

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2011**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor Duane Langsdorf called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Raeanne Danielowski, Duane Langsdorf, and Mike Wallen. Council Member absent: Mayor Lori Kampa. Also present: City Administrator Scott Johnson, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Community Economic Development Director Jim Thares, Senior Planner Katie Larsen, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Police Chief Sean Rifenberick, Assistant Fire Chief Paul Nemes, City Attorney Soren Mattick of Campbell Knutson, and City Engineer Brad DeWolf of Bolton & Menk, Inc.

4. OPEN FORUM

Acting Mayor Langsdorf opened the Open Forum at 5:01 p.m. No one came forward. Acting Mayor Langsdorf closed the Open Forum at 5:02 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

Council Member Wallen motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda. Seconded by Council Member Danielowski, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Danielowski motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Backlund, unanimous ayes, consent agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consists of: 6A) Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 23,

2011, 6B) Approve Norland Park Final Plat Extension Request, 6C) Authorize Hiring for Vacant Police Officer Position, and 6D) Approve Exempt Raffle Permit for the NWTF Sand Dunes Gobblers on April 9, 2011.

7. BUSINESS

7A. PUBLIC HEARING – Transformation House Annexation

Katie Larsen reviewed the annexation petition submitted for the proposed project known as the Transformation House, which would be a faith based state licensed 52 bed group care facility for the post treatment of the chemically dependent. The 2.46 acre site is located in Big Lake Township at 19424 CR 43 which is west of CR 43 and south of US Highway 10.

John Weicht from John Weicht and Associates and Betty Mathews, owner of the Transformation House discussed the project and other locations that Mathews owns. Weicht noted that the CR 43 location is the preferred location for the facility due to the location of the train station. Weicht also stated that he believes the zoning on the project should be medium density rather than high density. Mathews stated that the Big Lake facility would be a long-term care facility for chemically dependent men and feels that it would be a benefit to Big Lake to have the facility here. Mathews reviewed the history of her other sites located in Anoka and Fridley and indicated that the program would be a faith based program that would focus on individual/group/family counseling, relapse prevention, social and living skills, employment and education, and many more services.

Council Member Wallen inquired about the average age of their clients. Mathews indicated that they service all ages but that the average age would be between 30 years of age to 40 years of age. Council Member Danielowski asked if their clients are referred to them through the court process or if their clients come to them voluntarily. Mathews noted that they do take court appointed clients at their facilities along with voluntary admittals.

Acting Mayor Langsdorf opened the public hearing at 5:21 p.m.

Jim Peterson - 17907 182nd Avenue, Big Lake:

Peterson informed Council that he is the realtor of the adjacent property owner. Peterson doesn't doubt the need for this type of facility, but he did question whether the proposed location and density was appropriate. Peterson stated his concern with this type of facility being so closely located to numerous residential developments. Peterson stated that they would like to be compatible with their future neighbors and questioned how bringing additional felons and registered sex offenders into the community would benefit the Big Lake area. Peterson also requested that if a different zoning classification is considered for this parcel, that his client also receive that same consideration in the future.

Chris Kogut - 380 Donna Court, Big Lake:

Kogut stated that he supports counseling for recovering addicts, but that this use is not appropriate near a large residential development. Kogut also questioned how their clients would get to the train station.

Ted Carlson - 1993 214th Avenue:

Carlson stated that he supports these kinds of facilities, but that he is not in support of this type of facility in the Big Lake community. Carlson noted that he doesn't want Big Lake to be known for a treatment facility and stated that if this facility is allowed into Big Lake he would be moving his family to another community.

Brenda Byers - 17585 218th Avenue NW:

Byers commended Ms. Mathews for providing these types of services for those in need, but noted that some locations are appropriate for these types of uses, and some are not appropriate. Byers discussed the potential for decreased property values and the possibility of losing residents. Byers also stated her concern that their clients would be free to come and go from the facility without supervision and that drug dealers could become more drawn to come into this area.

