# City of Blaine
# Anoka County, Minnesota
# Minutes
## City Council Workshop

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

***While this is a public meeting where interested persons are welcome to attend, it is a work session for 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/97951894637***

***Questions? Email - Communications@BlaineMN.gov***

**Monday, February 10, 2020** | **6:00 PM** | **Cloverleaf Farm Room A**

**NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING**

**1 Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ryan at 6:00 p.m.

**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; Recreation Manager Nate Monahan; City Engineer Dan Schluender; City Planner Lori Johnson; Senior Engineering Technician Jason Sundeen; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

**Present:** 6 - Councilmember Garvais, Councilmember Jeppson, Mayor Ryan, Councilmember Robertson, Councilmember Paul, and Councilmember Hovland

**Absent:** 1 - Councilmember Swanson

**3 New Business**

**3-1 DISCUSS FUNDING REQUEST BY 3M OPEN FOR ADDITIONAL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS AT THE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER**

***Attachments:*** Site Plan
Estimates
Presentation
NSC Parking History

Community Development Director Thorvig stated in 2019 a request was made by the 3M Open for the City of Blaine to financially participate with Anoka County in funding parking lot improvements at the National Sports Center (NSC). As part of the 3M Open golf tournament, the NSC has agreed to allow the 3M Open to use the facility during the tournament for general spectator parking. There are 4,700 paved and 1,170 gravel stalls available at the NSC. Parking at the airport and TPC will be available for players, caddies, VIPs, media, etc. The paving of the parking lots was part of an approval the NSC received from the City in 2014, and the intention was for the NSC to receive money from the State of Minnesota to fund the improvements; however, this has not occurred.

Mr. Thorvig reported the tournament requested Anoka County and the City of Blaine to split the cost for paving the gravel parking lots and roadway. Tournament staff thought it was important for the tournament, NSC, Blaine and Anoka County to have the best experience possible for guests coming to the tournament and paving of the lots improves that experience. The various groups involved met several times to discuss whether it was feasible to construct the improvements prior to the 2019 tournament and whether there would be interest by Anoka County and the City of Blaine to split the costs of said improvements as these were initially expected to be paid for by the NSC. It was determined that it made the most sense to proceed with a project that included only paving of the interior roadway between 109th and 105th Avenue and re-grading the gravel parking lots. The paving of the roadway was completed at a cost of $257,324 which was split between the City of Blaine and Anoka County.

Mr. Thorvig explained the tournament has requested additional improvements to occur in 2020. These improvements include paving of the three gravel parking lots north of 105th Avenue. The City fire inspections department is also requiring fire protection (water line with hydrants) as part of any project completed. Anoka County Highway Department estimated the cost of said improvements to be $1,012,616. Broken down it is $534,964 for the large middle parking lot, $118,076 for the south parking lot, $83,965 for the north parking lot and $275,000 for the water line and hydrants. The county engineer has stated that it's unlikely that all three lots could be constructed prior to the tournament and suggested phasing. It hasn't been determined what could be completed in 2020 and is dependent on whether there is interest in the City to assist in funding.

Jen Hines, Assistant Tournament Director for the 3M Open, showed a short video to the City Council.

Hollis Cavner, Executive Director for ProLinks Sports, thanked the Council for their time and consideration. He explained in 1996 or 1997 he came to the City with a proposal to build a TPC golf course in Blaine. He commented his goal was always to bring the PGA tour to this City. He stated Blaine has been a great community to work with. He reported he manages nine events around the world and he was very pleased with how well the golf event went in Blaine this past year. He commented on the amount of money that was donated to charity from this event. He indicated this event would only get bigger and better every year. He believed he had to make the experience for the fans better, which included better parking facilities. He commented another concern was the need for more hotels. He indicated Anoka County supported the proposed parking improvements. He discussed the economic impact (over $50 million) of the 3M Open and how Blaine was promoted through this event. He discussed how a strong infrastructure in the City would create a great experience for fans going into the future.

Councilmember Hovland asked if 3M was working on increasing the number of hotels in the area. Mr. Cavner stated he was working with several different hotel groups in cooperation with the National Sports Center and commented how the players do not want to stay downtown but want to be in the area.

Mayor Ryan stated hotels had tough margins. He asked what the attendance rates were for the 2019 tournament. Mr. Cavner stated 130,000 people attended the 2019 3M Open. He indicated this was in the top tier out of all of the golf events last year. He understood that paving the entire parking lot was a big ask, but he stated he did not want to have to address this issue year after year. He explained this tournament would have a long term relationship with the City and indicated this infrastructure would keep the tournament growing. He commented further on the investment he has made in the golf course.

Councilmember Robertson questioned what the commitment was from the PGA and questioned what the long-term vision was. Mr. Cavner stated the original commitment was seven years. He explained the long-term vision would be to keep the tournament in Blaine after that time. He reported the only reason the tournament would move would be because the infrastructure did not work. He commented the other great investment that has been made in the tournament was being made by 3M.

Ms. Hines explained it was her understanding the NSC had asked for funding for the parking lots within their $5 million bonding request but indications were the Governor only included enough bonding to cover the maintenance facility.

Councilmember Paul commented on how valuable the parking was at the NSC.

Mr. Cavner stated this was true and if parking was not convenient the fan base could go down and hurt the tournament. He stated an investment in this parking lot would help the tournament for years to come.

Councilmember Jeppson indicated her frustration that the NSC was not in attendance for this conversation. She stated the 3M Open was moving up its timeline, which was understandable, but questioned why the NSC was not present. She said she feared the City would continue to become the NSC's backup plan when they did not receive enough funds through bonding to cover their expenses. Mr. Thorvig stated the NSC has been included in conversations regarding the parking lot and noted the PGA was making the parking request.

Councilmember Hovland questioned if a parking ramp should be considered. Mr. Cavner stated this would be a great option but noted the cost would be prohibitive.

Councilmember Garvais explained he appreciated the tournament. However, he stated he wanted to hear Blaine named more in the programming of the tournament. He indicated he would also like for the City to be able to talk to staff and officials of the players in order to receive more feedback on the tournament. Mr. Cavner apologized for the Council being left out of some conversations last year and noted this would not occur going forward. He stated this was in error in the past and would change, adding he understood the value of having a strong partnership with the City of Blaine and Anoka County.

Further discussion ensued regarding how the PGA was working to create events that would turn the golf tournament into a 52-week event versus a one week event.

Mayor Ryan reported he would like to understand the requirements of fire hydrants/suppression in the parking lot.

Councilmember Robertson requested further information regarding how the parking lot project would be phased. Mr. Thorvig discussed the phases for the parking lots noting the funding source would be the EDA General Fund.

Councilmember Garvais stated he could support this item moving forward but commented he would like to understand more about the fire hydrant requirements. He recommended staff speak with the Fire Chief regarding this item and report back to the Council.

Councilmember Jeppson questioned what the timeline was for this project. Mr. Thorvig stated staff would need to get started on plans and specs shortly in order to complete the project in time for this year's tournament. It was noted the parking lots would be completed in two separate phases. He explained he would speak

with the Fire Department and Anoka County to get a better idea on the costs then reported this item would require formal action from the EDA.

Mayor Ryan commented on the bonding request made for the NSC in 2020.

Councilmember Garvais asked which parking lot would be done first. Mr. Thorvig explained the larger parking lot would be done in 2020 and the two smaller lots would be done in 2021. He reported the project was being done in two separate years due to the large amount of work that was needed to get the projects done.

Councilmember Hovland indicated he would like more information regarding the required watermain and fire hydrants as this was a $300,000 expense.

**Council consensus was to support the funding request from the 3M Open for additional parking lot improvements at the National Sports Center and to direct staff to bring this item to the EDA in March.**

***30 Minute Discussion***

**3-2**

## ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS (PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND SIGNS)

***Attachments:*** Chapters 33 and 34

Presentation 3

City Planner Johnson stated this is the third opportunity for staff to provide information on the proposed zoning ordinance changes. Staff discussed the changes proposed for performance standards and signs. The changes focused on the home occupation ordinance, changes to parking requirements, the new method that would be used to deal with donation drop off boxes and signage clarifications.

Councilmember Jeppson recommended staff consider creating language for pop can drop off boxes/trailers.

Councilmember Garvais stated he supported the recommended changes from staff. He indicated some businesses may oppose building an expensive structure around their garbage cans.

Further discussion ensued regarding political signage.

Councilmember requested staff look into the foot candles coming from the Auto Kingdom sign. Ms. Johnson reported staff has had complaints regarding this sign and that staff had spoken to this property owner and requested the sign illumination be decreased.

The Council recommended the property owner be fined if necessary in order to bring the sign into compliance.

Ms. Johnson reported she would be bringing these Zoning Ordinance amendments to the Planning Commission for review in March.

***30 Minute Discussion***

**3-3**

## DISCUSSION ON PARK MASTER PLAN

***Attachments:*** 2020-02-03 Blaine Park and Recreation System Master Plan
Park Development CIP 2020-2024
Parks and Trails Levy 2020 - 2024
Parks Master Plan

Public Services Manager/Assistant City Manager Therres stated at the November 2019 Council retreat, the Council discussed a framework on how to address the recently completed parks master plan. Because of the size and breadth of the master plan, it was proposed to discuss it in several segments. This first segment will be a brief history of how the plan was developed, what it includes, and some comparisons to national standards.

Mr. Therres explained the City Council indicated that they wanted to discuss the major capital items as they came forward. One capital item that is coming forward that relates to the park master plan is the parking lot improvements to Happy Acres Park, slated for 2021. Happy Acres Park currently has a 65-space paved parking lot that is in poor condition. According to national park standards, and based on our current facilities Happy Acres should have a 160-space parking lot. The discussions on Happy Acres parking goes back to 2013 and pre-dates the parks master plan. The 160-space parking lot is proposed to be funded from our park dedication fund and our parks and trail levy fund in 2021. The budgeted amount is $525,000. Staff commented on the number of parks and amenities currently in the City of Blaine and requested feedback on the Park Master Plan. It was noted Recreation Manager Nate Monahan was in attendance for comments or questions.

Councilmember Robertson asked if the City had considered finding local businesses or neighborhoods to sponsor the parks and assist with park cleanup/maintenance. She feared the City's park maintenance fees would not be sustainable for the City long-term. She indicated the City offered a great deal of amenities for its residents and this all came at a cost. Mr. Therres discussed the projected parks maintenance fees for the next five years. He explained volunteers could be pursued for park cleanup.

Councilmember Robertson suggested local businesses be pursued to assist with

park equipment or sponsoring an entire park. She believed Blaine was an amazing community that would support the parks system and would rather have staff pursue funding from local businesses and churches instead of asking for more from the taxpayers.

Councilmember Hovland stated park amenities and maintenance was a concern for him. He stated many of the park benches and picnic tables have been removed from the neighborhood parks. He explained it may be difficult to get the neighbors involved in neighborhood parks given the fact some of the parks have been neglected for quite some time. Mr. Therres reviewed an inventory of each park and understood that some parks needed maintenance, picnic tables and park benches. Mr. Monahan stated the picnic tables are removed by City staff if they become vandalized or have graffiti.

Councilmember Hovland anticipated there were many students in the community looking for projects and volunteer hours and recommended the City look into ways to take advantage of this. Mr. Monahan stated the City sponsors an Earth Day event that focuses on local park cleanup and noted the City won an award for this initiative last year.

Mayor Ryan commented he has been part of the park clean up events.

Councilmember Hovland stated the City needed to work to curtail the graffiti and vandalism that was occurring in the local parks.

Councilmember Jeppson explained she agreed with Councilmember Robertson for the most part and encouraged staff to pursue partnerships with local businesses for the City's larger parks.

Councilmember Robertson questioned if the City had taken into consideration the demographics of the community and the aging population in Blaine when planning for future parks. She indicated the City may have to think of new and innovative ways to use the parks in order to get residents to utilize the space. Mr. Therres reported park equipment was replaced every 20 years and if the equipment was still in good condition, this timeframe could be extended. Mr. Monahan stated staff does look into the demographics in the neighborhoods.

Further discussion ensued on how neighborhoods evolve over time and how this can impact neighborhood parks.

Councilmember Paul asked if fees were charged to athletes using City fields. Mr. Therres commented a $10 feet is charged to each athlete to assist with park and field maintenance.

Mr. Monahan commented the City had an Adopt a Park program geared towards residents and reported information regarding this program was available on the City's website.

Councilmember Robertson recommended this program be advertised in order to make residents aware of this opportunity. She believed Blaine was a unique City and that people wanted to be engaged in the community.

Finance Director Huss commented on the funds that had been set aside for park improvements. He reported the Parks Master Plan was not a budgeted item and funds still have to be identified for these improvements.

Councilmember Garvais stated he would like staff to provide the Council with additional information regarding long-term park maintenance and park expenses. He explained it appeared the City was setting aside $500,000 per year for parks and was looking to spend $1.5 million in expenses. He indicated this could not be sustained.

City Manager Wolfe reported the Parks Master Plan would be broken into several different segments going forward and noted staff could come back to the Council with further information on costs. Mr. Huss commented further on the benefits of having a Parks Master Plan and how this would assist the Council in planning for future expenditures for the parks.

Councilmember Hovland commented he would like the City to remain flexible going forward as park amenities, wants and needs of the community change over time. He indicated he was also interested in staff looking at which parks would benefit from irrigation systems. Public Works Director Haukaas stated at this time staff does not believe any of the ballfields were lacking irrigation systems. He stated the only reason to add an irrigation system would be for aesthetic purposes.

Mr. Therres asked if the Council supported putting the Happy Acres parking lot in the five year CIP. The Council supported this recommendation.

**Council consensus was to direct staff to bring this item back for further discussion at a future workshop meeting.**

***30 Minute Discussion***

**3-4**

## 2020 COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

***Attachments:*** 2019 Council and Commissions

Board-Commission Applicants by Ward

City Clerk Sorensen stated on January 27 and 28 Council interviewed 23 individuals for board/commission appointments, both new applicants and incumbents. Council is asked to review the candidates interviewed and reach consensus for Mayoral appointment on February 19 and Council confirmation on March 3.

Mayor Ryan reviewed the appointments in further detail with the Council.

**Council consensus was to direct staff to bring this item forward for approval at the February 19 City Council meeting.**

***15 Minute Discussion***

**4 Council Calendar Review**

## OTHER BUSINESS

None.

**ADJOURN**

The Workshop was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.