



Approved: February 8, 2016

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**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORK SESSION WITH PLANNING COMMISSION  
JANUARY 19, 2016  
5:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council work session at 5:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor David Grant; Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, and Dave McClung (arrived at 5:10 p.m.) (left meeting at 5:41 p.m. and returned at 6:53 p.m.)

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** Community Development Director Jill Hutmacher; Acting Public Works Director John Anderson; Senior Planner Matthew Bachler; Finance Analyst Dave Perrault; City Clerk Amy Dietl; Planning Commission Chair Roberta Thompson; Planning Commission Alternate Andy Holewa; Planning Commissioner Brent Bartel; Planning Commissioner Phillip Neururer; and Planning Commissioner Steven Jones

**1. AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. 2016 Planning Commission Work Plan and Project Priorities Discussion**

**Senior Planner Bachler** stated that the City Council is being asked to provide input and feedback on the draft 2016 Planning Commission Work Plan. In addition, this meeting is an opportunity to discuss other planning-related items. The City Council may provide feedback to the Planning Commission on their role, ask questions and discuss items of concern. The Planning Commission may provide input to the City Council on important planning items they see in the community and bring up topics of interest or concern.

Staff reviewed the work plan in further detail with the Council and requested feedback.

**Community Development Director Hutmacher** believed that the Planning Commission had a very full work plan. She explained that adjustments may need to be made throughout the year to accommodate new items being submitted for review.

**Mayor Grant** requested that organized trash collection on TCAAP be a priority on the work plan. He wanted to see a conscience effort made to reduce the wear and tear on the new streets within TCAAP.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if the organized collection would be for both commercial and residential properties.

**Mayor Grant** suggested that this be pursued for both commercial and residential properties.

**Councilmember Holden** requested that staff contact the recent City Council candidates to see if any were interested in serving on the Planning Commission or Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee. She explained that she has received a great deal of negative feedback on the placement of the Goodwill Store and asked that the Planning Commission discuss this further.

**Roberta Thompson**, Planning Commission Chair, commented that the Planning Commission has discussed this matter and believed that the City had to find a compromise between existing and new developments. In addition, the City had to consider how other cities were redeveloping.

**Councilmember Holden** thanked each of the Planning Commissioners for their service to the City of Arden Hills.

**Councilmember Holmes** questioned if outdoor display would be addressed by the Planning Commission in the future.

**Senior Planner Bachler** stated that this would be reviewed by the Planning Commission after being further discussed by the City Council at the work session this evening.

**Councilmember Holmes** inquired if the City had to review its industrial flex zoning standards.

**Community Development Director Hutmacher** discussed how the industrial flex zoning district was changing and believed that it would be in the City's best interest to prepare for the future of this area.

**Councilmember McClung** expressed frustration with the County Road E setback situation and looked forward to this item being addressed.

**Mayor Grant** thanked the Planning Commissioners for their dedication and appreciated their service to the City.

### **B. Goodwill Store – 1201 County Road E Discussion**

**Senior Planner Bachler** explained that Goodwill is completing final work on the interior of their store at 1201 County Road E and is expecting to hold a grand opening at the end of this month. Staff was recently contacted by Goodwill with a request to modify the approved exterior elevation plan for the County Road E façade. The proposal was to replace two spandrel glass windows to the immediate right of the County Road E entrance doorway with two transparent glass windows.

**Senior Planner Bachler** indicated that the B-2 District Design Standards require commercial buildings with frontage on a public street to have a minimum façade transparency of 50 percent. The approved development plans granted Goodwill flexibility on this requirement, allowing for transparent window coverage of 26.4 percent on the County Road E façade. The addition of the two transparent windows would bring the development into closer conformity with the B-2 District Design Standards.

**Senior Planner Bachler** stated that the Development Contract and PUD Agreement for the project requires that any significant changes to the approved plans be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. The City Attorney advised that because the modification is minor and brings the building in closer conformance with the City's standards the proposal could be approved administratively.

**Councilmember Holmes** stated that she was dismayed that this item was on the agenda. She believed that the request should have been handled administratively. She questioned why the applicant could not follow the plan approved by the City.

