

**City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – November 16, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Gretchen Artig-Swomley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers Len Cacioppo, Laurel Amlee, Ben Johnson and Jim Lindner were present. Also present: City Attorney Patrick Kelly, City Treasurer Tom Kelly, Planning Commission Member Joshua Patrick and Planning Commission Chair Don Cummnigs, Summit Farm Villas HOA Board President Sharon Roland, and Residents Isaac Nelson and Jim Wilson.

November 16, 2021 Agenda

A motion was made by Councilmember Linder to accept the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, agenda approved.

Minutes

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo to approve the October 19, 2021, City Council Minutes. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, minutes approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo to approve the November 3, 2021, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, minutes approved.

Committee Reports – Planning Commission

Planning Commission Chair Don Cummings gave an overview of the Planning Commission Meeting on November 3, 2021. The Planning Commission had a public hearing on an IUP for the Birkeland property. The Planning Commission recommended to the Council approval of the IUP with conditions, which will be discussed later in the City Council Meeting. The Commission is hoping to finish up the Home Occupation Ordinance discussion at the December meeting. Commission Chair Cummings also mentioned that the Commission might have a public hearing for a CUP at 3825 Scheuneman Road. Commission Chair Cummings also noted that during the November 3 meeting it was discussed that the Planning Commission may want to change the dates of their 2022 meetings to a different day of the week so that the City Planner from TKDA, Evan Monson, can join in the case that his guidance is needed.

Old Business

Mayor Artig-Swomley presented ideas for the next edition of the Newsletter to include pieces such as the new fire Ordinance procedures, well update and the hydrology that pertains to the well issues, VLAWMO issues regarding dog poop and smart salting, deer hunt report and the completion of the MS4 permit.

New Business

Resolution #2021-0011 – Designated Polling Places – City of Gem Lake 2022

A motion for adoption of the foregoing Resolution to designate Heritage Hall as a polling place for any elections conducted in the City in 2022 was offered by Councilmember Lindner and was seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo and upon vote being taken thereon, the Resolution was passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

Liquor License/Procedures

Resolution #2021-0012 – Gem Lake Hills Golf Course Liquor License 2022

The motion for adoption of the foregoing Resolution to approve the 2022 Liquor License Renewal for Gem Lake Hills Golf Course was duly introduced by Councilmember Lindner and seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, and upon vote being taken thereon, the Resolution passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

Resolution #2021-0013 – Country Lounge Liquor License 2022

The motion for adoption of the foregoing Resolution to approve the 2022 Liquor License Renewal for the Country Lounge was duly introduced by Councilmember Lindner and seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, and upon vote being taken thereon, the Resolution passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

Quarterly Billing from 2020

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested the Council step back from allowing businesses to pay quarterly for their liquor licenses and move back to annual payments because payment was not being paid on time or was forgotten about. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to stop quarterly payments for liquor licenses, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, quarterly payments will no longer be accepted.

Nine Month Golf Course License Concept

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested to the Council that the City add a nine month Golf Course annual payment to the fee schedule for the Golf Course. The Golf Course is only open 9 months of the year so the City would take the total fee due and only charge for 3 of the 4 quarters. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to add a 9 month Golf Course License fee to the fee schedule, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, a nine month Golf Course fee will be added to the fee schedule.

Election Recap November 2, 2021

Mayor Artig-Swomley stated that the turnout was fantastic. The election judges were a little worried about parking and were hoping to ask Wilbert Plastics for future elections if it is ok to use their parking lot for overflow parking. The judges are most concerned about future presidential elections.

Interim Use Permit Request by John Birkeland

After review from the Planning Commission on November 3, 2021 for John Birkeland's request to construct a parking lot for the display of automobiles being sold at his business across the street, CarFit. The proposed lot would have 22 stalls for displaying of vehicles. The proposed project was previously approved by the City in 2019, but was never completed and expired after one year.

The Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the request, to issue an Interim Use Permit (IUP) to allow the applicant to construct a parking lot on the site for storage of cars for the CarFit business located across the street at 3555 Hoffman Road. The following conditions were recommended:

1. The applicant cannot conduct automobile sales on the site
2. The IUP shall have a time limit of five (5) years from the date of approval by the City Council
3. The applicant shall secure all required permits, and comply with the requirements of said permit.

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to approve the IUP with the conditions listed, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, 4 in favor, Councilmember Amlee abstains from the vote, motion passes, IUP approved based on recommended conditions.

Gem Lake Infrastructure Issues

Hoffman Road Slope Failure Update – Justin Gese

The project is currently under construction. Mr. Gese is also negotiating with the County and working on the easement with White Bear Floral.

Scheuneman Road Storm Water Study – South End – Justin Gese

SEH is out looking at the south end of the road to see what can be done to help with the stormwater issue.

Villas of Gem Lake Update

There is a punchlist with several items that still need to be completed and SEH is having trouble getting the builder to complete them. Hanson Builders had to apply for a permit from the Ramsey Washington Watershed, and the Watershed is not satisfied with the plantings. The City also has a water bill for water used during construction, there is a conference call between the Mayor and the City Attorney to discuss the next steps.

Gem Lake Trail Update and Ideas

Kim Anderson Uzpen will be submitting a proposal to the Council in the spring for signs, benches and plantings. Ms. Anderson Uzpen would like the City to possibly use a new contractor for the upkeep of the wildflower planting, because the current one has been hard to reach. The burning idea has been dropped. The City has been approached about a dog relief area and placement of garbage receptacles along the trail, both the City and VLAWMO are against the idea. Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested that the Council take a vote on the dog relief area idea to formulate the City's opposition to the idea Councilmember Linder mentioned that such a relief area could violate the City's MS4 permit. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to not assign a dog relief area anywhere in the City, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, there will not be a designated dog relief area within the City of Gem Lake.

