

**BIG LAKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

JULY 8, 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, City Engineer Layne Otteson, Police Chief Joel Scharf, City Clerk Gina Wolbeck, Assistant Liquor Store Manager Lisa Miller, and Assistant Fire Chief Mark Hedstrom.

4. OPEN FORUM

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

Terri Dickinson, 3310 Lake Ridge Drive- Noted that she was on the Planning Taskforce Committee and that they agreed what the City needs is step-up housing with larger lots and larger driveways, noting that they agreed that Big Lake consisted mainly of starter homes and what they did not want was people to move out of the City as their families grew and they needed more space. Dickinson stated that she felt the consultants continually pushed high density, low-income housing as well as expanding outside the City limits and using private property for projects. They promoted governmental force, and a disregard for property owners. She felt one consultant bullied her because she stood up against the Agenda 21 push. Dickinson discussed the City's review of a conceptual plan for buildings, Section 8 short or long term homeless housing, but no step-up housing. She understands that the 20-year old starter home neighborhoods were redefined as low-

density housing and she feels this is deceitful. Dickinson also reviewed notification to area properties, and pleaded to the Council Members to be accountable to the citizens of Big Lake first and foremost.

Cam Habeger, 16702 205th Avenue NW - Stated that he loves living in Big Lake and the natural amenities it provides. Habeger discussed the Planning Commission's concept plan for the Marketplace Crossing proposed to be developed by Commonbond. The people of the City and the Township love their way of life, so much that when a flyer went out people mobilized a plan to attend the open forum portion of the Planning Commission meeting on June 17 to voice their objection. So many people attended that some had to stand in the hallway similar as today, noting that 13 people spoke at open forum in opposition to the project. Habeger discussed his concern that immediately following the meeting, the Planning Commission immediately called the developer to coach them on their concerns, noting that the Zoom videoconference system was still connected, and stated that this call was unethical. Elected and appointed officials should be looking out for citizen interests, not the developer's and bank's interest. Habeger asked the City Council to investigate this call, and to obtain the phone transcript and zoom call recording so we can further vet this out, and for Paul Knier to head up the investigation. Habeger noted that they are all here to be helpful and to contribute alternative ideas on the use and tax base of this land. The Comprehensive Land Use Map is extremely flawed on how residents view the land use. Habeger stated that we oppose the addition of excessive high density housing to this City, we oppose the conversion of commercial zoned parcels to high density, and we oppose excessive variances to developers who push these projects through.

Scott Creighton, 601 Lakeshore Drive – Noted that he has lived here for 22 years. He noted that most speakers are against the development for all the same reasons, noting that it doesn't belong in this small town, that our taxes will go up and he guarantees that there will be more crime, and that it will change this town even more. He would rather have housing come in that benefits the City, that won't be a detriment to the City.

Rebecca Renslow, 5541 Aberdeen Way – Stated that she is here again to ask the City to reallocate funds from the Police Department to preventative programs that will help diversify the community more effectively including programs on mental health and social work. There are a lot of issues with substance abuse in Big Lake, but there are practically no well-developed programs for mental health and substance abuse in our area, noting the City of Lakeville's program that they have in place to address these areas. Renslow stated that Police are simply not equipped to handle a person experiencing a mental health crisis, noting that Police are meant for crime, not for social work. Renslow stated that the social work programs in Big Lake are extremely under staffed and under utilized. Renslow strongly urged Council to consider investing funds to strengthen and widen the social work program, and to form a diversity committee. Renslow again asked the City to reallocate funds from a taskforce designed for crime to forces built to prevent and aid such issues

with nuance, thus making a safer community.

Justin Higgins, 5450 Edinburgh Way – Stated that he is against the Planning Commission for putting in this low income housing, stating that it will be a bad deal for Big Lake noting that he has lived here for 20 years and he doesn't want to see worthless people not paying taxes. Higgins stated that if we are going to put houses in, he would like to see at least \$500,000 homes built in there.

Karen Wood, 19960 159th Street NW – stated that she lives just up the street from this project and is very much opposed to the idea. Wood discussed that she purchased three acres of land surrounded by potato fields when she moved here in 1978. The area is peaceful and quiet, and she doesn't want to lose that. She also stated that she does not want Big Lake to turn into a metropolis or a suburb of Minneapolis.

Nate Wood, 19960 159th Street NW – Stated that he has lived here his entire life and is opposed to this project. Doesn't want the Police Department to have to watch over these people and the homeless.

Dave Dickey, 16644 205th Avenue NW – Stated that he moved here in 2012 from Alaska, stating that he did not move here to live in a place like Northeast Minneapolis. He likes it here because it is nice and quiet and is away from the city. Dickey stated that he has yet to see a low income housing area not bring in more crime. Urged the City to knock off the behind the scenes stuff. Stop it and get it out in the open so everybody knows what's going on.

