



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Minutes

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

City Council Workshop

While this is a public meeting where interested persons are welcome to attend, it is a work session for City Council and staff to discuss issues before them. It is not for the purpose of receiving public input.

*To participate in the meeting join the Zoom Webinar at
<https://blainemn.zoom.us/j/99599968252>*

Questions? Email - Communications@BlaineMN.gov

Monday, June 1, 2020

6:00 PM Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, city meetings will now be
held as virtual meetings until further notice

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING

1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:01 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held virtually.

2 Roll Call

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; Public Works Director Jon Haukaas; Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Brian Podany; Finance Director Joe Huss; Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Bob Therres; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Planner Lori Johnson; City Attorney Patrick Sweeney; Communications Technician Roark Haver; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; Senior Center Coordinator Ann Genosky; Recreation Manager Nate Monahan; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

Councilmember Paul joined at 6:17 p.m.

Present: 7 - Councilmember Garvais, Councilmember Jeppson, Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Swanson, Councilmember Robertson, Councilmember Paul, and Councilmember Hovland

3 New Business

3-1

EMERGENCY FOOD SERVICE AT MARY ANN YOUNG CENTER

City Manager Wolfe stated when the Mary Ann Young Center (MAYC) was

closed to the public in March, the City continued to provide daily lunches to 20 to 23 regular diners because of concerns it was their only access to nutritious meals. To accomplish this, the City arranged with the National Sports Center (NSC) to provide daily lunches after our current provider, Volunteers of America (VOA), could not guarantee that they could provide the lunches. MAYC staff picks up and distributes the lunches to the daily diners at the MAYC through a drive-up service. Staff does not have any written criteria or income verification guidelines for those to whom the city provides emergency meals. Staff made the determination based on their knowledge of the diners who they have served over the years. They identified those who they believed would not get a nutritious meal if not for this emergency food service. Of the 30 diners who have received emergency meals from MAYC, 13 of them are not residents of Blaine. Due to the need to plan and pre-order food, the city made a commitment to NSC to provide this service through July 3, 2020 and City staff is looking for Council direction on how to proceed after July 3.

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres commented on the different options available to the Council to continue providing meals to the 20 to 23 regular diners.

Councilmember Robertson supported the City continuing meals at the MAYC in order to help these elderly out through the pandemic.

Councilmember Swanson agreed the meals should continue. He questioned when the City could consider opening up the MAYC. Mr. Therres stated the City was beginning to have these conversations but noted staff did not have any information at this time. He stated that the City's expense to provide these meals during the pandemic may be refunded in the future.

Mayor Ryan supported the meals continuing. He discussed how important it was for the seniors in the community to be able to gather at the MAYC. He encouraged the City to reopen the MAYC when restaurants reopen.

Councilmember Jeppson explained she supported the City paying the small fee to feed these seniors. She questioned if it was better for some of these seniors to sign up for the meals on wheels program.

Councilmember Garvais supported the program and suggested the City reach out to see if the seniors being served these meals wanted to pick up a meal or if it would be easier to use meals on wheels. He suggested the City consider speaking to Hope for the Community foodshelf to see if there were groceries available to provide to these seniors. Ms. Wolfe stated staff was not concerned about the cost but wanted to make the City aware of the expense of continuing this program. She reported staff was very well connected with these seniors and calls could be made

to the seniors to see if they would like to continue meals with the City or sign up for meals on wheels.

Councilmember Paul supported helping the seniors in the community. He recommended staff speak with these seniors to see if they would still like to continue the meals.

Councilmember Jeppson stated she could also support the City covering the cost difference between meals at the MAYC and meals on wheels if this was easier for the seniors.

Mayor Ryan anticipated the senior center had funds available to cover this expense given the fact coffee has not been served there every day since mid-March.

Councilmember Hovland indicated he could support the City spending \$1,000 per month in additional expense in order to feed these seniors.

Mr. Therres asked if the Council wanted to continue meals with the NSC and could additional seniors be added to the list being served.

Councilmember Robertson supported the NSC continuing to provide the meals.

Councilmember Swanson stated he could support the meals continuing with the NSC but questioned if this would hurt the relationship the City has with the VOA. Mr. Therres explained the City had a long-standing relationship with the VOA and when congregate dining can continue the VOA could be brought back to the MAYC.

Councilmember Garvais stated he supported the NSC providing the meals and indicated he could support the program increasing in size up to 50 seniors.

Council consensus was to support the meal service continuing and requested information on reopening the Mary Ann Young Center. The Council would also like to see the City partner with food shelves to include supplemental food to those in need.

30 Minute Discussion

3-2

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Attachments: [Neighborhood Meeting Policy](#)

City Planner Johnson stated at a recent workshop, the City Council discussed the public notification process for development related items and expressed their desire to create a policy for neighborhood meetings and public hearing notification boundaries. Staff has prepared such policy and will implement if and/or when the

city council approves the policy. This will require a resolution by the City Council, but it will be an administrative policy for staff. Staff commented further on the policy and requested feedback from the Council.

