

**City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – May 17, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Gretchen Artig-Swomley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers Len Cacioppo, Laurel Hynes-Amlee, Ben Johnson and Jim Lindner were present. Also present: City Attorney Patrick Kelly, City Treasurer Tom Kelly, Landform Principal Steve Sabraski, Luther Auto Representative Linda McGinty, Attorney Peter Beck, SEH representative Richard Parr, resident Craig Rafferty, Planning Commission Chairman Don Cummings and Planning Commission Member Joshua Patrick.

May 17, 2022 Agenda

Mayor Artig-Swomley added two agenda items, one for discussion of the Gem Lake Trail and open space area, another for discussion of the City’s social media policy, in light of the new Facebook page. A motion was made by Councilmember Linder to accept the modified agenda, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved.

Minutes

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo to approve the April 19, 2022 City Council Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion passes, minutes approved.

Committee Reports – Planning Commission

Planning Commission Chairman Don Cummings provided a brief report on the upcoming presentation of the Gem Lake Comprehensive Plan and the important work that would follow final acceptance of the plan by the Metropolitan Council, which is anticipated to happen soon. He thanked the council for the cooperative support and look forward to the work ahead.

Old Business

Mayor Artig-Swomley presented ideas for the next edition of the City Newsletter to include pieces such as information on the Gem Lake Water Plan, the Luther Cadillac Project, the new Public Works arrangement with White Bear Township and other potential stories. Lindner suggested that he write an article on constructing a “pollinator” garden.

Artig-Swomley noted that Acting City Clerk would be working remotely for the remainder of the week.

New Business

Special Presentation: Nate Sparks, Northwest Consulting

Artig-Swomley opened the joint City Council and Planning Commission Presentation of the 2020 Gem Lake Comprehensive Plan and introduced Nate Sparks of Northwest Consulting, who helped write the document. Sparks reviewed the plan and its required sections. He explained the Metropolitan Council’s requirements for completion and where the plan stands at this time, in terms of final approval. Artig-Swomley asked that the Gem Lake trail in the southwestern section of the city be added to the appropriate section of the plan for the final edit. Sparks agreed to do this. He stated that final approval by the Met Council was expected in mid to late May. Following this, the City Council would be required to do an official resolution accepting the plan.

Luther Cadillac Project-Developer’s Agreement

The Developer’s Agreement between Gem Lake and Luther Cadillac was presented and discussed. Linder motioned to approve the agreement as presented, Cacioppo seconded, all in favor, motion approved.

Haynes-Amlee expressed concerns about road access and contractors blocking her driveway, which is located next to the construction site. Peter Beck, attorney for Luther fielded questions on this matter. It was agreed that on May 18, three trucks with lowboy trailers will bring equipment to the site. Another truck will be for erosion control materials on the same day, weather permitting. These vehicles will access the site from existing road. They will then construct the site access entryway from Highway 61. City Engineer Justin Gese stated expectations that after May 18, all traffic is to access the site from the new entry point and no truck traffic will enter/leave the site from existing roadway. Developer’s Agreement, Section 4.5 covers site access.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) will approve and issue a permit for site access from Highway 61. Johnson asked if a project may he has is the official project map. Luther representatives stated the map issued on April 26, 2022 is considered the final map.

Gem Lake Infrastructure Issues

Water Study/Well Situation Update

Richard Parr from SEH reviewed the completed draft water plan for Gem Lake, which contained many possible options for serving all, or part, of the City with a municipal water system.

SEH used three priority levels:

- 1) those lots whose private wells exceed Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) health-based guidance levels;
- 2) those wells with contaminants present but below MDH guidance levels; and
- 3) properties adjacent to those with contamination levels. The water plan study considered a sole source water provider, as well as smaller, localized plans, where multiple providers may serve Gem Lake depending on proximity to those water providers. Costs are potentially very high, given the project cost and the limited number of contaminated wells. Justin Gese stated SEH has a department that looks into financing these types of water projects.

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested holding a public meeting on the planned date of the September council workshop. (September 12) Gese added there should be a preparatory meeting in August to establish the agenda and how the public meeting will be managed. Lindner moved to accept the water plan study seconded by Cacioppo, all in favor, motion approved.

Water Gremlin-Draft Report from the Minnesota Department of Health

MDH's report on Water Gremlin was distributed to the city for comment. Councilmembers all received a copy.

Stormwater Discharge and Pipeline License Update – Patrick Kelly

Attorney Patrick Kelly gave an update on stormwater pipe access discussions with Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway. Lindner moved seconded by Artig-Swomley directing Kelly to reach out to BNSF in June for a status update. All in favor, motion approved.

Septic System Education Program

Mayor Artig-Swomley reviewed the septic system educational materials that will be posted to the city website. Resident Craig Rafferty asked about the annual septic inspections. Artig-Swomley responded on communications between her and the city septic inspector on expectations, scheduling and communication to residents.

Facilities Report Energy Consumption – Jim Lindner

Lindner provided a report on Heritage Hall energy bills and winter weather data from December, 2021 through February 2022. Electric use is down because of improvements made (lighting retrofits, automation scheduling), but natural gas costs were high due in part to world events and cold temperatures. Motion by Johnson, second by Cacioppo to accept Lindner's report. All in favor, motion approved.

