

City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – August 15, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Mayor Gretchen Artig-Swomley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jim Lindner, Len Cacioppo, and Ben Johnson were present. Councilmember Laurel Amlee was not present. Also present: City Attorney Kevin Beck, City Treasurer Tom Kelly, Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence, White Bear Township Senior Finance Analyst Haley Rodriguez, Ramsey County Commissioner Nicole Frethem, VLAWMO Administrator Phil Belfiori, Planning Commission Chair Joshua Patrick, and Gem Lake residents Jim Wilson, Isaac Nelson, and Richard Pientka.

August 15, 2023 Agenda

A motion was introduced 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 introduced by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo to approve the July 18, 2023, City Council Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, agenda accepted.

A motion was introduced by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo to accept the August 9, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, agenda accepted.

Special Presentations

Ramsey County Update - Commissioner Nicole Frethem

Ramsey County Commissioner Nicole Frethem gave the Council an update on some of the County Initiatives. The County's Appropriate Response Initiative has plans in place that are taking effect now, some are in progress and will take effect in the future. Right now, social workers are being embedded in ECC to respond to mental health-related crisis and mobile crisis teams are responding to 911 calls.

Soon the County will address the public health response to substance use calls that are not medical emergencies. In progress right now the County is looking to contract a community organization to hire and train responders to respond to certain calls. By late fall 2023 the County is working on a County-Wide Co-Response Model.

Some other initiatives the County is working on include a City/County Business Retention and Expansion Pilot, a Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Levy, a Food Scraps Pickup Program and Non-Public Safety Traffic Stops.

VLAWMO Annual Report – Administrator Phil Belfiori

VLAWMO Administrator Phil Belfiori gave an overview of the Past and possible future efforts between VLAWMO and the City of Gem Lake. Gem Lake currently holds both the chair for board (Jim Lindner) and technical (Gloria Tessier). Currently 94% of Gem Lake's land area is within VLAWMO boundaries. Some possible future partnerships/projects are Smart Irrigation and Feasibility Study/Planning for the Commercial District.

As the City is looking to add an irrigation system at Heritage Hall, it is a possibility that the City would like to participate in the Smart Irrigation Controller Pilot Program. The Commercial District Area consists of about .03 sq miles, 101,607 sq yards. A large amount of rooftop and impermeable surfaces are draining into Gem Lake. This study could help the City determine better plans for the drainage.

Consent Agenda

Resolution #2023-014 August 2023 Donation to White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf
Resolution #2023-015 August 2023 Donation to Willow Lane Elementary
Monthly Financial Report(s)

Quarterly Financial Report Claims

All items on the consent agenda were reviewed by the Council. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve all the items listed on the consent agenda as is, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Committee Reports

Commission Chair Joshua Patrick shared with the Council that the Commission is finally ready to recommend approval and adoption of the revised Nuisance Ordinance and two (2) other Ordinances created by the revision of the Nuisance Ordinance by the August 2023 meeting. The City Planner and City Attorney have been very helpful during this process and the Commission is grateful for all the help and hard work. The Commission also discussed short term rentals and wants to keep the discussion on the back burner for future meetings. Commissioner Chair Patrick also shared that there will be no Planning Commission Meeting due to scheduling conflicts and vacations.

Old Business

Newsletter

The Mayor shared the draft September Newsletter with the Council that will be sent to the printers soon. The Mayor asked that the Council review it and send over any editorial changes to Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence. The next Newsletter that the Mayor will begin working will include topics such as the Ramsey County Commissioners presentation, Tessier Road Project, Hutch Schilling, MPCA findings and the 2024 preliminary budget.

Tessier Road Condition Update

The City has received two (2) proposals for the Tessier Road project, one from Metro Paving and the other from Allied Inc. White Bear Townships Public Works recommends that the Council approve the proposal from Metro Paving as it is the lowest bid and includes reclaiming the asphalt and the base to a depth of 9” vs Allied that would only mill 4” of asphalt.

Councilmember Linder introduced a motion to approve the \$77,310.00 proposal from Metro Paving, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Gem Lake Trail Signs

The trail signs have been ordered from Vacker sign. Final versions of the signs were presented to the Council. The signs will not be in the manufacturing stage.