**Community Development Director Hutmacher** explained that the plan approved by the City Council for the Goodwill Store had some non-transparent windows on the County Road E facade. The applicant asked last Wednesday if two of the non-transparent windows could be replaced with transparent windows. She reported that normally any changes would have to be approved by the Council. However, the proposed change more closely aligned with the goals and objectives within City Code. After speaking with the City Attorney, it was determined that staff could approve the change. It was noted that staff sent an email to the City Councilmembers to see if there was any objection and one objection was brought to staff's attention. In the end, she reported that the applicant withdrew its request and would be installing the windows as shown in their plans.

**Councilmember Holden** did not understand why the applicant assumed that they would receive an immediate response from City staff regarding this matter.

**Mayor Grant** reiterated that typically when an applicant makes a change to their plans, this requires City Council review.

**Councilmember Holden** suggested that the Council discuss the administrative/Council procedure for approving plan changes in the future.

**Councilmember McClung** reported that he had no objection to the requested change by the applicant. He expressed some concern with the quick turnaround the applicant was demanding from the City. He was in favor of the Council discussing the administrative approval process at a future Council work session.

**Mayor Grant** requested that administrative changes be discussed by the City Council at a future work session.

### **C. Outdoor Display and Sales Zoning Regulations**

**Senior Planner Bachler** stated that the City is currently reviewing the use of outdoor display and sales areas in commercial districts and considering whether the Zoning Code should be updated to further regulate these activities. At the City Council work session on October 19, 2015, staff presented initial recommendations for regulatory standards that could be added to the Zoning Code. The City Council directed staff to complete further work on display area dimension standards, the types of products that could be displayed, and screening from residential properties.

**Senior Planner Bachler** indicated that staff has drafted amendments to the Zoning Code that would incorporate the new standards discussed in this memo and at the October 19, 2015, work session. The City Attorney has reviewed the draft language and does not have any concerns at this time.

Staff is requesting that the City Council provide additional feedback.

**Senior Planner Bachler** explained that the next step in this process would be to have staff draft a final version of an ordinance amending the Zoning Code to include the regulations on outdoor display and sales. The Planning Commission would be required to hold a public hearing on the ordinance prior to formal action by the City Council.

**Mayor Grant** questioned how he was to understand the definition of “residential zoned” properties within the proposed zoning code amendment.

**Community Development Director Hutmacher** discussed how this term was to be interpreted by staff and the Council.

**Councilmember Holmes** supported the outdoor display and sales zoning regulations as presented by staff.

Further discussion ensued regarding how the proposed code would address outdoor displays throughout the community.

**Mayor Grant** asked if the proposed outdoor display and sales regulations would work on TCAAP as well.

**Senior Planner Bachler** believed this to be the case.

**Mayor Grant** explained that the next step for this matter would be to go before the Planning Commission for review and recommendation to the City Council.

#### **D. Sanitary Sewer Realignment at 3280 Sandeen Road**

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that the property owner, Steven Nelson, at 3280 Sandeen Road is interested in realigning the rear yard sanitary sewer on his property to provide more buildable area. This issue has been discussed in the past by the City. Mr. Nelson is interested in constructing the relocation of this sewer this spring. The proposal has been reviewed by Planning staff and a recommended course of action has been laid out by Senior Planner Matthew Bachler in his memo dated January 11, 2016.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** indicated that the rear yard sewer is a public sanitary sewer that was originally constructed with clay pipe. This sewer has since been lined. The proposed sewer would be constructed with PVC pipe. Public Works will need to clean this sewer periodically and to accomplish that will need access from the street to a new manhole in the back yard with an easement machine. Public Works will need this access protected by an easement and kept clear of all obstacles such as fences, retaining walls, gardens, plantings, etc.

Staff requested that the Council provide the applicant with feedback on how to proceed.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed sanitary sewer realignment at 3280 Sandeen Road.

**Mayor Grant** asked if this sanitary line had been relined.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** reported that this was the case as the existing clay pipe had been lined.

**Mayor Grant** questioned how many additional feet of sewer lines would be needed.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** commented that the realignment did not require a significant length of extra line. He stated that the difficulty with the proposed realignment would be jetting the new lines.

**Councilmember Holden** questioned the cost of putting in the new lines.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** reported that the City would not bear any of the costs for the new lines. The request was being made by the property owner and would benefit the property owner. Therefore, the entire cost of the project would be the responsibility of the property owner.

**Steven Nelson**, 3280 Sandeen Road, estimated that the project would cost between \$12,000 and \$20,000. He explained that he was interested in selling the house, having it demolished, and allowing for a new home to be built.

**Mayor Grant** asked how the City would maintain these lines in the future.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** discussed the access and grading difficulties with the property.