Park and Trail Discussion

Mayor Artig-Swomley will get a cost estimate for another park bench. Motion for her to proceed by Lindner, second by Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved. Discussion then turned to the use of park and trail dedication funds. Attorney Kelly offered an update on a current court case regarding the legality of cities requiring such fund from developers for commercial land. Case is still pending in the court system.

Don Cumming stated several Villas residents and the home owner's association are willing to help maintain the trail and plantings. Cacioppo discussed the trees planted by the Tree Trust. Some trees may be dead. Tree Trust is following up on the status of the trees they planted.

Internal Management

League of Minnesota Cities Training Program

Mayor Artig-Swomley and Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence attended League of Minnesota Cities Training last month and found it very beneficial. Data practices and records management are primary topics for Gem Lake in the year ahead. Lawrence is embarking on a long-term look at the City's record management, in order to standardize and improve the way the City keeps records, discards older records and seeks out ways to make things easier to locate at Heritage Hall. Data practices training is available on-line for council members. It is brief but effective training and comes highly recommended. Council members should contact Lawrence to register.

City-Wide Clean Up Event May 21 Planning

The City will be holding a city-wide clean-up event on Saturday May 21, 2022 from 9:00 a.m. – Noon. The City will supply those who come to participate with industrial strength garbage bags. These trash bags can be dropped off in the Heritage Hall parking lot at the conclusion of the event. At noon, hotdogs, chips and soda will be served to celebrate the conclusion of the event. Mayor Artig-Swomley stated that the food has been purchased for an estimated four dozen participants. She asked for volunteers to help with the food service.

The Trash to Treasure part of the event will involve residents placing unwanted items at the end of their driveways in order to re-purpose them into someone else's home. It was a popular event in the past and she hoped it would be again.

Discussion of County Road E Corridor Study

Johnson gave an update on the County Road E corridor study group. He asked how Gem Lake might transfer budget money from various accounts to cover participation costs. Each city in the study was asked to contribute \$6,000. Tom Kelly explained various transfer options. Motion by Lindner second by Johnson to begin participating with this group by making the \$6,000 payment. All voted favor, motion approved.

Public Works and White Bear Township Rate Discussion

A rate structure for public works duties performed by White Bear Township for the City of Gem Lake was agreed to by resolution at the last council meeting. Mayor Artig-Swomley provided an update on discussion with the Township on the mechanics of the working relationship. They will perform all public works services for the City as of June 1, 2022, including routine, emergency and other special services. The Township voted to approve the move at the board meeting this week. They agreed to a new Joint Powers Agreement covering this relationship that was drafted by Attorney Patrick Kelly. Lindner made a motion to approve this JPA, Hynes-Amlee seconded, all favor, motion approved.

Charitable Gambling Donations

Resolution #2022-011 May 2022 Donation to White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf

The City of Gem Lake requested a donation in the amount of \$1000 to the White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf.

The motion for adoption of the Resolution was introduced by Lindner and seconded by Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #2022-012 April 2022 Donation to Scholarship Fund Applicant

The City of Gem Lake requested a donation in the amount of \$1000 for an approved application for recent graduate Jake Tangwall for post-secondary education purposes as part of the Gem Lake Scholarship program.

The motion for adoption of the Resolution was introduced by Lindner and seconded by Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program

Resolution #2022-013 in Support of the “Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” Program

The council had previously supported the veteran-based program called “Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” managed by the Suburban Ramsey County Network. It was decided to renew this support of the efforts of this group.

The motion for adoption of the Resolution was introduced by Lindner and seconded by Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved.

Discussion of Gem Lake’s Social Media Policy

The City of Gem Lake has launched a Facebook page to focus on special events and announcements. It will be considered a secondary site for information on Gem Lake, after the web-site. With this in mind, a basic social media policy needs to be instituted to insure proper adoption of rules as to how the page will be managed. A social media policy template was obtained from the League of Minnesota Cities and modified for City use. Lindner introduced a motion to approve this policy, seconded by Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved.

Purple Line Discussion

The Council reviewed proposed changes to the Purple Line route and discussed their merit. Most were initially in favor of stopping the line at the Maplewood Transit Center. More discussion is needed Cacioppo will attend the Met Council sponsored Purple Line meeting later this week. This meeting will be virtual.

Community Outreach to Other Cities and Government Bodies

A new proposal for water billing is being developed by Artig-Swomley, Lawrence and Patrick Kelly. Kelly has been designated as the one and only point person with Vadnais Heights for discussion of this proposal. Lawrence is working well with the Ramsey County Election Board. Johnson will manage the relationship with the City of White Bear.

Claims

Lindner made a motion to pay the May bills, seconded by Cacioppo. All in favor, motion approved.

Monthly Financial Report

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

Presentations from the public, 2 minutes maximum

Residents in attendance had no comments or questions.

Open Items for Council Members to Bring Up

Lindner asked that the annual MS4 public hearing be scheduled for September rather than August, due to a schedule change for the engineer in charge, Emily Jennings. Meeting information will be relayed to Lawrence. Lindner also asked the council to consider a targeting picketing/protesting ordinance that cities in the area are considering. It can be formally discussed at the next meeting.

Future Council Meetings

City Council, Tuesday June 21, 2022, Workshop for June is CANCELED.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion from Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gretchen Artig-Swomley