster, the beginning of the zoning code update and the downtown mobility study. Plans for 2024 include additional legal training for the Commission members.

Commission members and the Council discussed their appreciation for Community Development Staff and the support they provide to the Commission. There was also discussion regarding past decisions and differing levels of support for various projects, the next comprehensive planning process and the current status of the purple line.

2. 2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

City Manager Crawford reviewed the City's draft 2024 Legislative Priorities. There was consensus amongst the Council to prioritize changes to the laws regarding clarification to the authority of School Resource Officers, allow Chief Law Enforcement Officers to access the National Criminal History Database, funding for urban forest management, funding for lead water service remediation, and to oppose legislation that would pre-empt local zoning authority. There was not consensus to support legislation for Lake Links Trail-Hwy 96 portion project to MnDOT / County versus City nor to support legislation preserving and expanding city authority for parkland dedication and park dedication fees. The Council will adopt 2024 legislative priorities at their January 23, 2024 regular meeting.

Adjourned 9:18 PM