

**ANDOVER SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 14, 2020
MINUTES**

The Andover City Council Special Meeting was called to order by Mayor Julie Trude, April 14, 2020 6:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Councilmembers present: Sheri Bukkila, Valerie Holthus, Jamie Barthel and Ted Butler

Councilmembers absent: None

Others present: City Administrator, Jim Dickinson

INTERVIEWS OF PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY APPLICANTS

Angela Marinello –Park & Recreation Commission

Mayor Trude thanked Ms. Marinello for applying. She asked why she decided to reapply. Ms. Marinello replied after speaking to the Mayor at an event, she thought she would miss being on the Park Commission and thinks it is her calling to be on the Park Commission.

Councilmember Barthel asked for one or two items that Ms. Marinello helped accomplish while on the Park Commission. Ms. Marinello stated during her term she has decided on new playground equipment for parks and addition lighting at ball fields. Worked on Chesterton Commons park that was completed a couple years ago.

Councilmember Bukkila asked do you feel you actively participate in the discussions at the meeting. Ms. Marinello indicated she does actively participate in the discussions and does not feel like she holds back with her opinions.

Councilmember Holthus asked what do you see that can be improved with Andover parks and how can Council help with those tasks. Ms. Marinello stated she feels the Council has done a tremendous job helping, especially with the budget so parks can continue to look great. She indicated staff does a wonderful job keeping the fields and parks in great condition. Ms. Marinello stated her top priority is that all playground equipment is updated to the code compliance.

Councilmember Butler asked with the limited park improvement funds how would you go about balancing the funds, would you favor passive parks or active parks used by sports associations. Ms. Marinello answered she feels the Park Commission does a good job of balancing between the two.

Councilmember Barthel asked if reappointed what would you like to see improved at the parks. Ms. Marinello stated she would like to see more parks adopted by residents.

Mayor Trude asked if there is a closing statement you would like to make. Ms. Marinello stated she feels she has made an impact on the Park Commission and would like to continue to do so.

The Council thanked Ms. Marinello for taking the time to interview.

Wes Volkenant– Economic Development Authority

Mayor Trude thanked Mr. Volkenant for applying. She asked why he has interest in being on the EDA and if he has done any special preparation to learn more about the EDA. Mr. Volkenant stated he appreciates being an alternate on the Planning Commission and believes there is some what of an overlap between the two. He believes he has knowledge of city businesses and would bring value to the EDA. He stated the EDA is a unique commission since it has both Councilmembers and two residents. Mr. Volkenant indicated he read the 2019 and 2020 EDA meeting minutes.

Councilmember Holthus asked would you be in favor of the City of Andover offering financial incentives to attract commercial and industrial businesses. Mr. Volkenant stated the city does have an unfortunate circumstance without being attached to a state throughway. If it takes financial incentives, I think you would have to continue down that path. He continued he thinks you need to find more mechanisms to bring growth to the city.

Councilmember Butler asked what types of commercial and industrial businesses should the City attract, promote, or pursue. Mr. Volkenant stated as a primarily residential community, the City is very limited as what it can offer to a large warehouse type of facility. Would like to see more restaurants or fast food businesses in the City.

Councilmember Barthel asked with five councilmembers and two resident members that make up the EDA, how do you make sure your voice is heard on the commission. Mr. Volkenant replied putting out communication to the residents is key and he is comfortable being that voice to the residents.

Councilmember Bukkila stated years ago when you interviewed for a commission you talked about your vision for Bunker Lake Boulevard, which included apartment buildings and public transportation, is that still your vision. Mr. Volkenant stated he still believes there has to be a place in the city for lower income people to live and have means to public transportation. He suggested working with Anoka County Transit Committee.

Mayor Trude indicated we have a number of qualified candidates for this position, why should we select you as a member of the EDA. Mr. Volkenant stated he has talked to each member of the council and you know my strengths and weaknesses. He continued he would bring dedication, would come prepared, and would have opinions.

The Council thanked Mr. Volkenant for taking the time to interview.

