

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

MARCH 9, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Danielowski called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Raeanne Danielowski, Seth Hansen, Duane Langsdorf, and Mike Wallen. Council Member absent: Scott Marotz. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Planner Michael Healy, and City Engineer Brad DeWolf and Assistant City Engineer Jared Voge from Bolton & Menk, Inc.

3. PROPOSED AGENDA

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

4. BUSINESS

4A. MS4 Permit Update

Jared Voge presented a draft of the Municipally Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) application for re-authorization. Voge noted that the City's permit reapplication was formally accepted by the MPCA on April 3, 2014 with the City's commitment to update its policies, procedures, and documentation. In order to comply with the new permit requirements, existing City Ordinances must also be revised to accommodate the new permit requirements. Voge noted that these amendments will be coming to Council in April for consideration.

4B. MN GreenStep Cities Program

Hanna Klimmek reviewed the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program which is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program that supports cities in achieving their sustainability and quality of life goals. This program is managed by the MPCA and is based on 29 best practices which are tailored to Minnesota cities and focus on cost savings and energy

use reduction. Klimmek noted that the Program started in June 2010 and there are currently 96 cities recognized by the MN GreenStep Cities Program. Klimmek also explained that the best practices categories fall within five areas including Buildings and Lighting, Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Management and Economic and Community Development. Klimmek discussed the benefits of becoming a GreenStep City and asked for Council feedback on beginning the process to be designated as one. Council directed staff to proceed with inviting a GreenStep representative to visit the City of Big Lake and to draft a resolution to join the Program.

4C. Single/Two Family Rental Housing Registration Discussion

Clay Wilfahrt discussed the need to establish rental registration rules for single-family and two-family dwelling units that are rented out to a non-owner of the property. Staff estimates that there are approximately 250 to 300 of these types of rental properties in the City. Code violations have occurred on rental units where notification to the owner has been problematic. Staff proposed addressing this gap in communication by adopting a single-family, two-family rental registration Program. Council directed staff to proceed with finalizing an Ordinance for future Council consideration establishing a rental registration program for single and two family properties.

4D. Code Enforcement Procedure Discussion

Hanna Klimmek discussed the current process the City follows for Code Enforcement. Code enforcement has been traditionally handled on a complaint basis with code enforcement actions only occurring if another resident submits a formal complaint. Klimmek reviewed how code enforcement is handled within the Community Development Department, the Police Department and Public Works. Last spring, the Police Department engaged in a proactive code enforcement experiment regarding more aggressively preventing junk and blight. The department conducted a sweep of the City targeting approximately 140 problem properties. Klimmek noted the extreme amount of staff time it took to complete this project which took approximately four months to complete. Klimmek clarified that there has not been any proactive code enforcement since last year's sweep, and all code enforcement since that time has been complaint based. Since bringing the City Planner position back in-house, staff has been discussing ways to improve the Planning and Zoning approach to code enforcement to align it better with efforts of the Police Department and Public Works. Staff also recommended that the City actively solicit complaint based code enforcement through the City Newsletter, Facebook and the City Website. Discussion was held on the need for community members to be proactive in turning in complaints but that some are fearful to do this, discussed possibly using Trouble Tickets software that could provide anonymity in filing complaints, establishing objective guidelines for identifying junk and blight, and possibly testing the anonymous complaint option with marketing to residents. Council directed staff to establish milestones for the junk and blight program and re-evaluate after a period of time.

4E. Solar Garden Update

Michael Healy provided an update on the SolarStone project. A solar garden was proposed to be located on City owned land along Highway 25 in Big Lake Township. SolarStone's proposed project is a 5 Megawatt solar garden which creates a problem with the 10 acre parcel of City owned land. In order to obtain that amount of wattage, more solar panels would be needed which would not meet the County's 50 foot setback. SolarStone is proposing a site plan with 25 foot setbacks which would give them enough space for the 5 Megawatt project. Sherburne County has denied their Variance request with the rationale that they have required other Solar projects to conform to the 50 foot setback requirement. Staff discussed the option for the City to adopt its own solar ordinance and whether the City would like to annex this parcel considering it is a City owned parcel. Healy reviewed the different requirements that could be implemented in a solar ordinance including allowing through an Interim Use Process as Sherburne County does, allowing through a Conditional Use Process which would run with the land, and allowing as a Permitted Use as Chisago County does. Healy noted that Interim Use Permits give the City the most control along with flexibility over the project. Discussion was held on setbacks based on the use of the adjacent parcel, and that cities generally require setback requirements to match the zoning requirements. Clay Wilfahrt informed Council that he will be going before the Town Board to discuss annexation of the parcel. Council directed staff to draft a solar ordinance allowing through an Interim Use Permit.

4F. School Board Use of Council Chamber Discussion

Gina Wolbeck informed Council that the Big Lake School District has request to use the City Council Chamber and video equipment to hold their monthly Board meetings. They will be providing their own staff to operate the video equipment. Council discussed the benefits of the School Board holding their meetings in the Council Chambers and telecasting the proceedings for the public to watch. Council directed staff to continue working with the School District to allow them to hold their meetings in the City Council Chamber and utilize the City's video equipment.

5. OTHER

Deb Wegeleben informed Council that the Personnel Policy changes include City offices being open on Columbus Day and closed the day after Thanksgiving.

6. ADJOURN

Council Member Hansen motioned to adjourn at 5:55 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Wallen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
City Clerk

03/23/16
Date Approved By Council