

Maple Grove City Council work session

meeting minutes

July 18, 2022

Call to order

Pursuant to call and notice thereof, a City Council work session was held at 5:30 p.m. and a joint City Council and Park Board meeting was held at 6 p.m. on Monday, July 18, 2022 at the Maple Grove Government Center/Public Safety Facility, Hennepin County, Minnesota. Present was Acting Mayor Karen Jaeger and Councilmembers Phil Leith, Judy Hanson, and Kristy Barnett. Absent was Mayor Steffenson. Present also was City Administrator Heidi Nelson, Community and Economic Development Director Joe Hogeboom, City Clerk Amy Dietl, Communications Coordinator Carol Morris, Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Stifter, City Attorney Justin Templin, and Park Board Members Bill Lewis, John Ferm, Andy Mielke, Debbie Coss, Kelly Cunningham, and Deb Syhre.

Acting Mayor Jaeger called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Discuss new THC legislation

City Administrator Nelson stated that with the recent legislative session, a new law was passed and it became effective July 1 legalizing the sale of certain edibles and beverages infused with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). She noted that the new law came as a surprise to municipalities and many legislators, and since it became effective, the League of Minnesota Cities has been reviewing the new legislation and advising cities on the impact from a regulatory and employment perspective.

City Administrator Nelson advised that some cities are beginning to draft code amendments to regulate the sale, but at this time, none have officially adopted any revisions. She noted that the areas of concern are with the sale and regulation of the product in the community and the impacts to personnel.

City Attorney Templin explained that while legislation legalized aspects of products containing THC by defining product packaging, minimum age to purchase, and warning labels; it does not identify where the product is to be located in the store. He suggested that the City Council may want to consider an ordinance that mandates THC products be located behind a counter or other area where it cannot easily be accessed by individuals under the age of 21. He discussed options the City Council has with regard to licensing, zoning, and other regulations.

Councilmember Barnett stated she would be supportive of THC products being handled similarly to how tobacco products are licensed by the city. She would like to see these products located behind the counter and have them be subject to compliance checks. She indicated that a moratorium would be a good idea until the city establishes how it plans on regulating the sale of THC products.

Councilmember Hanson noted that the City of St. Paul is handling THC products like tobacco products. She also commented on how regulation of these products is complicated by the fact that multiple agencies, such as federal, pharmaceutical, and agricultural organizations, are involved. She concurred that a moratorium to “pause” THC sales until the city can learn more is a good idea.

Councilmember Leith stated that THC products should be sold in a controlled situation, such as behind the counter and making sure buyers ID’s are being checked. He thought a moratorium might be good until the city figures out how it wants to handle the process.

Councilmember Jaeger noted that she is an advocate of the DARE program so she wants to be sure the city takes a step back by passing a moratorium to give the city time to make an informed decision.

Council consensus was to implement a moratorium on the sale of THC products to allow the city time to make decisions regarding implementation of local regulation. Discussion ensued regarding what would be done to provide education and information to businesses once the moratorium was passed. The item will be brought back to a future City Council meeting for consideration.

**Community Center
project and
communications
plan update (6
p.m.)**

Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Stifter stated that since the May 23 joint City Council/Park Board meeting, staff has been working with HGA to revise the master plan based on feedback from Council, Park Board, and Community Center Working Group. Nancy Blankford with HGA presented the updated plan.

Ms. Blankford shared the modified plan and explained that some of the modifications would add to the cost while some of the changes would reduce cost, but that the overall cost of the project would remain within the originally discussed budget parameters of \$116M. She showed how the new plan reuses more of the existing square footage as well as existing roads and surface parking lots. She explained that one gym would be eliminated and the indoor play area would be relocated to maximize the footprint and size of the walking track. Conversely, she discussed updated cost estimates that incorporate current market conditions and the cost to increase the banquet space to accommodate 300 seats. She showed the 34 percent growth of the expanded upper and lower levels.

Discussion continued with specific questions concerning spaces, uses, and sizes of rooms. The topic of how to answer resident questions regarding what happens if the ballot question does not pass this fall was also discussed. City Administrator Nelson stated there will still be a need for a project to address facility infrastructure issues, including structural and mechanical systems. If the referendum isn’t approved, the City Council will need to consider various options that could include a property tax increase to pay for infrastructure needs.

Communications Coordinator Morris provided a Community Center project communications update. She noted that staff continues to work closely with Rapp Strategies on a consistent and coordinated communications effort and that communication has been robust. Ms. Morris provided in detail the goals of the city's outreach, community outreach, and a discussion of goals that have been completed, scheduled, and pending. She noted that the communication avenues include the Community Center project website, dedicated email and voicemail for questions and input, social media, the city's website and newsletter, press releases, and several other methods of media. She explained that a solid foundation has been established for project communications and efforts will continue to focus on engaging residents and community stakeholders.

**Other items as
deemed necessary**

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Acting Mayor Jaeger at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Nelson
City Administrator