Greg Mueller – Economic Development Authority

Mayor Trude thanked Mr. Mueller for applying. She stated the EDA is a commission of the Council and two residents that work together to try to promote and develop the local economy. When you drive around the city and you see how the city has developed what do you like and what do you think can be improved upon. Mr. Mueller stated he has been a resident for 23 years. He stated he would like to see continued economic activity that provides families with activities to do. Mr. Mueller stated in his opinion restaurants are still lacking in the City.

Councilmember Holthus asked would you be in favor of the City of Andover offering financial incentives to attract commercial and industrial businesses. Mr. Mueller replied first you need to take a look at the numbers and decide does it make economic sense to provide incentives to attract businesses to this area, what is the payback period and if it looks good from both an economic standpoint and a community standpoint. He would be in favor of that, but you really do need to do your due diligence up front.

Councilmember Butler asked what type of commercial businesses should the City attract. Mr. Mueller stated he does not see Andover as a heavy industrial business community, what that leaves you is white collar businesses, such as architecture firms, developing firms, businesses of that type.

Councilmember Barthel asked with five councilmember and two resident members that make up the EDA, how do you make sure your voice is heard on the commission. Mr. Mueller replied he cares deeply for the City of Andover; he feels he would have an equivalent role as a resident and he would bring an independent voice to the EDA.

Mayor Trude asked what his vision is for the redevelopment area on Bunker Lake Boulevard. Mr. Mueller indicated with the right developer he could see affordable senior living.

Councilmember Bukkila stated there is quite a bit of senior living in Andover, so is there anything you have identified out there that is preventing seniors from moving into the City. Mr. Mueller answered lack of affordable housing, how can the City provide for that demographic.

Councilmember Barthel asked what drove you to apply and what difference can you make. Mr. Mueller stated he would like to give back to the community and be able to support the community his family has lived in for 23 years. He has international experiences and he feels he can bring those experiences closer to home and share that knowledge for the better of the community.

Mayor Trude asked what his role is on the Century College Board. Mr. Mueller indicated he is on the Century College Foundation Board; the Board is responsible for managing the foundation for the college and administering scholarships to the students.

Mayor Trude asked why you should be appointed to the EDA. Mr. Mueller replied he would like to give back to the community, he has the experience, is open minded and would have his opinion be heard.

The Council thanked Mr. Mueller for taking the time to interview.

Joyce Twistol– Economic Development Authority

Mayor Trude thanked Ms. Twistol for applying and asked why she would like to be reappointed to the EDA. Ms. Twistol replied with a prepared statement:

I appreciate the opportunity to have served for several years as a member of the EDA. Thank you. There are some items I would like to address this evening as “food for thought”. In the past several years it has been suggested that the EDA set goals or discuss future projects for the City. This has not happened, and I think it should. The EDA is presented with a budget and available funds but has not developed an overall plan for projects. If a project is considered, the EDA could budget for it or create a new TIF district which would make additional funds available.

So far, the EDA budget has been focused on the housing units along Bunker Lake Boulevard. That is good focus of the EDA’s energy, but drive along Bunker Lake Boulevard from Hanson Boulevard to Round Lake Boulevard and look carefully at the strip mall by Lucky Gas Station. And then look at the Downtown Center. Both those areas could use a façade update. If Andover continues to refer to itself as the “Edina of the North” perhaps we should begin acting like it. Other cities have used CDBG funds and assessments via the HRA to remodel store frontages. How about a partnership to accomplish the upgrades of these businesses?

Too often the EDA responds to a proposal that staff has reviewed, and the EDA does not have all the information available to make an informed decision. Getting the information on EDA projects to commission members ahead of time would allow members to review and come to meetings prepared with questions and concerns.

I would like to see for example partnerships with developers relative to landscaping requirements. After all it is our City and I think we should be taking an active role in its landscaping. At a cost of course, but the end result would be aesthetically pleasing with both homeowners and businesses not needing to wait years before the shrubs and trees mature to fulfill the vision presented at the time the PUD or plat are reviewed. This could mean a review of some of our ordinances but always looking at the overall aesthetic plan, that is the job of the EDA.

