

Maple Grove City Council work session

meeting minutes

September 18, 2023

Call to order

Pursuant to call and notice thereof, a City Council work session was held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023 at the Maple Grove Government Center/Public Safety Facility, Hennepin County, Minnesota. Present was Mayor Mark Steffenson, and Councilmembers Judy Hanson, Kristy Barnett, Kristy Janigo, and Rachelle Johnson. Absent was none. Present also was City Administrator Heidi Nelson, Finance Director Greg Sticha, Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Stifter, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Aimee Peterson, and Community and Economic Development Director Joe Hogeboom.

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

Avalanche Art – Maple Grove Performing Arts Center presentation

Shane and Danielle Vinup, the founders of Avalanche Arts of Minnesota, spoke to the City Council about their nonprofit organization and how it is dedicated to enriching the cultural and artistic landscape of Maple Grove and the surrounding communities. Mr. Vinup noted their primary goal is to establish the Maple Grove Performing Arts Center, a dynamic hub for local community theaters, musicians, and artists to showcase their talents while providing educational programs for all age groups. Ms. Vinup explained they plan to collaborate with local businesses and schools to further enhance the cultural scene and that funding for their initiatives will come from both individual and corporate donations. She further explained the highlights of investing in a Maple Grove-based Performing Arts Center, include its potential to foster collaboration, boost academic achievement, enhance mental agility, cultivate empathy, deliver emotional and social benefits, promote physical health, refine communication skills, encourage teamwork, and boost self-confidence.

Mr. Vinup commented on the financial commitment for Avalanche Arts of Minnesota. He explained the Vinup Family Fund was established with the Minneapolis Foundation in 2022 and \$2,050,000 in contributions have gone towards developing the Maple Grove Performing Arts Center. He and Danielle do not receive a salary for their roles within the organization, and the organization's funding strategy also involves fundraising efforts, such as grant applications, reaching out to Minnesota businesses and families for support, and seeking donations from the public. He noted the objective is to initiate the creation of the Performing Arts Center and ensure its sustained operation and programming through grants and ongoing public contributions, guaranteeing its long-term success and positive impact on the community.

Ms. Vinup provided a detailed analysis of the costs associated with constructing the building and operations of the Maple Grove Performing Arts Center as well as

its projected revenue potential. Ms. Vinup requested the Council's support by donating city-owned land located along Main St., just east of the library ramp.

There was further discussion on establishing a Performing Arts Center Board, parking concerns, the city's financial obligations with regard to the project, and the size of the art center. The discussion indicated that further evaluation and consideration were needed before proceeding with the project and would be brought back to the Council at a future date.

Housing goals discussion

Community and Economic Director Hogeboom stated that in 2022, the City Council established goals for two years to address housing policy. These goals encompassed both Rental Housing and Homeownership. Discussions have evolved to include the potential for affordable senior housing and the development of city-owned lots for housing purposes. Staff is actively working on an in-house planning study for the Fernbrook Lane and County Road 30 area, which, in addition to providing recommendations for roadway improvements, will incorporate a potential affordable senior housing component. Additionally, there is an ongoing exploration of partnerships with non-profit organizations like MAC-V, which has expressed interest in receiving a city-owned lot for constructing a single-family home to benefit veterans who previously experienced homelessness.

Members of Council discussed their perspectives and concerns regarding the vacant properties. The Scattered Site housing program, which includes 28 HRA-owned properties, was also mentioned, with a query about when the city had last added to this program. It was noted that the city may be at its capacity for this program. Councilmember Janigo shared feedback from residents with questions about these properties. The conversation shifted towards the need for criteria and transparency in allocating city assets and engaging with outside nonprofits. The desire for a clear and open process for these lots was expressed, with a recognition that discussions should continue to determine the best course of action, potentially involving MAC-V. Overall, the discussion centered on the need for a well-defined process and transparency in handling these properties. Staff commented that the issue would come back to the Council at a future date.

Village Hall status and next steps – continued discussion

Community and Economic Director Hogeboom explained that during a joint work session meeting on September 4, the City Council and the Park Board deliberated the fate of the Village Hall building, which had suffered damage from a fire in late 2022. Three options were presented: restoring the building in a historic manner reminiscent of the early 1900s, "deconstructing" the facility while salvaging reusable items, or restoring it to its pre-fire standard use, mainly for insurance compliance. The latter option was eliminated from consideration. The decision now hinges on whether to restore the building for historical purposes or demolish and regrade the site. Discussions focused on the building's condition, size, and potential reuse, considering factors such as the cost-effectiveness of demolition, potential cost savings through in-house demolition work by the Public Works Department, and the salvaging of the Village Hall sign. The League of Minnesota

Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) has stated that an insurance payout for Village Hall will be approximately \$253,000.

City Administrator Nelson indicated that the cost of demolition would likely be modest, as most work could be performed by the Public Works Department. Councilmembers Hanson and Janigo agreed that rebuilding may not be the best option from a financial perspective and suggested incorporating pieces from the Village Hall into the Community Center. The conversation indicated a consensus towards demolition of the building. Formal action for this item will be presented to the City Council for consideration on October 2nd.

**Other items as
deemed necessary**

City Administrator Heidi Nelson is seeking guidance from the Council regarding the veteran's recognition for city staff and a city proclamation. Councilmember Kristy Janigo proposed that the city formally acknowledge and appreciate staff members who are veterans of the United States armed forces in anticipation of Veteran's Day.

Council discussed the need for a process to handle Council requests for new policies or programs. Council agreed with this sentiment, emphasizing the necessity of establishing a formal process for managing Councilmember requests. Staff committed to establish a process for considering Council requests for new programs or policies to be brought forward for discussion.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Steffenson at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Nelson
City Administrator