

**City of Gem Lake  
City Council Meeting – February 15, 2022  
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. Councilmember Jim Lindner was present at Heritage Hall. Also present: City Attorney Patrick Kelly, Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence, City Engineer Justin Gese, VLAWMO Education & Outreach Coordinator Nick Voss, SEH Water Resources Engineer Emily Jennings, Planning Commission Chair Don Cummnigs, and residents Ray Tessier, Rick Bosak, and Val Cremin.

**Remote Meeting Declaration**

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner to approve the remote meeting declaration, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, remote meeting declaration approved.

**February 15, 2022 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 accepted.

**Minutes**

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo to approve the January 18, 2022, City Council Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, minutes approved.

**Committee Reports – Planning Commission**

There was no Planning Commission meeting held in February. Planning Commission is looking forward to finalizing the comprehensive plan.

**Old Business**

Mayor Artig-Swomley presented ideas for the next edition of the City Newsletter to include pieces such as a summary of the report given by the MPCA at the January council meeting, a story on the City clean-up day, illicit discharge based on the presentation by Nick Voss, and a story on the meeting John Choi held regarding public safety in Ramsey County.

**New Business**

**Resolution #2022-0004 – 2022 City of Gem Lake Fee Schedule/Ordinance No. 135**

For consistency purposes the City has determined that it is in its best interest to make the fee schedule into an official Ordinance that would be the subject of an annual public hearing. The motion for the adoption of the foregoing Resolution 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.

**VLAWMO Presentation – Nick Voss**

Nick Voss, VLAWMO Education and Outreach gave a presentation on how the MS4 program connects to everyday life in Gem Lake. Approximately 94% of Gem Lake's land area is within VLAWMO boundaries. The slides covered education and outreach information on pet waste, smart salting, and yard care and irrigation. Also covered was information on public participation opportunities, such as adopt-a-drain, service project /clean ups, and macroinvertebrates. Voss also talked about illicit discharge and what should be kept out of drains.

### **Report on Ramsey County Virtual Call February 15 with John Choi on Crime Trends – Jim Lindner and Gretchen Artig-Swomley**

Ramsey County Attorney John Choi gave a presentation to Ramsey County leaders on Public Safety. Ramsey County has formed a violence reduction leadership group which began formal meetings in April 2021 and law enforcement holds monthly meetings with suburban police chiefs. A lot of the carjacking that has been happening in Ramsey County is by juveniles, and it is often the same group of individuals. The amount of theft or violence that is happening is far more than people are actually being charged for. The violence reduction leadership group is coming up with solutions such as creating a Carjacking & Auto Theft Team (CAT Team), using focused deterrence, mental health supports and placements, and strengthening supports and appropriate secure placements for youth. Mayor Artig-Swomley invited Ramsey County Attorney John Choi to attend the April City Council meeting to discuss this more in depth.

### **Crisis Communication Class Report – Jim Lindner**

Councilmember Lindner attended a League of Minnesota Cities sponsored class. While there, he learned that it is recommended that the City have a communication plan in place in case a crisis happens. Once a plan is in place it will need to be decided how the information will be presented and who will be involved.

### **Gem Lake Infrastructure Issues**

#### **Water Study from SEH – Further Discussion – Justin Gese**

Mr. Gese informed the Council that in May the draft water study should be formally accepted as the final version. Councilmember Lindner move approval of that and the next phase of the study, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, study is approved to move on to the next phase.

#### **Villas of Gem Lake Update**

No progress or news to report.

#### **Stormwater Discharge and Pipeline License**

Following emergency repairs that the City of Gem Lake made to a stormwater discharge pipe that emptied into the railroad area, a licensing agreement was received by the railroad asking for a large licensing fee and an insurance policy. The city was not aware in advance that such demands would be made, especially since the city's engineer was in communication with the railroad throughout the repair project. The city repaired and existing pipe that had been put in so long ago that no one could find pipe work regarding its origin. Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested to the Council that City Attorney Patrick Kelly work with the railroad to find out what is going on with the additional paperwork.

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to allow City Attorney Patrick Kelly to address the additional paperwork with the Railroad Company, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, City Attorney Patrick Kelly will reach out to the Railroad Company.

#### **Heritage Hall – Jim Lindner**

Councilmember Lindner shared with the Council that his spreadsheet he created for the Xcel bills shows that because costs have gone up since last year the bill is more than last year even though Heritage Hall has used the same amount of energy. Councilmember Lindner is also creating a document showing all the chemicals that are stored at Heritage Hall as well as creating a brief training assignment for the City Clerk. Planning Commission Chair Don Cummings asked Councilmember Lindner if it was possible to turn up the air exchange during meetings and voting events. Councilmember Lindner said that he would look into this.

## **Internal Management Update**

### **City Council/Planning Commission Training Manual**

City Clerk completed the training and resource manual for Gem Lake leaders. Councilmembers and Commission Members can stop in the office at any time to obtain the manual or it will be distributed at the next in person meeting in March.

### **LMC Safety & Loss Control Workshop April 21, 2022**

The Mayor and the City Clerk will attend this meeting and the Mayor will prepare a report for the May Council meeting.