There should be a greater amount of communication to the residents of our great City. I have been told countless times about the “cost” and “time commitment” of the staff to pursue more communication exposure. What happened to the communication person who would accumulate and coordinate more communication with and for residents? Where are the human-interest stories and the examples of volunteerism of our residents? It shouldn’t take a virus to bring these

to the media's attention.

We only go around once, let's make it count.

Councilmember Barthel asked how can you take that passion to the EDA if reappointed. Ms. Twistol stated she has attempted to do that but feels the meetings have been some what restricted by the agendas. She suggests restructuring the EDA agenda.

Councilmember Butler asked what kind of businesses would you like to see Andover attract. Ms. Twistol stated first you would have to look at what areas do we have to bring businesses to. She does not want to see used car lots or junkyards in the City.

Ms. Twistol stated she is here to serve constituents, even though it is not a political thing she is out there to help.

The Council thanked Ms. Twistol for taking the time to interview.

The Council recessed at 7:13 p.m.

The Council reconvened at 7:20 p.m.

Kari Kafer – Economic Development Authority

Mayor Trude thanked Ms. Kafer for reapplying. She asked what has the EDA worked on that you think is worthwhile. Ms. Kafer replied getting the entrance signs accomplished was good. Does she think it was a huge accomplishment, no, but it is always nice to get items crossed off the "list". She stated one of her favorite items she has learned is how the Met Council works and is impressed how Andover has met the demands of the Met Council and still maintaining the feel of Andover.

Councilmember Barthel asked what skills or qualities do you have that make you a great EDA member currently and what is a skill you want to expand on if you are reappointed. Ms. Kafer indicated she is very observant, she picks up on things quickly and is a good listener. She would like to expand on the legality of things the EDA can do if reappointed.

Councilmember Bukkila asked in your view of Bunker Lake Boulevard and the future of the City with apartments do you believe that there is a need to bring transit to the City. Ms. Kafer replied she does not think transit would be a good fit for Andover, she does not see that working or wanted.

Councilmember Butler asked what types of commercial and industrial businesses should the City attract, promote or pursue. Ms. Kafer indicated she is open to any type of business to increase job opportunity.

Councilmember Holthus asked would you be in favor of the City of Andover offering financial

incentives to attract commercial and industrial businesses. Ms. Kafer stated she feels that would need to be determined on a case by case basis. She is not against a TIF District, but does believe it should be carefully looked at.

Councilmember Barthel asked what drives you to serve on the EDA. Ms. Kafer replied she sees Andover being a permanent place for her family and wants to be a resident voice on the EDA for the residents.

Mayor Trude asked why should you be reappointed to the EDA. Ms. Kafer indicated she is looking at herself being a permanent resident of Andover and she has found growth in serving on the EDA. She hopes she has shown her value and hope that can continue if reappointed.

The Council thanked Ms. Kafer for taking the time to interview.

Sophia Newton – Park & Recreation Commission

Mayor Trude thanked Ms. Newton for applying. Mayor Trude stated she noticed you organized a neighborhood watch group; can you explain how you did that. Ms. Newton explained she printed out flyers, delivered them to her neighborhood and the neighborhood gathered to get to know each other.

Councilmember Barthel asked if appointed what are one or two issues you would like to address. Ms. Newton replied she would like to see a park for autistic children and has heard from the community a splash pad is something the community would like.

Councilmember Holthus asked what is your favorite park and why. Ms. Newton stated her favorite park is Kelsey Round Lake Park, it was one of the first parks she found when she moved here, and it reminds her of a park from her childhood.

Councilmember Butler asked with the limited park improvement funds how would you go about balancing the funds, would you favor passive parks or active parks used by sport associations. Ms. Newton answered she feels striking a balance between the two would be important.

Councilmember Bukkila asked if you have limited funds and had to decide between two organized sport associations what factors would you use to make your decision. Ms. Newton stated the demand for the sport would be a factor.

