

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**JUNE 24, 2020**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Mike Wallen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Council Members present: Seth Hansen, Rose Johnson, Paul Knier, Mike Wallen, and Scott Zettervall. Also present: City Administrator Clay Wilfahrt, Finance Director Deb Wegeleben, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Chief Joel Scharf, Deputy Chief Matt Hayen, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, and Liquor Store Manager Greg Zurbey.

**4. OPEN FORUM**

Mayor Wallen opened the Open Forum at 6:01 p.m.

Teri Dickinson, 3370 Lake Ridge Drive – Discussed the June 19<sup>th</sup> protest held in Big Lake and questioned which Council Members were working with the group. Dickinson also asked what law did blocking the highway violate, and questioned who authorized blocking the highway. Dickinson also questioned if anyone on the City Council participated in the protest. The Council unanimously confirmed that no one on the Council participated in the protest.

Becca Renslow, 5541 Aberdeen Way – Stated that she helped organize the recent protest in the City of Big Lake and suggested the City consider allocating City dollars to fund social and mental health services as well as offering assistance to individuals battling domestic violence, addiction, and drug abuse. Renslow stated that she feels the police are overstretched and that these types of services could assist them.

Mayor Wallen closed the Open Forum at 6:08 p.m.

**5. PROPOSED AGENDA**

Council Member Hansen motioned to adopt the proposed Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Zettervall, unanimous ayes, Agenda adopted.

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

Council Member Knier motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consists of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, 6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of June 10, 2020, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of June 10, 2020, 6D. Approve Ordinance No. 2020-14 Amending Section 1068 to Allow Group Care Facilities as a Conditional Use and approving Summary Publication Resolution No. 2020-56, 6E. Authorize Sale of 2020 Tax Forfeiture Parcels, 6F. Approve AIS Watercraft Inspection Reimbursement Agreement with the Big Lake Community Lakes Association, 6G. Accept Resignation of City Planner Amy Barthel, 6H. Approve Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion Project Change Order No. 1, and 6I. Approve Public Works Mower and Trailer Equipment Replacement.

## **7. BUSINESS**

### **7A. Avalon Estates Development Application – PUD Concept Plan Review**

Kevin Shay reviewed the planners report for the development application submitted by Avalon Homes for PUD Concept Plan review. The request is for a proposed residential development on 57 acres located west of Highland Avenue. The existing property is currently vacant agricultural land, and lies directly south of Blacks Lake and west of Big Lake. The property was recently been annexed into the City of Big Lake and is guided as future neighborhood on the land use map. The parcel is currently zoned Agriculture with a Shoreland Overlay. The Applicant will be requesting a rezone to assign the PUD zoning for the site with R-1 Single Family Residential standards used as a base, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow a shoreland PUD in order to receive additional density, a Preliminary Plat and development Stage PUD to subdivide the property, and a Variance to allow an increased building height in the shoreland district. Shay explained that with a traditional PUD, flexibility could be requested for the maximum building height but shoreland PUD's do not allow flexibility for development standards which is why the applicant is requesting a Variance. The proposed project is for a residential development that would consist of 32 patio twin home units, 32 quad townhome units, and a 42-unit apartment building. Shay identified that the proposed gross density of the development is 2.9 units per acre which is within the density range for the low-density land use which allows 2.4 to 4 housing units per acres. The development will also include open amenity space and park areas. Shay reviewed Shoreland Overlay standards and requirements. The proposed development has four lakes that are classified as shoreland lakes by the MNDNR who impose restrictions on the development of the property. Big Lake and Lake Mitchell are classified as general development lakes, Black's Lake is classified as a recreational development lake, and Beulah Pond is classified as a natural environment lake. Each of these lakes have a 1,000-foot Shoreland Overlay boundary where the development standards are applied. Shay reviewed that the proposed extension of Highland Avenue is designated as a future

collector road and is necessary to provide access to this development and for future development to the west. Highland Avenue falls within the lakeshore setback and the developer will need to provide calculations to the City to ensure that 70% of the lakeshore setback is preserved in a natural or existing state. Shay noted that the MNDNR has provided comment on the concept plan stating that the plan is overall compliant with shoreland PUD standards and identified two items of concern including the height of the apartment complex and that realignment of Highland Avenue puts the road in the shore impact zone. Staff requested Council feedback regarding the project's acceptability in relation to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

Council Member Johnson stated that while she likes the project concept, she remains concerned about the access being proposed from Highland Avenue. Shay indicated that the EAW study will address transportation.

Mayor Wallen stated that this site is proposed for one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the City and that the proposed project will have thorough DNR review.

#### **7B. 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-02 – Receive Preliminary Engineering Report**

Layne Otteson reviewed the Preliminary Engineering Report for the proposed 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-02. Otteson noted that all street and utility work identified was to be included in the ST2020-01 project which has since been delayed. The items identified in ST2020-02 are items that are high priority to be completed this year so they don't continue to negatively impact operations and maintenance of streets, sewer collection, and water distribution systems. Streets identified for repair include Euclid Avenue, Lakeshore Drive/Hiawatha Avenue, Highline Drive, and Kilbirnie Drive/Sterling Drive. Otteson noted that concrete curbing, catch basins and manholes need to be repaired throughout the City as they are hazards to the public and to snow plow equipment. There are also several sinkholes next to catch basins that need structure repair and pavement patching. Otteson also reviewed sidewalk construction and ADA improvements that are needed along Minnesota Avenue and accesses to the McDowall Park trail system. These repairs will be funded through the Street Maintenance Capital Improvement Fund 196. Utility repairs needed are a 12" water main on County Road 81 that has been out of service for over a year. This infrastructure provides redundant water service to the western most neighborhoods of the City and is a critical top priority to get back on line. Otteson also discussed water services on Mount Curve that have been freezing in certain years since 2012 when the City rebuilt the street and installed storm sewer. Insulating the services in the street pavement area should significantly reduce service freeze ups. These repairs will be funded through the Water Capital Improvement Fund 399. Otteson noted that the overall estimated cost associated with these improvements is approximately \$171,000 which falls below the available funding amount of \$175,000.