Kristie Royce - 608 Forest Road:

Royce discussed her concern with how future development around the site would be affected by this type of facility. Royce also presented law enforcement response information from the cities of Anoka and Fridley and what the impact this facility would have on our local police department and ambulance services. Royce discussed the specialized jobs in this field and that higher paid new hires would most likely come from outside the Big Lake community. Royce also presented court findings relating to employment disputes with Mathews' other facilities.

Elvi Peterson - 27747 141st Street NW, Zimmerman:

Peterson noted that her son and daughter-in-law are Big Lake residents and she is concerned for her grandchildren living so near this type of facility. The surrounding developments are inhabited by families with young children who would not expect this type of facility to be located so close to their neighborhoods.

Kevin Daniels - 685 Forest Road:

Daniels stated his concern with the facility being located so close to his residential neighborhood and felt that the property isn't big enough to house this large of a facility.

Joanne Mauch - 549 Karen Lane:

Mauch stated her concern with her backyard facing the project site and discussed her concern with their clients relapsing or not completing the full program.

Larsen noted that three comments were submitted by e-mail prior to the public hearing. Two of the comments were opposed to the annexation and one was in favor of the annexation.

No one else came forward. Acting Mayor Langsdorf closed the public hearing at 5:56 p.m.

Mathews addressed some of the concerns of the residents who spoke during the public hearing. Mathews stated that she understands their concerns, but noted that she feels the problems already exist in Big Lake and that this type of facility can help rehabilitate our own residents. Mathews also addressed the statements made relating to police calls and reiterated that the Anoka and Fridley locations are controlled environments. Mathews also clarified the wage and labor comments. Mathews noted that she feels the density would be appropriate and that visitors generally only come on weekends which is minimal.

Council Member Backlund stated that he is 100% opposed to the annexation due to the potential costs to the City, the location of the site, and due to testimony from the public. Council Member Danielowski stated that she is opposed to the annexation due to numerous other commercial sites being available in the City limits and density concerns with the CR 43 site. Council Member Wallen discussed the negative comments that he has received on this project and stated his concern with excluding this type of business based on the services that it will provide. Council Member Langsdorf stated that he doesn't necessarily have issues with the Transformation House; he does have issues with the location of the project and noted that there are plenty of available commercial lots already annexed into the City that could accommodate this project. Council Member Wallen stated that he isn't comfortable making a decision without touring Mathews other facilities first. Council Member Danielowski clarified that her concern is with the site, not with the prospect of a Transformation House. Soren Mattick discussed public hearing requirements and Council's option to table the item and re-open the hearing at a future meeting. Scott Johnson clarified that this item is strictly for Council's consideration on the annexation petition and what they would consider an appropriate use for this site at this time.

Council Member Wallen motioned to deny the annexation petition submitted for the property located at 19424 CR 43. Seconded by Council Member Backlund, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Larsen informed Council that based on the motion approved by Council, staff will draft a denial resolution for future Council approval.

7B. Municipal Separate Storm Water System Permit Public Meeting

Mike Goebel discussed the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit and the annual public meeting that is required addressing the City's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program.

7C. Finance Director Update

Brad Falteysek from AEM, Inc. provided the March finance update and answered questions from Council.

8. LIST OF CLAIMS

Council Member Backlund motioned to approve the List of Claims ranging from Check No. 60395 through Check No. 60449. Seconded by Council Member Danielowski, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Scott Johnson reported on the New River Medical Center informational meeting held at Silver Creek Township on March 1, 2011.

10. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Council Member Danielowski: Reviewed the Business Expo, the Taste of the Islands Library event and the March Food Drive. Council Member Danielowski also informed the public of the upcoming Lions Club Fish Fry scheduled on March 11th at the Fire Station.

Council Member Langsdorf: Reported on the March Planning Commission Meeting.

Council Member Wallen: Discussed the League of MN Cities Newly Elected Officials conference that he attended and thanked the Chamber of Commerce for their efforts in organizing the Business Expo.

11. OTHER

Council Member Wallen encouraged residents to become engaged and to submit input on how the City can more effectively communicate with the public. Council also discussed Social Media opportunities and the poor attendance at Town Hall meetings that were held in the last couple years.

12. ADJOURN

Council Member Wallen motioned to adjourn at 6:34 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Backlund, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

03/23/11
Date Approved By Council