

***ANDOVER CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING – SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
MINUTES***

The Workshop Meeting of the Andover City Council was called to order by Mayor Julie Trude, September 22, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Blvd NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Councilmembers present: Sheri Bukkila, Valerie Holthus, Jamie Barthel (via Zoom,), and Ted Butler

Councilmember absent: None

Also present: City Administrator, Jim Dickinson
City Engineer/Public Works Director, David Berkowitz
Assistant Public Works Director, Todd Haas
Park & Recreation Commission Chair, Jim Lindahl
Others

DISCUSS PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION ITEMS

a) Prairie Knoll Park Proposed Lighting Plan

Mr. Haas stated staff were directed by the Park and Recreation Commission to look at lighting at Prairie Knoll Park. Staff connected with Connexus Energy to lay out a lighting plan using the Traditionaire light fixture. The Park and Recreation Commission recommended installing the Traditionaire fixture to match the existing lights in the park.

Mayor Trude stated she is concerned that the lighting be adequate to get people safely to the parking lot and into their cars.

Councilmember Holthus asked which fixture had less glare, the Traditionaire or the Shoebox. Mr. Haas stated the Shoebox directs light down and would probably have less glare. Councilmember Bukkila stated she is concerned about the up lighting affecting neighbors.

Councilmember Barthel asked if there would need to be more lighting units if the City purchased the Traditionaire. Mr. Haas stated there is not much of a difference between the Traditionaire and the Shoebox fixtures when it came to light spread.

Councilmember Bukkila stated she is concerned about the neighbors across the street and how they feel about the lighting. Mayor Trude asked if they have been approached. Mr. Haas stated he has not spoken to the neighbors about the lighting but has spoken to them about other safety factors in the park. Councilmember Bukkila said she would like the neighbors to weigh in.

Councilmember Butler stated his biggest concern is the lights are only positioned along the south side of the lot. He stated he is leaning towards the Shoebox fixture because it gives better light.

Park and Recreation Commission Chair Lindahl stated the Commission wanted to match up with the existing light fixtures in the south parking lot and that is why they chose the Traditionaire.

Mr. Haas stated the lights will not be installed until next spring which gives staff time to check with the neighbors and ask for an updated quote from Connexus.

Councilmember Bukkila asked what funding source would be used for the lights. Mr. Haas responded the item is in the Parks CIP and is slated as one project including the paving of the north parking lot.

Councilmember Butler stated getting neighborhood input is good and asked if they should look at lighting in the north side of the north lot as well to provide better coverage.

Mayor Trude asked if the lights could be adjusted to light the lot and trail. Mr. Haas stated a light was installed last fall on the trail and another light is planned to be installed near the sledding hill.

Councilmember Barthel stated he is in favor of the Shoebox fixture but would like to know how many lumens the light gives off.

Mayor Trude confirmed staff will look at adjusting the locations of the lights, the brightness of the lights, and checking with the neighbors for their feedback.

b) 5 Year Park CIP

Mr. Haas presented the Capital Improvement Plan as approved by the Park and Recreation Commission. He said the Commission has been approached by a pickle ball group about adding courts into the CIP. The Commission has decided to hold off until spring and then look at adding it into the CIP when they have a better handle on revenue from 2020.

Mr. Dickinson stated Mr. Haas has the most up to date numbers and the Park Improvement Fund which has increased due to Park Dedication fees recently receipted.

Mayor Trude asked Chair Lindahl to address why pickleball has not been put in the CIP. Chair Lindahl replied the City has indoor space and he stated he does not see outdoor courts happening unless the Park and Recreation Commission takes away a parking lot project in order to pay for the courts.

Mayor Trude asked about the soccer association transition and heard that there are not as many residents participating because the group is more focused on traveling. She asked if the soccer fields will be getting used as much as they used to. Chair Lindahl replied lacrosse and football are using the fields as well. He stated the new association has inhouse programs and numbers are not

declining. He stated the total proportion of Andover residents for the association has gone down, but that is because the size of the group has overall gotten larger.

Mayor Trude asked Mr. Haas if the soccer association has contacted the City about the change in requesting fields. Mr. Haas replied the association does not use as many fields in the fall, but in the summer, they are full. Mr. Lindahl stated the Park and Recreation Commission spoke to the new association and they did not appear to have any issues with the new procedures.

Jeff Smith, 1527 139th Lane NW spoke about pickleball being played inside is not currently desirable because of COVID. He stated everyone wants outside play. He stated he is 78 years old and is a pure pickleball player because he cannot physically play other sports he used to play. He showed the Council the pickleball equipment and said it has changed his life. He is getting more exercise, he is losing weight, and he is making new friends. He said you can get four pickle ball courts in one tennis court. Mr. Haas stated there are two courts in Northwoods Park and are lighted. Mayor Trude asked Mr. Smith how many people are playing pickleball in Andover. He replied about 60 that he knows. He said people he plays with do not want to go inside to play.