**Mayor Grant** inquired how the City would get the sewage to flow away from the lake.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** indicated that there was a ridge on the topography that would enable the sewage to flow down and then away from the lake.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if the DNR had any concerns with the proposed realignment.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that the DNR did not regulate sanitary sewer lines unless located within the ordinary high water mark. He reported that there were several large trees within the backyard that may have to be removed in order to install the new sewer lines and that the DNR has tree regulations that may require replacement of any trees removed.

**Councilmember Holmes** requested further information on the concerns that staff encountered regarding the neighbor.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** explained that the neighbor to the south was not interested in altering his sanitary sewer connection, and for this reason, the property at 3280 Sandeen Road would have to have a zig-zag connection.

**Councilmember Holmes** asked if the applicant had spoken with the City to see if a new home could be built on his property.

**Mr. Nelson** was comfortable with the fact that he would be able to build a new home on his property once the new sanitary sewer lines were in place and a new building pad was determined.

**Mayor Grant** was interested in reviewing the City's building codes to see if a new conforming home could be built on this property.

**Community Development Director Hutmacher** stated that she believed that this was a good point and stated that staff could look more closely into the setbacks and potential size of a building pad for this lot if the existing home were demolished. She then discussed the City's options for the property long-term.

**Councilmember Holden** did not support the zig-zag that would occur in the backyard and thought this would be a maintenance concern in the future. She stated that it would also be beneficial for the Council to have a recent comment from the neighbors.

**Mr. Nelson** stated that the proposed realignment of the sanitary sewer line would allow for the highest number of trees to be saved, which was the request of his neighbors. He did not believe it would benefit a future builder to build the house so close to the street.

**Councilmember Holmes** commented on the high cost of the realignment to the City with respect to the future maintenance of the sanitary sewer lines.

**Mr. Nelson** was willing to work with City staff further to straighten out the lines.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** indicated that the sharp angle in the new lines would still be a concern to staff.

**Mr. Nelson** discussed the new deck his neighbor to the south had constructed noting that it was located directly over the sewer line.

**Mayor Grant** questioned if there was any room for expansion to the back with the existing sewer line.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** estimated that the back of the existing house was 20 feet closer to the street than the sewer line was. He reported that the City would want a 10-foot easement on either side of the sewer line.

**Mayor Grant** stated that at this point, he was not in favor of moving the sewer line.

**Councilmember Holmes** agreed that she did not see the need to move the sewer line as this would become a burden to the City. She encouraged Mr. Nelson to speak with staff to see how the existing home could be expanded. She understood that the sewer on this property has been a concern for the past 20 years. She encouraged Mr. Nelson to consider reaching a compromise that does not include moving the sanitary sewer lines.

**Mr. Nelson** thanked the Council for their time and feedback regarding this situation.

### **E. Snow Plowing, Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy**

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that the City Council approved the current Snow Plowing, Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy in 2006. Since nearly ten (10) years have elapsed since last adopted, it is appropriate to check in with the City Council to determine if the policy and implementation are providing the level of service that the Council is looking to provide to residents.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** explained that Public Works plows 30 miles of public streets, 12.6 miles of trails, four parking lots, three hockey and three pleasure rinks, as well as driveways at 11 lift stations and two water towers. The plow routes include three street routes, and one trail and walk route. Each street route is plowed by one large truck, and a small truck plows cul-de-sacs and narrow streets. Trails and walks are usually plowed by either pickup trucks or toolcats.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** indicated that the current policy is sometimes thought of as having a trigger of requiring two inches of snow to have fallen before the City considers plowing the streets. The reference to two inches of snowfall is one factor used in the decision process as to when to begin snow plowing, but it is not the test as to whether or not to plow. There are a number of factors when it comes to making decisions regarding snow plowing which include the following: accumulation, weather forecast, timing to morning and evening commutes, and what other communities are doing. Staff communicates with other agencies and municipalities leading up to and during a snow event to stay informed about how our neighbors are responding to a snow event. Some of the changes that have taken place in our procedures since the policy was adopted are as follows:

1. Shift in the use of sand/salt mixture to 100% salt with brine activation.
2. Reduction in volume of ice control materials in exchange for more plowing.
3. Addition of salt brine pretreatment prior to a snow event.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that additional challenges when it comes to snow and ice control are:

1. More obstacles adjacent to walks (County Road E and County Road 96).
2. 36% increase in total walk/trail mileage in the last 10 years

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** explained that another issue covered in the snow plowing policy is damage to yards and mailboxes during plowing. Public Works repairs plow sod damage with topsoil and seed in the spring. Staff does not repair salt damage or damaged sprinkler heads in the right-of-way. Damaged mailboxes will be repaired if there is a physical hit between the plow and the mailbox. If the force of the snow caused the mailbox to drop, it is the homeowners' responsibility to repair the mailbox.