Gem Lake Well Update

Mayor Artig-Swomley had a discussion with Tim Grape from the MPCA where he provided additional information, and he feels like they have done everything in Gem lake and have now put the total at 20 wells showing amounts of the 1,4 Dioxane. Mr. Grape is waiting to hear back from some of the houses, 18 of the 20 are in the 1-2ppb along Goose Lake Road. It is still being investigated to determine where it originated and the MPCA is now looking at Vadnais Heights. There are still two (2) wells the MPCA is trying to obtain initial samples from.

Heritage Hall – Jim Lindner

CO2 Sensor Replacement

There are two (2) CO2 sensors at Heritage Hall that are in need of replacement. A quote was sent to the City Clerk in the amount of \$2,145.00. COVID funds will be used to replace the current CO2 sensors. Based on the quote, the cost excludes engineering, code upgrades or modifications required by the authority having jurisdiction, and overtime labor. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to accept the quote with a 10%

contingency, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes. The quote with a 10% contingency is approved.

Actuator Replacement

The heating valve for the bathrooms is stuck open and needs to be replaced. A quote was sent to the City Clerk in the amount of \$1,372.00. Based on the quote, the cost excludes engineering, code upgrades or modifications required by the authority having jurisdiction, and overtime labor. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to accept the quote with a 25% contingency, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes. The quote with a 25% contingency is approved.

Updates on all Other Building Repair and Improvement Projects

Councilmember Lindner has been collecting all the Xcel Energy Bills and created a spreadsheet that has shown him that are usage is lower compared to last year, but the charge compared to last year is more expensive. Parking lot lights have been completed. The new desk space has been completed, but Councilmember Lindner is reaching out to the company to see if the gap in the back above the cabinets can be filled in with countertop. The flag lights were not working, the lights were replaced and they are now functional. There was a “tree” growing along the side of the building which was taken care of. City Attorney Patrick Kelly brought up grants that may be available for the City to use, Councilmember Lindner is going to look into those.

Internal Management Update

City Council Clerk Training

The City Clerk has almost completed a full year in the position and will have completed all tasks that usually come up throughout the year.

City Council/Planning Commission Training Manual

Mayor Artig-Swomley stated that she would like to create a training binder containing documents available that can be given to the Planning Commission and City Council and new members that come in. A manual is being worked on to be available for this.

Health Insurance Stipend Concept

Councilmember Johnson did some research and spoke with surrounding cities and an individual from the League of MN Cities (LMC). Councilmember Johnson is asking for help in figuring out a way to get an insurance stipend for the one employee of the City. The issue that has come up is that the stipend cannot be untaxed and will have to be part of the taxed income for the employee. Councilmember Amlee has volunteered to help look into a reasonable amount that could be given for insurance and will make a recommendation at the December City Council Meeting. This will result in the employee getting a pay increase to accommodate for the cost of insurance This would not be intended to be a merit raise, which would be dealt with separately.

Public Works and White Bear Township

City Treasurer Tom Kelly collected the information on the amount of money we spend on all the outsourcing contractors. A meeting will be held on Friday November 19, 2021 to start the conversation about the Township taking over all those responsibilities. It will end up costing a little more, but would be worth having everything being taken care of in one place.

Resolution #2021-0014 – Score Grant Funding

A motion for adoption of the foregoing Resolution to accept the SCORE funding was duly introduced by Councilmember Lindner and seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, and upon vote being taken thereon, the Resolution passed with a vote of 5 in favor and 0 against.

Community Outreach to Other Cities and Government Bodies

The Sheriffs are using the building regularly. The relationship with the Ramsey Count Election Board is going well and has improved. The same hold true with White Bear Township. Outreach to the City of Vadnais Heights continues. The City Clerk is completing a spreadsheet for the City Attorney to present to see if changes can be made to water rates in the future.

Claims

Councilmember Lindner mare a motion to pay the bills, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, bills will be paid.

Monthly Financial Report

October financials were submitted for review. No questions from City Council.

Quarterly Financial Report

Third quarter treasurer’s report was submitted for review. City Treasurer Tom Kelly stated that the City is doing fairly well, general fund is doing good and there is still a lot of CARES funds to use. The utility fund increase has helped that fund stop losing money. No questions from City Council.

Presentations from the Public, 2 minutes maximum

Resident Isaac Nelson shared about the three weekends that the hunting party spent hunting. They were able to get five (5) deer in total, four (4) bucks and one (1) doe. The staggering of the weekends really helped the hunt be more effective.

Open Items for Council Members to Bring Up

Mayor Artig-Swomley stated that the Council may have to move back to zoom meetings with the rising COVID cases. The Council will follow what the MN Department of Health recommends. The Council will begin looking at the fee schedule by the December meeting. The Arcand property may run into zoning issues depending on the proposed usage and potential buyer requests. Mayor Artig-Swomley would like to make sure that the Council selects some organizations to receive donations using the Charitable Gambling Fund. A discussion on the Meadery’s liquor license and if they will be renewing by the end of the year. Councilmember Cacioppo brought up the speed limit sign and the fact that it starts to blink at you while going to speed limit, it should not blink until you are going faster than the speed limit.

Future Council Meetings

City Council, Tuesday December 21, 2021, Workshop, Monday December 13, 2021 canceled.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion from Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Melissa Lawrence