Mayor Trude said the request from residents was to put pickleball courts on the budget. She stated staff researched the cost at about \$400,000. Mr. Haas showed a court from the City of Blaine and said it's about \$60-70,000 per court. He said the City of Coon Rapids has courts and when he visited he was surrounded by Andover residents asking when courts would be built in Andover.

Mr. Berkowitz explained the costs associated with constructing pickleball courts. Mayor Trude asked if the boneyard by City Hall was a good space for courts. Chair Lindahl stated the Park and Recreation Commission thought it was a good location. Mr. Berkowitz said that property is a possibility, but it would change the operations of Public Works staff. He stated the other locations include the old Thorson property and Rose Park.

Councilmember Bukkila asked how many outdoor pickleball courts Andover has. Mr. Haas stated the City has 4 and they are striped on basketball courts. Mr. Smith stated they are not good courts because they do not have the fencing and use portable nets.

Councilmember Bukkila asked if this was a good transition until they can get courts built. Chair Lindahl stated the pickleball group said they do not like what the City currently has because they have to use portable nets and the court is not fenced in. Chair Lindahl stated the Park and Recreation Commission is limited by the budget. Councilmember Bukkila said she is taking the Park Commission's budget constraints into account and the fact that there is enthusiasm for the sport.

Mayor Trude said that half-court basketball is not a good solution, so the City actually has zero outdoor pickleball courts.

Councilmember Butler stated they saw the enthusiasm from pickleball players and wanted to do something, but the Park and Recreation Commission did not have the budget. He explained the

courts striped on basketball courts were not a long-term solution.

Chair Lindahl stated they have not seen the desire for outdoor courts until this past spring. He said if you want a nice project, it is going to take time. He said the pickleball group wants 6 courts at one location.

Mayor Trude stated she has heard more about pickleball and there is an increase in demand due to COVID.

Councilmember Bukkila said the City has increased the number of indoor courts. Chair Lindahl stated the City has accommodated the winter needs and there is a summer need that is going to take time to build and do right.

Councilmember Butler said there is huge use of pickleball in the winter in the Community Center with 50 people waiting to play. He said pickleball hits a broad demographic. He said he did not think the City would be hurting their Community Center revenue by having outdoor options in the summer. Councilmember Butler said he likes the Public Works boneyard location because of its proximity to the Community Center and people can check out equipment from the Community Center. He said he does not like converting tennis courts into pickleball courts.

Councilmember Holthus thinks it will be a very valuable, highly used amenity in the City and the Council should give serious thought to constructing courts. She feels strongly the City should do it.

Councilmember Barthel said he likes the idea of constructing courts and would like to send it to the Park and Recreation Commission to discuss and provide recommendation. He said it may take time to get the courts in the 5-year plan.

Mayor Trude feels the City should place it in the CIP in 2022 and collect more data, such as location.

Chair Lindahl stated the Park and Recreation Commission narrowed it down to three locations: Prairie Knoll, City Hall Complex, and Rose Park. He said if the City is going to build it, they should build 6 courts at a cost of about \$400-500,000 and there currently is no money in the Park Improvement Fund.

Councilmember Bukkila stated the Park Commission can put it in their goals, but if they do not have the funds, the Park Commission will have to look at prioritizing items. She also said she does not want the Council to bypass the Parks Commission review.

Mayor Trude summarized Council's opinions as follows: Councilmember Bukkila and Barthel would like to wait and place in the CIP for 2025. Mayor Trude, Councilmember Holthus, and Councilmember Butler would like to put it in the CIP sooner. Councilmember Butler suggested a study in 2021 and construction in 2022, hoping that Park Dedication revenue increases.

Mr. Dickinson said there has been a trend for developers to pay their park dedication fees up front however, others pay as they go. He said it is tough to estimate the Park Dedication numbers. He said when the property east of the railroad tracks develops, it will probably be a combination of land and cash.

Councilmember Bukkila suggested placing the pickleball courts in the CIP at 2025 and as funds become available, the project can be moved sooner.

Mayor Trude stated the CIP is like a wish list and places projects as a marker. Mayor Trude said she agrees that it is important to get the pickleball courts in the CIP and said it is more important than paving a gravel parking lot. Mayor Trude said that after spending \$5 million recently on organized sports, it is time to spend money on adults. She said each year the CIP gets pulled up and looked at to see if they can afford to construct the projects.

Mayor Trude requested a park east of the railroad tracks be added to the CIP as well. She said it is important to get things on the CIP list so people know that it is reserved and the City is thinking about it ahead of time.

Councilmember Bukkila reiterated that she supports placing the pickleball courts in 2025 and explained once a project is in the CIP, people expect it to happen. She said the public does not understand that it is only going to happen if there are funds and Council approves it.