Code Violation – 1621 Goose Lake Road

At July’s City Council meeting the Council deemed 1621 Goose Lake Road a public nuisance. An abatement order was sent to the resident and a contractor was scheduled to come out and remove the trailer from the property. The contracted tow company was unwilling to move the vehicle blocking the trailer and did not remove the trailer from the property. Due to the trailer still being on the property the City Attorney would like to pursue a court order to have it removed. The homeowner was invited to be present at this meeting but did not attend.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to authorize City Attorney Kevin Beck to pursue a court order to have the trailer removed from 1621 Goose Lake Road, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

New Business

White Bear Township JPA

Slight changes were made to the existing JPA between White Bear Township and Gem Lake. The changes made were to help clarify the shared expenses between the Township and City.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to accept the revised JPA, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Ordinance No. 86 Nuisance

City Planner Evan Monson put together a staff report regarding the changes to the Nuisance Ordinance. “The current ordinance was ‘streamlined’, removing old/outdated and unnecessary language. A few sections were removed (traffic, vehicles, parking, meth labs), as these sections had their own definitions and enforcement procedures in the middle of the existing nuisance ordinance. The current ordinance read like three different ordinances in one, with the reader bouncing around between nuisances, traffic issues, meth/drug labs, and back to nuisances. Sections addressing discharging of weapons and portable storage containers were then moved up with the remaining nuisances. Enforcement and abatement language from the Attorney was added as well. The proposed Nuisance Ordinance is now six pages, compared to 12 in the existing.”

Councilmember Linder introduced a motion to adopt the revised Nuisance Ordinance No. 86, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Ordinance No. 143 Clandestine Drug Labs

City Planner Evan Monson put together a staff report regarding the new standalone ordinance created by removing it from the Nuisance Ordinance. “This new ordinance (143) contains language that was previously housed in the nuisance ordinance. The language has not changed, but has simply been moved into its own ordinance.”

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to adopt the new standalone Clandestine Drug Labs Ordinance No. 143, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Ordinance No. 144 Traffic and Vehicles

City Planner Evan Monson put together a staff report regarding the new standalone ordinance by removing it from the Nuisance Ordinance. “This new ordinance (144) contains language regarding vehicles, traffic, and parking that was in the nuisance ordinance. Ordinance 132 (Golf Carts) was also added into this new ordinance, and would be repealed if this were to be approved. Apart from a few grammatical edits, the language here has mostly remained the same.”

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to adopt the new standalone Traffic and Vehicles Ordinance No. 144, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Archery Deer Hunting Application at 7 Daniels Farm Road

A permit request for a hunt on private property located at 7 Daniels Farm Road was received. The requested dates of the hunt will be September 16-18, October 27-29, and November 3-5. The hunting party consists of 11 hunters, all of which have obtained their Bow Hunters Certification and a MN DNR Hunting License. Deer stand locations were given and consent of neighbors has been received.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the Archery Deer Hunting application at 7 Daniels Farm Road, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Archery Deer Hunting Application at 1270 Goose Lake Road

A permit request for a hunt on private property located at 1270 Goose Lake Road was received. The requested dates of the hunt will be September 22-24, November 10-12, and November 17-19. The hunting party consists of 5 hunters, all of which have obtained their Bow Hunters Certification and a MN DNR Hunting License. Deer stand locations were given and consent of neighbors was not needed as all deer stands are more than 300 feet from the next property.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the Archery Deer Hunting application at 1270 Goose Lake Road, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance for Car Dealerships Discussion

Barnett Kia wishes to remodel their current building. The idea of remodeling section by section seems to be more work than just demolishing and rebuilding. At this time the City's Zoning Ordinance does not allow for the construction of new dealerships and does not have enough specific language for already existing dealerships that want to expand. It would be recommended that language be added to the current ordinance for situations such as this. It was also recommended that the dealership might also want to apply for a Conditional Use Permit.

Future Charitable Gambling Donations

White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested that the Council make a donation in September in the amount of \$1500.00 to the White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to request a donation in the amount of \$1500.00 for the White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Community Outreach to Other Cities and Government Bodies

Councilmember Johnson shared with the Council that the Corridor Committee is in the final steps of finding the contractor they would like to use for the planning portion of the project. The committee is hoping to have this contractor by some time in October.

City Attorney Kevin Beck is working on reaching out to Vadnais Heights City Attorney on the water at the villas of Gem Lake.

Open Items for Council Members to Bring Up

Councilmember Lindner invited those in attendance and the Councilmembers to the next VLAWMO meeting on Wednesday, August 23, 2023.

Future Council Meetings

City Council, Tuesday, September 19, 2023, Workshop, Monday, September 11, 2023 is CANCELED.

Attendance Inquiry

At this time all in attendance will be at the September meeting.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion from Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.