Staff requested feedback from the Council on the policy.

**Mayor Grant** understood staff was completing a check-in with the Council. He questioned what four parking lots were plowed by staff.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** reported that the Public Works staff plows the City Hall parking lot, in addition to the lots at Ingerson, Perry and Freeway Parks.

**Mayor Grant** requested comments from the Council on the policy.

**Councilmember Holmes** supported the policy as is.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if the current policy would cover the sidewalk and trails within TCAAP.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** was in favor of having property owners maintaining the sidewalks within TCAAP, as was the practice within the remainder of the City.

**Mayor Grant** reviewed several edits to the document, noting that the City no longer uses sand and requested the mileage reference be corrected.

**Councilmember McClung** questioned how the salt brine was working for the City.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** reported that the salt brine was very effective and he appreciated the relationship City staff had with the County.

**Councilmember Holden** stated that her roadway was the last plowed after each snow event. She questioned if staff could review the route schedule to have this area completed more quickly.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that he could review this but understood that staff worked to complete business and commercial plowing first before moving onto City streets. He expressed the concern that the snow plow drivers have when running by the new Goodwill Store.

**Councilmember Holden** did not want to have this same snow removal concern on the properties within TCAAP.

**Councilmember McClung** requested that no changes be made to the sidewalk policy from January to April, but that any changes to the current policy be enforced in the 2016-2017 winter season.

**Councilmember Holmes** agreed with this recommendation and looked forward to discussing this matter further. She believed that the City currently did a great job removing snow.

**Councilmember McClung** was in agreement stating that the City received few complaints from the public regarding the snow removal process.

**Mayor Grant** asked if the snow removal policy was located on the City's website.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** indicated that the entire policy was not posted on the website.

**Mayor Grant** requested that staff publish the City's snow plow policy on the City's website.

#### **F. 2016 Employee Compensation Plan Non-Union Employees**

**City Clerk Dietl** indicated that the City Council annually evaluates its compensation plan and determines if a cost of living adjustment (COLA) is appropriate. The 2016 budget was prepared with a 3.0% increase for non-union employees. The seasonal and part-time recreation employee compensation plan has been reviewed by staff and adjustments have been based on a memo drafted by John Anderson and Sara Grant.

Staff recommended that this item be brought to the regular City Council meeting on January 25, 2016, to approve the 2016 Employee Compensation Plan for non-union employees retroactive to January 1, 2016, as presented and the Seasonal Employee 2016 Part-time scale as presented.

**Mayor Grant** noted that the Council approved the union contract at 2.5% first year and 2.75% second year. He explained that the proposed 3.0% increase for non-union employees was included in the 2016 budget. However, he wanted the Council to discuss this matter further prior to recommending approval.

**Councilmember Holmes** supported the 3.0% increase based on the results of the 2015 pay study.

**Councilmember McClung** was in favor with a 2.5% increase as this would be consistent with the City's union employees.

**Councilmember Holden** recommended a 2.75% increase be approved for the non-union employees.

**Mayor Grant** supported a 2.75% increase as this would be in alignment with the union contract.

**Councilmember McClung** indicated that he could support a 2.75% increase as this would closely align with the union employees and other State agency increases.

**Councilmember Holmes** reported that she would also support a 2.75% increase.

**Councilmember Holden** believed that the City was on the high side for seasonal employee pay.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** discussed the difficulty the City has with hiring and keeping seasonal employees on a yearly basis. For this reason, staff is proposing a wage increase in order to attract the right people.

### **G. Proposed Highway 10 Median Discussion**

**Mayor Grant** stated that during an update on projects to the City Council from MnDOT, Mark Lindeberg mentioned that as part of a MnDOT safety project, the center median on Trunk Highway 10 in front of Welsch's Big Ten Tavern and Scherer Bros. Lumber Co. will be closed permanently. He indicated that staff has been asked to draft a letter regarding this project. He is looking for feedback regarding the content of the letter, Council concerns, and who the letter should be sent to. A draft letter was included in the agenda packet as a starting point for discussion.