### **City Clerk Annual Review Preparation**

Mayor Artig-Swomley informed the Council that Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence is due for her annual review. To prepare for this she will be filling out an extensive review form and sharing her feedback with Lawrence. Other council members are encouraged to provide whatever feedback they are able to, using all or part of the standard review form. It is understood that because council is not directly supervising Lawrence, their feedback may be limited, but is nonetheless valuable. Feedback should be provided by mid-March. The Mayor also let the Council know that it was distributed to City Treasurer Tom Kelly to contribute feedback as he feels is applicable. The Review will take place the last week of March or first week of April.

### **Federal Holiday Discussion**

The employee manual was updated from the previous meeting on how employees get paid for holidays. Mayor Artig-Swomley also informed the Council that Juneteenth, or Freedom Day as it is referred to, will be added to the employee manual as an observed holiday for City employees.

### **Discussion of current Ordinance No. 84 – Business Licensing Procedures and proposed replacement Ordinance No. 136 – Business Licensing**

The City Clerk created draft Ordinance No. 136 in order to address business licensing in a more comprehensive manner than the current Ordinance 84 does. The new draft ordinance is based on White Bear Township's ordinance and addresses topic such as penalties for nonpayment/nonrenewal. Adopting 136 would also require repealing and replacing the current Ordinance No. 84. Copies of both draft Ordinance 136 and existing Ordinance 84 were provided.

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to repeal Ordinance No. 84, seconded by Councilmember Amlee. Voice vote taken all voted yes, motion passes, Ordinance No. 84 Business Licensing Procedures has been repealed.

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 136, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, Ordinance No. 136 Business Licensing has been approved.

The City clerk will make the updates and remove Ordinance No. 84 from the website and add Ordinance No. 136.

### **Establishment of Notary Fee for Non-residents**

Mayor Artig-Swomley proposed that the fee for residents of White Bear Township and Gem Lake would be free and all non-residents would have to pay a fee of \$5.00 for a Notary service.

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to add the fee to the current fee schedule, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, Notary fee will be added to the fee schedule.

### **2018 Comprehensive Plan City of Gem Lake Update**

A final version of the Comprehensive Plan for Gem Lake was reviewed a year ago at a public hearing and then submitted by the city's consulting firm to the Metropolitan Council. In the last quarter of 2021, the Met Council requested additional changes and revision in a letter that was received in late December. All but one revision has been made by the consulting firm. They are currently waiting on Mr. Gese to send over information on flow rates. Mr. Gese is working on trying to clarify some things before submitting the information. The plan was turned in on time and the City is currently four (4) years from date of original submission. Final approval is anticipated shortly after the submission of this last round of requested revisions. The Mayor is going to suggest a joint Council and Commission informational meeting to present the final version of the comprehensive plan. The Mayor would like to see better communication with any consulting firm in the future and asked Lawrence to try to locate the contract with the consulting firm covering this project.

### **Public Works and White Bear Township**

At this time there has been no additional discussion on hourly rates that White Bear Township would charge the City of Gem Lake for public works services. Annual audits are underway for both cities at present, leaving the City Treasurer will very little time to work on this project. Once things quiet down again, the Mayor will meet with White Bear Township and Public Works to discuss rates.

### **Proposed City Wide Clean Up Event May 21**

The City of Gem Lake would like to piggyback with White Bear Township as much as possible on this event, but as of right now it will consist of mainly street cleanup. Mayor Artig-Swomley also suggested that Gem Lake do the "Trash to Treasure" day at the same time. It was suggested that hotdogs and water be served at the conclusion of the event at Heritage Hall to thank those that helped and to celebrate. More planning will be discussed at the next meeting.

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to have a City cleanup event on May 21, 2022, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, the City will have a City wide cleanup event and Trash to Treasure day on Saturday, May 21, 2022.

### **Community Outreach to Other Cities and Government Bodies**

The City Attorney Patrick Kelly sent a letter to Vadnais Heights regarding water utility billing and the City is still waiting on a response. Councilmember Cacioppo has been assigned to represent Gem Lake in communication with Vadnais Heights. Councilmember Lindner is working with VLAWMO. Councilmember Johnson met with the new city manager for the City of White Bear Lake. White Bear is teaming up with Vadnais Heights to study development opportunities in the County Road E corridor, and invited Gem Lake to participate. Each city would be expected to contribute financially to the project. This is something that will be discussed at the March City Council meeting.

### **Claims**

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

### **Monthly Financial Reports**

The financials for December were submitted and the Council had no comment. The financials for January were submitted, but with missing information due to the bank statements not being delivered on time, the Council had no comment. City Treasurer Tom Kelly was unable to join the meeting.

### **Quarterly Financial Report**

City Treasurer Tom Kelly was unable to join the meeting, the Council had no comments.

### **Presentations from the public, 2 minutes maximum**

Residents in attendance had no comments or questions.

**Open Items for Council Members to Bring Up**

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested that with COVID-19 numbers going down, that the City return to live meetings. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to go back to live meetings for March, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, City Council and Planning Commission will return to live meetings starting March.

**Future Council Meetings**

City Council, Tuesday March 15, 2022, Workshop, Monday March 14, 2022 canceled.

**Adjournment**

Being there no further business, following a motion from Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, the meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Melissa Lawrence*