

City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – June 20, 2017
Meeting Minutes

Mayor Uzpen called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Councilmembers Artig-Swomley, Bosak, Kuny and Lindner were present. Others in attendance: City Attorney Patrick Kelly, City Finance Director Tom Kelly, Andy Gitzlaff, Ramsey County Regional Rail, Ben Johnson, Planning Commission Chair, citizens: Kyle Anderson, Roys Andrews, Lenore Bolfig, Pete Cremin, Shirley Dingman, Roberta A. Feiner, Kari Fonstad, Cheryl and Chuck Granlund, Beth and Tom Hansen, Beth and Steve Herzog, James Johanning, Bill and Judy Jahn, Carl Johnson, George Jungmann, Ken Kirchoff, Gordon Kordosky, Constance and Daniel Kunin, Debra Larsen, Jody and Ken Lorenz, Paul Luecke, Lowell Lundy, Fritz Magnuson, Julianne Markiewicz, Taylor McGuire, John McKenzie, Brad Naylor, Pete Oswald, Richard and Roberta Pientka, Art and Susan Pratt, Craig and Kathy Rafferty, Steve Rowan, Justin Short, Burnell Shull, John Snidarich, Gary Tangwall, Jeff Tschetter, Steve Varley, Nathan Fair, Landmark.

June 20, 2017, Agenda

A motion was made by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, seconded by Councilmember Bosak to approve the agenda for June 20, 2017, motion passed. Agenda approved.

Minutes

Councilmember Lindner made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley to approve the minutes for May 16, 2017, with Councilmember Bosak abstaining, motion passed. Minutes approved.

Committee Reports

Ben Johnson, Planning Commission chair updated the council on the Planning Committee meeting on June 6, 2017. The committee reviewed the predator offender ordinance No. 131, draft. Committee recommended approval with a 4-0 vote in favor, with one question as to how a church would be defined. Reviewed the Consolidated Land Use Ordinance, committee tabled the ordinance until the July 5th, Planning Commission meeting to allow time for more comments. The ordinance is posted on the web site and copies available at city hall. Held a public hearing on the purchase of property on County Road E, good discussion took place between the citizens and committee. The planning committee were not in favor of the purchase of the property. Councilmember Artig-Swomley thanked Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lindner and Mr. Emeott for all their hard work on the Consolidated Land Use ordinance.

Old Business

Newsletter ideas – land use ordinance, property purchase, general city news, Rush Line, National Night Out, how city residents can obtain city/water and how to pay for it.

New Business

Rush Line Corridor Update, Andy Gitzlaff

Andy Gitzlaff, Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, presented on the preferred alternative, dedicated guideway bus rapid transit from Union Depot in St. Paul to White Bear Lake. The route would be Robert Street, Phalen Boulevard, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way (Bruce Vento Trail), and Highway 61. The cost of the project would be \$420 million.

The public hearing opened at 7:35 p.m. Steve Rowan, 3 Hillary Farm Lane, asked about County Road E station. Taylor McGuire, 1365 Goose Lake Road, asked about a park and rides at stations. Response:

Some stations will have a park and ride. The public hearing closed at 7:45 p.m. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to support Resolution 2017-05, transmitting the City of Gem Lake support for the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Rush Line Corridor to the Rush Line Corridor Task Force, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and the Metropolitan Council. Councilmember Artig-Swomley seconded the motion, motion passed.

Audit Findings, Chris Knopik, CliftonLarsonAllen

Chris Knopik presented the results of the City of Gem Lake 2016 audit. Because the City of Gem Lake now has an employee, the City will need to adopt an out-of-state travel policy. Mr. Knopik will provide samples for the city to adopt.

Claims for the month of June, 2017

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley to approve the claims for June, 2017. Motion passed. Claims approved.

Monthly Financial Reports

Approved. A motion was made by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, seconded by Councilmember Lindner to make a \$2,000 donation with funds received from the charitable gambling account to the White Bear Lake Food Shelf during the month of July, 2017. Motion passed.

Purchase of Tom Hansen's Field – Public Hearing

The Mayor provided an overview of the public hearing. The proposal is to buy 18 acres, sell off part of the land to a developer, thereby the city controls the land and the development. Part of the land would be paid for with a CD with a 5 year term and part would be sold to the developer at \$62,000 an acre. Over the years citizens have asked for a development of villa homes so they can stay in Gem Lake but not necessarily in their current home, 20 -25 villa homes projected to meet that need. In addition the villa homes would increase the tax revenue which will pay for all or most of the bond.