**Councilmember Holmes** explained that she traveled this highway daily and believed that the median should be closed. She believed that the intersection was extremely dangerous and noted that a Sheriff died at this location two years ago. She recommended that the Council defer to the expertise of the State on this issue. She did not believe Big Ten would suffer from the change.

**Councilmember Holden** understood that if MnDOT deems this intersection to be unsafe, the City would have to accept their decision. She was concerned with how the City's businesses would be adversely impacted by the proposed access change.

**Councilmember McClung** supported a letter being drafted to MnDOT expressing the City's concern for its local businesses and how they would be impacted by the proposed median closing. He suggested the City ask MnDOT to work with the businesses to mitigate any adverse effects of the closure. He believed that the intersection was extremely unsafe and should be closed given the high speed of traffic along Highway 10.

**Councilmember Holden** did not believe a letter was necessary.

**Mayor Grant** discussed how traffic would be rerouted to Big Ten if the median were closed.

Further discussion ensued regarding Big Ten and Scherer Brothers and how these businesses would be impacted by the traffic change.

**Councilmember Holmes** did not believe the City should get involved because the City was not certain as to how these businesses would be impacted, adversely or otherwise. She did not believe that the new route would be difficult for Arden Hills' residents to figure out.

**Mayor Grant** believed that the City had to make some sort of statement on behalf of these businesses.

**Councilmember Holden** did not want a lot of excess traffic driving through the manufactured home community. She wanted the safety of the children living within the community maintained. She supported a basic letter being drafted to MnDOT.

**Councilmember Holmes** requested that her name not be placed on this letter.

#### **H. Council Vacancy Discussion**

**City Clerk Dietl** indicated that the City Council has a vacancy due to the death of Robert Woodburn. The City Council advertised this vacancy and held interviews on January 11, 2016, and January 13, 2016. She requested that the Council hold a discussion to determine who will fill this vacancy and direct staff to bring this agenda item to the regular City Council meeting on January 25, 2016, to approve the appointment of the new City Councilmember for the remainder of 2016.

**Mayor Grant** stated that he would make calls to each of the candidates and inform Jonathan Wicklund that he was being offered the Council seat.

## **2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES**

**Mayor Grant** discussed concerns surrounding a driveway on Arden Place. He understood that a short section of this driveway was removed and replaced in order to improve the situation. However, the homeowner was still bottoming out when entering and exiting his driveway. He stated that the homeowner has since hired a contractor, removed the driveway and had it replaced. He explained how this project fell through the cracks last fall due to the retirement of Terry Maurer. He believed that the City should be responsible for the payment of the new driveway.

**Councilmember Holmes** did not agree. She believed that the homeowner should have contacted staff and made an additional request to the City in order for the contractor to cover the expense. She questioned when the driveway was originally completed by the City.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** reported that the work was done as part of the 2006 PMP by URS.

**Councilmember Holmes** did not agree with the City covering this expense given the fact the work was originally completed 10 years ago.

**Councilmember Holden** agreed. She questioned if this was the original homeowner.

**Mayor Grant** believed this to be the case. He explained that he was not aware that the work was completed 10 years ago and understood that it would have been beneficial for the homeowner to report the problem to the City in a more timely manner.

**Mayor Grant** requested that the Council receive a list of complaints or matters of concern from Request Tracker along with the resolutions.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that the Council may benefit more from the issues that have not been resolved.

**Mayor Grant** wanted to be informed on all matters of concern and the resolutions.

Discussion ensued regarding Request Tracker and how the program tracked matters of concern for the City.

**City Clerk Dietl** asked if any of the Council would be attending the CenturyLink meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>. She reported that she would be attending the 10:30 to noon meeting.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** reported that the City received a request from Xcel Energy to go onto load management. He explained that the power was to be shut off and City Hall was to be run by its generator. He indicated that the generator started, but would not run due to the cold temperatures. He noted that this was just a test by Xcel Energy.

**Councilmember Holden** asked how this could be avoided in the future.

**Mayor Grant** believed the generator needed winter blend fuel.

**Acting Public Works Director Anderson** stated that the generator also needed to have a heater on the fuel tank to avoid the fuel from becoming gelled.

**Councilmember Holden** recommended that staff look into the expense of a fuel tank heater for the generator.

### ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council work session at 8:35 p.m.



Amy Dietl  
City Clerk



David Grant  
Mayor