

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**MAY 8, 2019**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. ROLL CALL**

Council Members present: Dick Backlund, Seth Hansen, Rose Johnson, Paul Knier, and Mike Wallen. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, Public Works Director Mike Goebel, City Engineer Layne Otteson, City Planner Michael Healy, and Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey.

**3. PROPOSED AGENDA**

Council Member Johnson motioned to adopt the proposed agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

**4. BUSINESS**

**4A. Discussion on Zoning Rules for Firearm Ranges**

Michael Healy reviewed the request submitted from Duane Langsdorf, the owner of Autostop, an auto repair shop located at 101 Lake Street South for the City Council to discuss zoning rules for firearm ranges in the City limits. Langsdorf's commercial building has a vacant space on the north side of his building which previously functioned as a car wash. Langsdorf is seeking to convert the space into an indoor firearm range. Healy noted that the zoning code places tight restrictions on where firearm ranges can be allowed. Ranges are not currently allowed in any commercial district, but are allowed in the City's heavy industrial zoning districts under specific conditions. The Autostop property is located in the B-3 General Business Zoning District and is located approximately 25 feet from a residential property line to the south, and the proposed firearm range would be located approximately 80 feet from the residential property line to the south. The residential lot is one acre in size and the house itself is roughly 175 feet from Autostop. Healy explained that the City Council has broad authority through their legislative role to create zoning rules for the City's various zoning districts. The shooting range proposal would not be able to move forward under the City's current rules and could only be allowed through an Ordinance Amendment. Langsdorf is interested in applying for an Ordinance Amendment if the Council is receptive to discussing the idea. Healy noted that Council's interest for discussion does not mean the Council is committing to support an Ordinance Amendment. This type of amendment would require a public hearing at the Planning Commission where there would be an opportunity for public comment. The Planning Commission may, or may not end up recommending changes to the ordinance.

Council reviewed Langsdorf's request. Council Member Knier stated that he is open for continued discussion on the concept. Knier asked for clarification on the reasoning for the setback requirement? Healy stated that the zoning code regulates setbacks to avoid negative impacts to adjacent property. Council Member Johnson stated that she sees no known significant issues with the project and would be open to further discussion. Johnson also stated that this type of project adjacent to the railroad tracks seems like a good use. Council discussed that requiring a Conditional Use Permit would provide the City the ability to review site locations on a case by case basis. Council Member Hansen stated that he is in favor of this type of project. Council Member Backlund stated that he is open to further discussion on the project, and questioned the amount of parking at the site. The Applicant informed Council that he is looking at a maximum of five lanes at the range which won't generate a large number of parking. Mayor Wallen stated that he is open to further discussion of allowing this use in the B-3 Business District with a 100-foot setback requirement. Joel Scharf informed Council that the Police Department would utilize an indoor firearm range.

Duane Langsdorf discussed the proposed project, noting that most firearm ranges are located in B-3 Zoning Districts.

The general consensus of the Council is that they are open to a formal discussion about modifying the zoning rules for firearm ranges within the B-3 Business District.

#### **4B. Discussion on the City's Dog Licensing Program**

Joel Scharf discussed changes made to the City's dog licensing program in January 2016 which resulted in going from a "lifetime" license to a biannual licensing of all dogs in the City. It was anticipated that this process would bring together a more robust database of dogs in our City, at the same time allowing for the verification of rabies vaccination at the time of licensure. Scharf noted that in review of the success of the change for the past two years, it has been determined to not have had the desired effect. At this point, the volume of staff time spent in the licensing process, coupled with the weak revenues from license sales, opens the door for discussion on the elimination of the program entirely. The Police Department has not had one instance where a dog has been reunited with its owner due to having a City license. Scharf also stated that he feels it's not worth the time for Officers to have to conduct follow-up on dog complaints to ensure licenses are obtained. Scharf noted that several communities are electing to end the practice of dog licensure and are replacing this practice with encouragement to dog owners to microchip their dogs, or purchase customized tags which identify the owners and addresses. Scharf reviewed revenue generated from the program compared to expenses the City incurs, which appears to be a losing venture for the City.

Council Member Johnson stated that technology has moved past this type of licensing program, and doesn't see the point to continue if it's not working as we intended it to. Johnson liked the idea of the City encouraging dog owners to microchip their animals. Council Member Knier stated that he is all for doing away with the dog licensing program. Council Member Hansen stated that he is in agreement with eliminating the program.

Council directed staff to proceed with eliminating the City Dog Licensing Program.

#### **4C. Xcel Energy Easement Request Discussion**

Layne Otteson reviewed the request submitted by Xcel Energy for a 10-foot wide Easement for a high pressure gas line on City property along Putnam Avenue located south of McDonald's. Otteson hasn't heard back from them on specific plans, and noted that the area Xcel has unofficially identified has been identified as a potential City parking lot and is located in our downtown area. Otteson noted that he will bring back information once Xcel submits further plans.

Council discussed the potential for redevelopment of this area. Discussion was also held on private easements versus public easements. Otteson explained that a private easement would provide a monetary gain for the City, and that a public easement would provide space for other utilities. Otteson stressed that we don't want to limit ourselves as far as development or ponding needs in this area.

#### **4D. Street Seal Coating and Micro Surfacing Review**

Mike Goebel reviewed the City's history of seal coating and crack filling for the past 30 years up until 2015. Goebel noted that most of the seal coating was done with a process called chip seal, which consists of first sealing the cracks with a rubberized material, and then applying an emulsified asphalt liquid, CRS-2 to the road surface. A crushed granite or pea rock is then applied to the emulsified asphalt liquid and then compacted with a roller. The City most recently used crushed granite, and the materials are given time to bond and cure out. The final process is the loose material being swept off the street. Goebel noted that a seal coat will typically last 6 to 10 years and costs approximately \$25,000. Goebel also discussed the benefits of fog sealing over the granite/pea rock that can add an additional 2 to 3 years of life to chip seal.

Goebel reviewed budgeted dollars for seal coating and crack filling dating back to 2003, noting that in 2016, dollars budgeted towards seal coating was instead used to help fund the mill and overlay project on Mitchell Road, Loon Drive, Wood Duck Lane, Ruddy Duck Lane and Black Duck Lane. In 2017 and 2018, due to concerns with some communities that were experiencing failing streets after seal coating, it was decided to postpone seal coating until a conclusion was reached on cause, and to proceed to spend funds on street overlays or wait for further direction from the City Engineer. Goebel also discussed controversy about the negative impact these processes could potentially cause a road. Staff has been researching new chemicals that can improve street conditions, noting that a chemical known as Replay is up and coming, but hasn't received MNDOT approval yet. Goebel clarified that right now, we are only crack filling. Layne Otteson discussed the process the City of Fridley followed which was on an eight year sealcoat schedule, noting that it's a way of protecting a City's asset. Otteson also noted that it is imperative to do a good job during construction with compaction, in combination with ongoing preventative maintenance efforts.

Staff will review budget and available technologies, and report back to Council.

**4E. New Ideas Discussion** - None presented.

**5. OTHER** – No other.

**6. ADJOURN**

Council Member Hansen motioned to adjourn at 5:43 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Knier unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
City Clerk

05/22/19  
Date Approved By Council