The City of Gem Lake must respond to the Metropolitan Council with their requirements some of which include parks, growth, sewer, water for cities. Councilmember Bosak spoke. He has been on the council for over 20 years, he thanked the audience for attending and said we need your continued input every month, we need more involvement, said his agenda has always been towards keeping taxes as low as he can, he attended the Planning Commission meeting and felt that much misinformation has been circulated, for instance that the council has been denying developers, said that hasn't happened, no applications have been denied. Bosak cited developments voted-in in Gem Lake, Hillary Farm, New Trax, water in the Hoffman's Corners area to spur development and White Bear Montessori. Developers have come in floating ideas to put in something the land isn't zoned for. Bosak said an ice arena was one example, another example was Landmark Development's first concept sketch that was well like by the council and at 29 homes with a park, it was only a few homes over the density for the zone. They were encouraged to simply meet the zoning requirement and come back. But Landmark came back with a new plan that had 39 homes. Bosak said that he favored trails or a park because it had been asked for in citizen surveys but obviously a park or trails could only go on undeveloped property and geographically could never be adjacent to every home. Councilmember Artig-Swomley spoke, mirroring what Commissioner Bosak said, we want to preserve Gem Lake, we do have mandates from the state and federal government and it's a balancing act. She has received feedback from citizens. In addition she reminded attendees that we are your neighbors and swear words and obscenities are not appropriate.

She received 41 phone calls and of those phone calls, 8 people were in favor of this. Finance Director Tom Kelly explained the property tax abatement.

Mayor Uzpen opened the public hearing at 8:43 p.m. Roberta Pientka, 3970 Tessier Road, opposed to the park and the city as a developer. Richard Pientka, 3970 Tessier Road, asked about the planning commission results. How were the properties picked for abatement? Tom Kelly response: We have to pick properties that surround the land, some commercial not necessarily surrounding the land, properties can only be abated once. Carol Schacht, 1201 Little Fox Land, opposed to the park, property tax abatement and overall proposal. Connie Kunin, 1270 Goose Lake Road, opposed, if people who are surrounding the land feel strongly about it, they should purchase it. Brad Naylor, 1430 Goose Lake Road, in favor, did not appreciate the council being called inappropriate names, citizens need to recognize the number of hours the council spends volunteering their time. Ken Kirchoff, 3744 Big Fox Road, opposed, the city should not get involved. Justin Short, 3614 Big Fox Road, opposed to sidewalk on County Road E, not opposed to the city purchasing the property, noted that he received an anonymous note from a stranger stating he was operating a business in his accessory building, stating he is doing personal woodworking for himself and working on his John Deere in his building and invited any citizen to stop over and see for themselves. Kyle Anderson, 3872 Scheuneman Road, opposed, taxes will go up, a city doesn't have to do everything the Met Council says. Craig Rafferty, 3750 Big Fox, nothing wrong with the concept, supportive of the general concept, city should not purchase. Cal Johnson, 1355 Goose Lake Road, opposed, love a park or even a trail down Goose Lake Road. Kari Fonstad, 1355 Goose Lake Road, encouraged the council to table the idea and would like more information. Jeff Tschetter, owns rental property 3930 Scheuneman Road, does not reside there, opposed, asked about the risk associated with the purchase. Julieann Markiewicz, 7 Hillary Farm Lane, opposed, should slow down the process, questions about the process. Paul Luecke, 17 Hillary Farm Lane, thanked the council for their work, talked about vetting, idea of the costs, slow down and look at the numbers, found it unfortunate and disappointed that the arguments became so personal. Taylor McGuire, 1365 Goose Lake Road, opposed, you should listen to your CPA, you only have seven months of cash. Commissioner Artig-Swomley response: The current balance of funds doesn't reflect the infusion of property tax monies that we receive semi-annually, that payment has yet to be received. Beth Herzog, 1433 Goose Lake Road, this isn't the meeting to discuss a proposal from a developer. A resident of the community without proof accused the Mayor of working with the Hansen's for monetary gains. The public hearing was closed at 10:22 p.m. A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Bosak to vote on purchase. A voice vote was taken, Mayor Uzpen, abstained, Councilmember Lindner, nay, Councilmember Bosak, nay, Councilmember Artig-Swomley, nay, Councilmember Kuny, nay.

Councilmember Bosak made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley to drop the remaining two resolutions, no objections, motion passed.

Next Meetings

City of Gem Lake Workshop for Monday, July 10, 7:00 p.m. Next City Council meeting, Tuesday, July 18, 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gloria Tessier