Nora Lewandowski - 20095 170th Street NW – Stated that she is opposed to the project, and understands that where we are situated between Minneapolis and St. Cloud and recognizes that the growth is coming and is inevitable. Lewandowski stated that we can't make more land, and discussed that what has brought this issue to a head is the stretch along Marketplace that was zoned commercial, and trying to turn it into high-density housing. Lewandowski stated her concern that she doesn't have a say in the City and how her tax dollars will be used to build more schools when all this additional housing comes in that she doesn't have a say in. Lewandowski discussed that we finally have a newspaper that is going to circulate and the importance to share information with all community members including those that live in the Township and get more involvement as we all want what's best for the community. Lewandowski stated that she understands the debt issues of the City and that the City wants to sell land, but that we need to do what's best for the people that live here already. Lewandowski discussed that her grandkids play hockey and that there has never been support to build an ice arena. Hockey families have to drive to Princeton for their home ice. We are talking about bringing in more children and we already don't have anything for kids to do. Feels there is a race to get mass high-density housing put in, and asked for someone to show us a list of supporters of this project.

Mayor Wallen noted that everyone signed up to speak at open forum were allowed to do so, and any further attendees wishing to speak on the topic addressed by most of the open forum presenters, are asked to approach the microphone, state their name and address, and state their opinion on the topic brought forward by other presenters.

Ralph Kiffmeyer, 16160 201st Avenue NW – Stated that he not only opposes the project, he feels it is a totally inappropriate place to build this type of housing, which is 2.5 miles from any services.

Council Member Hansen stated that he will not tolerate any derogatory comments made about any class of people, and expressed his frustration that previous presenters have made comments that degrade people. The Mayor and Council Members concurred with Council Member Hansen's statement.

Jim Miller, 20415 167th Street NW – Stated that he is opposed to it also.

Dick Dezwarte, 20253 167th Street NW - Stated that he is opposed to it also.

Beth Dezwarte, 20253 167th Street NW – Stated that she is opposed to that building happening right there at Marketplace Drive.

Gary Metzger – 16848 205th Avenue NW – Stated that he is opposed to this also.

Mark Zachman, 20272 169th Circle NW – Stated that he is vehemently opposed to this.

Alona Carston, 16564 Houghton Drive – Stated that she is definitely opposed to this project.

Mike Berg, 5300 Edinburgh Way – Stated that he is definitely opposed to that.

Donnie Schueller, 16908 204th Avenue NW – Stated that she has lived here for 48 years and she hopes to God this doesn't go through.

Ray Sundstrom, 17000 205th Avenue NW – Stated that he opposes it.

Jeff Carston, 16564 Houghton Drive – Stated that he opposes it.

Jessica Glen, 16702 205th Avenue – Stated that she is opposed to it.

No one else came forward. Mayor Wallen closed the Open Forum at 6:23 p.m.

5. PROPOSED AGENDA

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

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Johnson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of items no. 6B and 6E for separate consideration. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, Consent Agenda approved. The Consent Agenda consists of: 6A. Approve List of Claims, ~~6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of June 24, 2020~~, 6C. Approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2020, 6D. Approve Coronavirus Relief Fund Certification Form, ~~6E. Approve Election Judge Appointments for the 2020 Primary and General Elections~~, 6F. Approve Reclassification of Police Administrative Positions, 6G. Approve Reclassification of City Clerk Position, 6H. Accept Resignation of Part-time Liquor Clerk Nate Dunning, and 6I. Approve Outside Employment Request Form for City Administrator.

6B. Approve Council Workshop Minutes of June 24, 2020

Council Member Knier requested a revision to the June 24, 2020 Council Workshop Minutes under item no. 4B. Knier requested that the language be revised to better identify parking options near the lake.

Council Member Hansen motioned to approve the June 24, 2020 City Council Workshop Minutes with revised language to item no 4B as requested. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

6E. Approve Election Judge Appointments for the 2020 Primary and General Elections

Mayor Wallen reviewed the process for appointment of election judges for the 2020 elections. Wallen informed Council that two additional names have been added to the list since the Council packet was distributed and recommended Council approve the list presented at the meeting.