Council Member Johnson questioned why the streets have deteriorated so badly. Otteson reviewed that possibly the streets were paved when the air temperature was too low, or the material used was inadequate.

Council Member Zetervall asked if large vehicles are a contributing factor to the deterioration. Otteson noted that larger vehicles do more damage than smaller vehicles which has to do with equivalent single axel loads. Otteson explained that a large vehicle won't cause road deterioration, but once that type of deterioration starts, a heavier vehicle will affect the longevity of a road. Otteson clarified that these streets are 20 to 25 years old so some deterioration is expected due to their age.

Council Member Knier asked about the status of a meeting with Aztech to discuss micro surfacing.

Council Member Knier motioned to receive the Preliminary Engineering Report and Order Plans and Specifications for the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-02. Seconded by Council Member Zetervall, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

#### **7C. 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-02 – Plans and Specifications and Order Advertisement for Bid**

Layne Otteson reviewed the Plans and Specifications for the 2020 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-02 which will address needed repairs to street pavement and utilities.

Council Member Knier motioned to approve Resolution No. 2020-57 approving the Final Plans and Specifications and authorizing the Advertisement of Bids for the 2020 Street and Utility Project No. ST2020-2. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

#### **7D. Organizational Structure Amendments**

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed recent significant organizational changes that occurred at the beginning of the year. One component of the reorganization was to combine the Public Works Director and City Engineer positions. Over the initial first six months of this change, the demands on that position have become overwhelming. The City has been required to hire consultant engineers on some projects as a result, and not all engineering goals are being met as a result. Wilfahrt stressed that this is not a problem of employee performance, but rather of workload. Staff has met with the Personnel Committee to discuss options and to develop a proposed solution. The Personnel Committee discussed leaving the structure as is, or divesting some of the Public Works duties. Wilfahrt noted that it was preferred to divest some Public Works duties from the City Engineer. As the department is divided into Water/Wastewater and Streets/Parks, Staff believes these

divisions can be managed more efficiently by two separate departments. As Water/Wastewater is interrelated with Engineering in many ways and is fairly prescriptive, Staff believes this division would continue to work well under the supervision of the Engineering Department. Streets/Parks has similarities with the Community Development Department including the Recreation Coordinator position. Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek has indicated that she is comfortable with the capacity of her department to take on the Streets/Parks division.

Mayor Wallen thanked City Engineer Layne Otteson for trying the combined position, and noted that Council recognizes that the result was found to be unattainable. Wallen also thanked Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek for taking on the Streets/Parks Division.

Council Member Knier stated his appreciation that the restructure was worked out without having to add more staff.

Council Member Hansen motioned to approve job description amendments for the Community Development Director, City Engineer/Utilities Manager, and Streets and Parks Superintendent. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

#### **7E. COVID-19 Preparedness Plan**

Clay Wilfahrt presented the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that is mandated by the Governor's Executive Order for workplace safety and to reduce the spread of the disease.

Council Member Hansen motioned to approve the City of Big Lake COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Seconded by Council Member Zettervall, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

#### **7F. Monthly Department Reports**

Deb Wegeleben provided a year-to-date financial report, discussed the unassigned fund balance and reviewed allocated funds identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan Fund. Wegeleben also discussed the upcoming schedule for the 2021 budget cycle.

Greg Zurbey provided an update on the Municipal Liquor Store operations for May 2020 noting inventory issues on the supplier end, the cancellation of all tastings and events due to COVID, reviewed new hours of operation, and discussed vacant employment positions. Zurbey also provided a year to date financial comparison between 2019 and 2020.

Hanna Klimmek provided an update on activities in the Community Development Department. Klimmek reviewed housing/commercial development statistics/projects, and redevelopment projects. Klimmek also reviewed a year to date 2019/2020 permit activity

comparison, provided a status update on the Community Branding and Identity Design project, noted that Staff continues to support the Big Lake business community with COVID relief efforts, and discussed the application process for filing the vacant City Planner position.

**8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Clay Wilfahrt discussed the increased volume of parking at Lakeside Park noting that Staff continues to work through signage, restroom use, and boat patrol. Wilfahrt also discussed the substantial amount of staff time the City has spent on policies and procedures to meet the Executive Order requirements, and noted that day-to-day City operations remains the same. Wilfahrt discussed the potential CARES Act funding and reviewed that Staff will continue to track costs and Staff time. Wilfahrt also discussed his mid-year Personnel committee performance evaluation that was conducted recently.

Council Member Knier asked if the restrooms need to remain closed at Lakeside Park. Wilfahrt noted that the public restrooms have been reopened and staff will check to see if the showers are working.

**9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Mayor Wallen: Discussed the recent City Administrator mid-year review.

Council Member Johnson: Discussed the recent Personnel Committee Meeting.

Council Member Knier: Reviewed the recent streets meeting with the City Engineer.

Council Member Zettervall: Discussed the June Planning Commission Meeting and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting.

**10. OTHER** – No other.

**11. ADJOURN**

Council Member Knier motioned to adjourn at 7:09 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck  
Clerk

Date Approved By Council 07/08/2020