Councilmember Barthel asked if you are appointed as a Park and Recreation commissioner, you are a representative of the City how would you promote the parks in a positive manner. Ms. Newton replied she likes to be involved in the community so she would find more ways to do that. She enjoys visiting the parks and would like to hear from community members with their ideas.

Mayor Trude asked how did you learn about what the Park Commission does. Ms. Newton indicated she has watched the meetings from the last year and thought it would be something she

would be interested in. Mayor Trude asked if there was a project that she was interested in that she might have an opinion on. Ms. Newton replied Prairie Knoll Park and the paving of the parking lot.

Mayor Trude asked why should you be appointed to the Park and Recreation Commission. Ms. Newton stated she is the type of person that likes to learn more and would use what she learns to help others in the community.

The Council thanked Ms. Newton for taking the time to interview.

Tracy Strombeck – Park & Recreation Commission

Mayor Trude stated the last time you interviewed I had asked if you had a chance to watch the Park Commission meetings or read the minutes, have you done that. Ms. Strombeck indicated she did read the minutes from 2019 and 2020. Mayor Trude asked if there were any projects that interested her. Ms. Strombeck stated yes, the Strootman Park project with the half basketball court and refurbishing of the playground equipment.

Mayor Trude asked if she saw some value in the work the Park Commission had done last year. Ms. Strombeck replied she saw value in all kinds of parks regarding trail updates and maintenance.

Councilmember Barthel asked what are one or two things you would like to see accomplished on the Park Commission if appointed. Ms. Strombeck replied since she has not been a Park Commissioner before she would come in and observe for a little bit. If she is appointed, she would need to see what is going on and then go from there.

Councilmember Bukkila asked tell us something you like about Andover and something you think needs to be improved upon. Ms. Strombeck stated she likes the rural feel of Andover. She wished the City had more restaurants. She indicated the city does a great job with the maintenance of the ball fields but in her opinion the maintenance isn't done enough so that is an area that could be improved.

Councilmember Butler asked with the limited park improvement funds how would you go about balancing the funds, would you favor passive parks or active parks used by sports associations. Ms. Strombeck answered she does know there is a shortage of ball fields in the city, she also knows that passive parks are important too because not every person is a "sports" person.

Councilmember Barthel asked if you are appointed as a Park and Recreation commissioner, you are a representative of the City how would you promote the parks in a positive manner. Ms. Strombeck replied she would promote the parks for all ages in the community.

Mayor Trude asked what can we do to accommodate all ages in the parks. Ms. Strombeck replied she feels the City should try to help all entities that make a request, but of course cost and funding would be a factor.

Mayor Trude asked if appointed how would you handle a decision that you disagree with. Ms. Strombeck stated as a commissioner she would have one vote, even if she disagrees with the decision it doesn't make it wrong. She stated that is how you learn.

Mayor Trude asked why should you be appointed to the Park Commission. Ms. Strombeck stated she has lived her entire life in Andover. She has been to many of the parks in the City and has spent many years on a sports booster club. She stated the goal is always the big picture, not just her goals. At the end of the day it takes a lot of people to do things correctly and move things forward for the masses.

The Council thanked Ms. Strombeck for taking the time to interview.

DELIBERATION

The Councilmembers discussed and reviewed the candidates for all vacant Commission positions.

Motion by Barthel, Seconded by Bukkila, to appoint Kari Kafer and Greg Mueller to the Economic Development Authority. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Bukkila, Seconded by Holthus, to appoint Angela Marinello and Sophia Newton to the Park & Recreation Commission and appoint Tracy Strombeck as the alternate. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Barthel, Seconded by Bukkila, to accept the resignation of Ted Butler from the Park and Recreation Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dickinson stated with the resignation of Mr. Butler the Park and Recreation Commission seats would be filled the following with the approved appointments made by Council:

Angela Marinello term expires 12/31/22
Sophia Newton term expires 12/31/20
Tracy Strombeck term expires 12/31/21

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Bukkila, Seconded by Barthel, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hartner, Recording Secretary