



City of Blaine

City Council Workshop

June 17, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, Jess Robertson, and Lori Saroya (arrived at 6:06PM).

ABSENT: None.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Safety Services Director/Police Chief Brian Podany; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; City Attorneys Tom Loonan and Lida Bannik; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

- 3.1.** 2024-229 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.03 Subd. (1)(b) - Labor Negotiations Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

After motion and second the council moved to a closed session meeting to receive a labor negotiations update.

- 3.2.** 2024-68 Median Safety Ordinance

Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

Safety Services Director/Police Chief Podany stated this item was postponed at the May 20 workshop. The median safety ordinance is being proposed due to concerns of pedestrians standing for long periods of time in the median of high traffic intersections within the City. The ordinance still allows for safe crossing of roadways but prohibits standing in the median for multiple light cycles. This ordinance was previously presented to council at the workshop on March 1, 2021. The proposed median safety draft ordinance arose out of police and resident concerns about pedestrians standing for long periods of time in the median of certain high-traffic intersections in the City of Blaine. There are several high-traffic, high-speed arterial roadways within the City that have been identified as potentially dangerous for pedestrians. Both residents and police have identified multiple intersections where this has been a problem and there have been repeated incidents at those locations. Pedestrians standing in high traffic roadway medians present an increased risk of being struck by a vehicle and impeding traffic flow. Feedback from officers who have responded to complaints about this problem note that those who partake in the action that have been requested to move to a position of greater safety have refused to do so as it is not prohibited by law.

Chief Podany explained the proposed median safety ordinance prohibits pedestrians from standing within the intersections identified in the ordinance for a duration longer than two crosswalk signals. It does not prohibit crossing as directed by traffic signals. It additionally prohibits motorists from stopping or standing in their vehicles to address pedestrians who are standing in medians. This helps to ensure safety in preventing crashes and promoting efficient traffic movement. Enforcement of the ordinance will begin with education and requests for movement from the prohibited activity. For continued or repeated violations, enforcement action will be an option. He shared how in 2021 research was done into legal considerations of a median safety ordinance prior to passage of the ordinance. Staff is asking council to consider the proposed ordinance being implemented into the City of Blaine Ordinances. If the Council is interested in considering the ordinance, it can be placed on the agenda for an upcoming regular meeting.

Councilmember Larson asked if this ordinance amendment would only apply to medians. Chief Podany reported this was the case. He explained case law keeps the city from addressing behavior on the sides of roads.

Councilmember Newland suggested Radisson Road be added to the list of roadways. Chief Podany indicated he could speak with engineering department about this roadway.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he supported the proposed ordinance amendment.

Council consensus was to support moving forward with the amendment as proposed.

3.3. 2024-231 Proposed Amendments to Off-Sale Intoxicating Liquor Licenses

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

City Clerk Sorensen stated at the May 13 workshop council provided staff feedback on possible amendments to both off-sale intoxicating liquor and tobacco licenses. Tobacco license amendments will be before council at a later date but staff is seeking feedback on the proposed off-sale license amendments. Staff reviewed the proposed proposed amendments that would retain the current distance of a 1 mile distance between and a cap of 1/7,000 in population for exclusive liquor stores but allow flexibility for other off-sale license types in conjunction with a large retail use or grocery store and requested feedback from the council on how to proceed.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for their efforts on this matter. She appreciated how staff broke down the license types, noting she wanted the city to maintain a level of flexibility going forward so as not to lose opportunities to other communities.

Mayor Sanders thanked staff and noted he supported the ordinance amendment as proposed.

Council consensus was to support moving forward with the amendment as proposed.

3.4. 2024-247 Proposed Amendments to Tobacco Licenses
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated at the May 13 workshop council provided staff feedback on possible amendments to both off-sale intoxicating liquor and tobacco licenses. Off-sale license amendments were discussed at the June 17 workshop and staff is now seeking feedback on the proposed tobacco license amendments. Staff reviewed the proposed amendments that would reduce the total number of tobacco licenses over time by creating license types based on whether they are in conjunction with another use or exclusively a tobacco products store, then placing a cap on both license types. It was noted the city currently has 54 tobacco licenses, 9 of which are tobacco products stores. All existing licenses would remain in effect until they are not renewed or expire. Changes in ownership already require a new license be applied for; council is not required to issue the full number of tobacco licenses it has available.

Councilmember Robertson stated the reason she brought this item to the council was because she received a complaint from a resident about the number of shops in the city. She indicated the city currently had 54 tobacco licenses. She encouraged the council to consider what its identity should be. She supported the city setting a cap on the number of tobacco licenses. She commented on how cannabis would be another issue the council would have to be addressing in the near future. Ms. Sorensen explained the number of cannabis licenses in the city would be separate from the number of tobacco licenses in the community.

Councilmember Larson indicated this was a great conversation for the council to have, especially before cannabis comes into the community. She anticipated cannabis would be located in liquor stores and smoke shops. Ms. Sorensen reported it was her understanding cannabis shops would be a standalone shop. She indicated the city would know more about

this use in August.

Councilmember Larson stated this would mean the city could have double the shops, when it comes to cannabis and smoke shops.

Councilmember Massoglia supported the city setting a cap for the number of tobacco licenses. He recommended the council further discuss the appropriate number of each tobacco license type.

Councilmember Larson supported setting limits as well.

Councilmember Fleming recommended the city not have more than 12 tobacco product stores, 50 convenience/grocery stores, and three or four cigar shops.

Councilmember Robertson stated she wanted the city to be mindful of the developments that are coming forward.

Council consensus was to support moving forward with the amendment as proposed. Further discussion will be needed regarding the appropriate number of each tobacco license type and will be discussed again at a future workshop.

4. Other Business

City Manager Wolfe and City Attorney Loonan discussed open meeting law and closed session regulations.

5. Adjournment



Signed by

Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by

Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

The workshop was adjourned at 6:43PM.