Council Member Hansen motioned to approve Resolution No. 2020-58 appointing election judges for the August 11, 2020 Primary Election and the November 3, 2020 General Election. Seconded by Council Member Johnson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7. BUSINESS

7A. Student Liaison Roles and Responsibilities and Appointment of Ella Dotzler

Clay Wilfahrt reviewed the Student Liaison Roles and Responsibilities Policy. The intent of the position is to serve as a liaison between Council, the Big Lake School Board, and young residents of the community. The position will also provide young people a voice on community happenings. Wilfahrt reviewed that Big Lake High School Student Ella Dotzler had approached the Mayor about the opportunity and Council directed Staff to draft a policy of rules and responsibilities for Council consideration and to move forward with appointing Ella Dotzler to the unpaid position. The tasks Ella will be asked to do include developing ways to better involve young people in decision making, developing ways to collect input from young people on decisions, developing an ongoing program for future student liaisons, and to identify at least one other special project to work on and present to Council. Ella Dotzler stated that she is excited to start, and Council applauded Ella for her interest.

Council Member Zettervall motioned to approve the Student Liaison Roles and Responsibilities, and appoint Big Lake High School student Ella Dotzler to the role until the end of the 2021 school year. Seconded by Council Member Knier, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7B. Authorize Donation of Surplus Property

Joel Scharf reviewed the recently completed upgrade to the Department's "active threat" ballistic vests. The Department equips each squad car with additional armor for our officer's protection during critical calls. The prior ballistic vests contained both soft body armor, and a rifle rated ballistic plate. The upgraded vests shift to only a ballistic plate. The purchase of the upgraded vests was accomplished through use of donations and narcotic forfeiture funds. Scharf also reviewed that it's become a trend for Fire Departments to have accessible body armor for their member's protection. The Police Department is intending to donate five of surplus vests to the Big Lake Fire Department as well as the donation of five surplus vests to the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

Council Member Knier motioned to approve the donation of Police Department surplus property to the Big Lake Fire Department and the Clay County Sheriff's Office. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. Monthly Department Reports

Fire Department – Assistant Fire Chief Mark Hedstrom provided statistical information on

calls for service for the month of June. Hedstrom also reviewed small group training activities in June, recent grass fires, reviewed the fire fighter hire status informing Council that 9 attended testing, discussed a live burn training the Department participated in and recognized 2020 Fire Class graduates Brady Bagne and Clint Maxson. Council thanked the entire department for their dedicated service during very difficult circumstances.

Police Department – Joel Scharf updated Council on police statistics, calls for service, significant arrests, and self-initiated policing activities for the month of June. Scharf discussed parking violations and increased park patrol at Lakeside Park and an increase in traffic complaints along Lakeshore Drive/Hiawatha Avenue, reviewed the new portable speed sign currently placed on Lakeshore Drive, discussed increased regional burglaries in the area, and reviewed the partial cancellation of the Freedom Fest event. Scharf also provided an update on the upcoming retirement of Police Specialist Laurie Morris and the status of filling the vacant administrative position within the Department. Scharf also discussed comments made during the last two open forums about defunding law enforcement.

Engineering/Public Works Department – Layne Otteson provided an update on engineering projects underway in the City and activities in the Utilities Department. Otteson reviewed the ADA Transition Plan, AIS inspections, lakeshore reviews and permitting, erosion inspections, and the annual MS4 report. Otteson discussed the status of the Safe Routes to School plans which has a bid opening scheduled for July 21, and the Street and the Utility Improvement Project No. ST2020-2 which has a bid opening scheduled on July 28. Otteson also discussed the outlet elevation at Lake Mitchell, the new sidewalk at the Crossings Phase II development, and discussed damaged curb at the catch basin near Wrights Crossing Park. Otteson reviewed activities in the Utility Department noting that Well No. 5 has cleared up and is online, discussed improvements in the existing oxidation ditches, noted the sale of the 1981 AG-Gator equipment, reviewed water valve repair on Industrial Boulevard, and provided an update on the Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion project that is approximately 75% complete. Council Member Knier discussed previous Council discussion on the need for water conservation education to go out to residents.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Clay Wilfahrt discussed the status of a proposed Lakeside Park Lease Agreement for the parcel located across Lakeshore Drive from the park. Staff has discussed possible terms with the property owner to determine what a framework would look like. Wilfahrt also reviewed the recent CMRRPP meeting, and the group's efforts to get citizens to complete the county-wide engagement survey to help guide the planning process.

9. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS and QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mayor Wallen: Reviewed the July Fire Board Meeting. Wallen reviewed the ownership of the JPA and the Fire Boards efforts to build communication tools for the Fire Department.

Council Member Hansen: Reviewed the June CMRRPP meeting.

Council Member Johnson: Discussed the recent Fire Board Meeting.

Council Member Zettervall: Discussed the July Planning Commission Meeting.

10. OTHER – No other.

11. ADJOURN

Council Member Knier motioned to adjourn at 7:07 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Hansen, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

Gina Wolbeck
Clerk

Date Approved By Council _____ 07/22/20