Councilmember Butler asked if Councilmember Bukkila would be open to a study in 2021 and construction dollars in 2024 or 2025. Councilmember Bukkila agreed that it is a more realistic approach and allows the Park and Recreation Commission time to do their work.

Mayor Trude asked if the Park and Recreation Commission is looking at adding a park on the east side of the railroad tracks. Mr. Haas replied the Park Plan specifically states the City is looking at constructing one more neighborhood park in the general area of the railroad developments.

Mayor Trude said the park should go on the list as well and feels that there should be some money spent on adults.

Park and Recreation Commission Chair Lindahl stated he was one opposed to paving parking lots, but as time has progressed, he sees the need. He is concerned that new neighborhoods are going to come in and want a park immediately and there will not be any money for one because the City is paving parking lots and pickleball courts.

Councilmember Barthel stated he supports the \$10,000 pickleball study and would still like the Park Commission to take the lead. He said he would like to see the construction go in the CIP in 2024-25.

Mr. Dickinson summarized the discussion of the Council as follows: \$10,000 in 2021 for a pickleball planning study and construction in 2023 or later.

Councilmember Holthus stated she is concerned that the study will be irrelevant if there is a large gap between the study and construction. Councilmember Butler responded the study will determine the location, the number of courts, and other information that will still be relevant.

Mayor Trude suggested the item go back to the Park and Recreation Commission. Mr. Dickinson replied the City needs to have the CIP solidified so it can go in front of Council for approval in October. Mr. Dickinson said the construction of the pickleball courts has to be in the CIP more than two years in the future or there is a public expectation it will be built soon.

Mayor Trude asked Park and Recreation Commission Chair Lindahl to take the item back to the Park Commission with the direction that the Council would like pickleball courts placed in the CIP budget. Mr. Haas stated he will take the pickleball item to the Park Commission on October 1st and establish construction in the CIP in 2024.

c) 2020 Existing Park and Future Park Facilities Chart/Zones A-D

Mr. Haas asked Council to present questions on the Park Facilities Chart as presented in the staff report.

Mayor Trude noted the improvements to Timber Trails Park and said it is a gorgeous park that rarely gets used. She stated she would rather see the money go to a park that has a lot of activity. Councilmember Butler said it is used for baseball and due to COVID, has not been used as much this year. He said it is a good field and the baseball association will need to be reminded that it is available. Mayor Trude replied she trusted Councilmember Butler's opinion on Timber Trails.

Mayor Trude said Country Oaks Park is slated for no improvements and she always sees kids playing at the park. She said she feels the park is well used and should be considered for improvements. Councilmember Barthel said Country Oaks has more amenities and is used more by the neighborhood. Park and Recreation Commission Chair Lindahl stated the Parks Commission has not received any public comments about Country Oaks. He explained public feedback drives many of the Park Commission's decisions. Mr. Berkowitz stated Country Oaks is slated for replacement but questioned if there is space for new amenities at the park. Councilmember Barthel replied the park is built out and there is not much space for anything new.

Mayor Trude said Woodland Crossings is considered for irrigation. She said when she visited the park, she saw signs that there are areas that are not groomed to reduce the need for watering. She asked why the park would need irrigation if it is intended to be a low-maintenance park. Mr. Grode said the Park and Recreation Commission gave staff feedback if the grass became aesthetically unappealing to the neighborhood, that the City consider irrigation. Chair Lindahl stated the Park Commission wants parks to fit into the neighborhood and reduce complaints by residents, so irrigation was put in case it became a problem.

Mr. Smith stated he lives by Bunker Hills Park and the playground is used a lot, but the ball field is not used at all.

Mayor Trude said she heard from a resident near Terrace Park that there used to be a sliding hill and they would like to see that brought back. Mr. Haas said they can use it as a sliding hill. Mayor Trude said she thinks it has to be mowed better and there may be scrub trees making sliding dangerous.

Mayor Trude suggested adding skateboard equipment.

Councilmember Holthus asked what was happening with the old golf course. Mr. Dickinson replied that it is not a park. He explained the DNR has an easement over it and the City can only put a mowed trail in there.

The Council discussed Strootman Park and adding some equipment there since young families are moving in. Mr. Haas said staff will make sure there are some smaller pieces of equipment added to the playground.

Mayor Trude suggested looking at adding equipment to Hidden Creek East. Councilmember Bukkila said the neighborhood hears noise from the Sheriff's shooting range and the basketball court. She said the irrigation would be the most important thing in that park. Mr. Berkowitz summarized Councilmember Bukkila's suggestion: add irrigation, remove basketball court, and add a shelter.

Mayor Trude stated the Round Lake boat launch must be getting more popular with paddle boarding. Mr. Haas said the cattails are filling that area in. Mr. Haas said cars do not get stuck, but the City had to remove some cattails.

Mayor Trude stated she appreciated the work staff put into the spreadsheet. