

Maple Grove City Council work session

meeting minutes

March 6, 2023

Call to order

Pursuant to call and notice thereof, a work session meeting of the Maple Grove City Council was held at 5:45 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2023 at the Maple Grove Government Center/Public Safety Facility, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

Present were Mayor Mark Steffenson, Councilmembers Judy Hanson, Kristy Barnett, Kristy Janigo, and Rachelle Johnson. Present also was City Administrator Heidi Nelson, Director of Public Works/City Engineer Ken Ashfeld, Community and Economic Development Director Joe Hogeboom, Chuck Stifter, Parks and Recreation Director, Finance Director Greg Sticha, and City Attorney Justin Templin.

Mayor Steffenson called the meeting to order at 6:24 p.m.

2022-2024 City goals – code enforcement and housing

Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom noted that as part of the overall city goals, the City Council established several goals that pertain to work within the Community and Economic Development Department, such as zoning enforcement and housing goals to be addressed by staff by 2024.

Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom explained that Council directed staff to look for ways to be more efficient in commercial, industrial, and residential property maintenance enforcement. He stated that the city currently employs one full-time person who serves as the zoning enforcement officer, and in addition to enforcing property maintenance complaints, that position also administers massage licenses, sign permits, and conducts landscaping inspections of new developments.

Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom indicated that the City Council in its goalsetting session in 2022, expressed interest in being more proactive with property maintenance inspections; however, with one staff person in that role, the city is limited in the amount of proactive zoning enforcement that can occur or being able to enforce complaints quickly. He noted that if staff drives by a property that violates code enforcement standards, it is addressed. Otherwise, the city currently follows a complaint-based enforcement process.

Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom went on to talk about how property maintenance enforcement is handled in different communities. He noted how some cities are staffed to concentrate on

proactive zoning inspections and other cities perform complaint-based property maintenance inspections. Responsibilities of zoning and property maintenance enforcement is typically handled by Fire Department or Community Development staff in other communities. He also noted that zoning and property maintenance complaints have been consistently rising through the years, and that many complaints are about things such as trash/recycling container placement, junk in yards, exterior storage, parking, illegal fencing, and grass/weed complaints. He discussed the number of formal complaints received by the city in the past three years. He also provided information on the number of permits, licenses, and landscape plan inspections that have been performed during that same period of time.

Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom stated that another way to assist with keeping community standards in place is to evaluate existing code requirements to ensure community needs are being met. He brought up the topic of trash and recycling container placement and noted that amending code requirements has provided greater flexibility for residents who do not have space to store these containers in their garages, while still upholding community standards. He also noted that the ability for staff to issue administrative citations has been helpful and has led to significant increases in achieving code compliance. He further noted that many properties are aging in the community and lack of repairs or updates accounts for some of the complaints received. With this in mind, he suggested considering future amendments to city code to address issues such as paint or rust and other exterior maintenance issues.

Further discussion continued regarding abatement cases and the process and expense involved with working through those situations. City Attorney Templin notes the time-consuming process to work through an abatement can be expedited if there is a safety issue or other reason to advance things quickly.

Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom discussed rental license fees noting the city's fees were low compared to peer cities, so fees were raised in 2023 and are proposed to go up again in 2024 if warranted. He also talked about the upcoming addition of a fire department staff member to assist with commercial rental inspections.

Discussion continued regarding the rental housing moratorium and whether there was a need to wait until the end of July to lift the restriction on rentals. Community and Economic Development Director Hogeboom suggested that it might make sense to leave the moratorium in place due to legislation being considered that would limit corporations' abilities to convert single family

homes into rental property as well as looking at restricting property maintenance companies from being located out of state.

The Council discussed making several code changes that will aid in management of rental licensing and inspections, including requiring a local property management and maintenance agent for rental properties, increasing exterior maintenance inspections of rental properties, and examining ways to help reduce the number of families residing in one-family dwellings.

More discussion took place on opportunities for affordable or attainable owner-occupied housing, including partnering with the Minnesota Council for Veterans for possible development of affordable single-family housing for veterans, and looking into the development of affordable senior housing on city-owned property.

Consensus of Council was to add an additional zoning enforcement officer in the 2024 budget, who would also assist with exterior rental property inspection. Council also supported adding additional seasonal staff. Additionally, Council directed staff to identify city code changes that would allow for additional control over rental licensing and inspection.

Potential land acquisition – parks and recreation comprehensive plan

Director of Public Works/City Engineer Ashfeld stated he was looking for Council direction regarding the purchase of tree conservancy land from the TriCare property. He explained that the city's comprehensive plan identifies park conservancy at three locations along I-94. He discussed the purpose and locations (north, middle, and south locations) of the three conservancy parks along I-94.

Director of Public Works/City Engineer Ashfeld discussed in detail the area located on the west side of the south location, with is north of Menards. This area is subject to the TriCare development proposal for the Edison Apartments. TriCare is interested in selling the property east of Edison Apartments and the city is interested in integrating this property into the park conservancy.

Director of Public Works/City Engineer Ashfeld indicated that the most reasonable use of the property is to package it with the Radintz parcel to complete the planned conservancy. The Radintz property is roughly 13-acres, with nine acres being non-wetland. Director of Public Works/City Engineer Ashfeld explained that the Radintz property is intended to be partially a park conservancy with the remaining portion developable. He

noted that staff is talking with the Radinitz family about their willingness to preserve this property by dedication to the city. He explained that city ownership of the property would allow for dedication as a park and would also circumvent the parcel from being landlocked.

Consensus of the Council was to purchase the TriCare property to preserve the property through city ownership by utilizing funds from the Improvement Project Fund (IPF) to cash flow the purchase.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Steffenson at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Nelson
City Administrator