Councilmember Paul stated he appreciated staff's efforts on this policy. He supported the City stepping aside in order to allow the developer to foster a relationship with the neighborhood.

Councilmember Robertson thanked staff for their hard work on the new policy and noted she appreciated the flexibility that would allow for the notification process to be increased when necessary. She questioned if the Council should not attend neighborhood meetings. Ms. Johnson stated staff would leave this up to the City Council.

Councilmember Jeppson asked if any other cities had a similar process in place. She is concerned that this process could deter developers from wanting to develop in Blaine. Ms. Johnson indicated staff had researched this matter and spoken to other communities. She explained there was a variety of ways cities approached this topic and she did not expect developers would be surprised that a neighborhood meeting would be required.

Councilmember Hovland recommended that if Councilmembers attended the neighborhood meetings that comments not be made in order to allow the developer to gain feedback from the public.

Councilmember Garvais stated he supported the policy as presented.

Council consensus was to support the proposed neighborhood notification process as presented by staff.

30 Minute Discussion

3-3

COVID-19 IMPACTS

City Manager Wolfe stated staff has a number of updates regarding the COVID-19 impacts. She was pleased to report that no staff members have tested positive for COVID-19.

City Clerk Sorensen updated the Council on the upcoming primary election. She discussed the supplies the Secretary of State would be providing to cities for polling. She indicated hand sanitizer and masks would be included, but plexiglass shields would not. She commented staff was seeking additional election judges and the City was working to locate alternative polling locations because schools were not supposed to be used if at all possible.

Community Development Director Thorvig discussed how staff has been looking at loan or grant programs for businesses that were suffering due to COVID. He reported staff would be bringing a program forward for the Council to review on June 15. He explained staff was proposing to provide \$250,000 to \$300,000 in EDA funds which would help 25 to 30 businesses.

Mayor Ryan stated he was pleased local restaurants could begin serving patrons outdoors.

Ms. Wolfe reported staff was waiting for one more glass quote for the counter areas before coming back to the Council with this information.

Ms. Wolfe noted the athletic associations was a busy and active topic. She explained she received safety plans from one association on Friday and understood these associations were very eager to help. She indicated outdoor sports programs were a moving target at this time and staff would keep the Council apprised on this situation.

Ms. Wolfe reported staff has been monitoring the beach and has seen a fair amount of people visiting the beach but were remaining social distanced. She indicated complaints were being brought to the City and questioned how the City should proceed.

Police Chief/Safety Services Manager Podany discussed the complaints that have been received for the beach. He explained he has stopped by and noted at the time there was 30 people there but even more people at the volleyball court. He indicated he reminded people to properly social distance. He anticipated the department would continue to receive several calls a day, especially on nice days. He stated one member of the public was extremely concerned about people swimming out to the middle of the lake given the fact there was not a lifeguard on duty.

Recreation Manager Monahan explained people would continue to gather at the beach. He anticipated with school now being done and the weather becoming warmer even more students would congregate at the beach. He stated he stops at the beach everyday at 8:00 a.m. to check on the cleanliness and noted the site has been relatively clean.

Councilmember Swanson requested an update on the curfew. Police Chief Podany discussed the curfew that was in place and noted the curfew would be extended through June 3 and would run from 10:00 p.m. through 4:00 a.m. He reported Anoka County opted out of the County-wide curfew and left this up to individual cities. He noted the neighboring cities that would have a curfew in place through

June 3. He reported the department has enhanced staffing at this time and would continue to monitor the calls activity in the City.

Councilmember Robertson stated she would defer to whatever the Police Department needs, with respect to the curfew. She commented this wasn't about what she thinks and noted she would support the department if they needed this tool in place. Police Chief Podany discussed how the curfew had assisted officers in patrolling the business districts in the community in order to protect them from suspicious activity.

Mayor Ryan commented he would support a curfew if this was something the Police Chief recommended be in place. Police Chief Podany recommended if the Council were to approve a curfew through June 3 that this be approved first thing at the Council meeting in order to allow staff to push this information out on social media.

Councilmember Garvais supported the City keeping a curfew in place if this was something the Police Chief believed was necessary. Police Chief Podany encouraged the Council to keep the curfew in place through June 3 given the threats that have been made and to assist with protecting property in the community.

Mayor Ryan asked if the Council supported him making an emergency declaration putting a curfew in place through June 3.

Councilmember Robertson supported the Mayor taking this action now in order to give staff more time to notify the public.
Councilmember Paul agreed.

Councilmember Hovland stated he could support the 10:00 p.m. curfew. He explained he did not want to create fear in the community but understood it was important to protect the public as well. He recommended the City be clear that this was a precautionary measure.

City Attorney Sweeney supported the Mayor making an emergency declaration at this time in order to allow staff to push the curfew information out to the public.

Mayor Ryan declared that on behalf of the Police Chief and the City Council for the City of Blaine a curfew would be in place June 1 through June 3 from 10:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

Discussed

15 Minute Discussion

4 Council Calendar Review

City Manager Wolfe reviewed the Council Calendar.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

The Workshop was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.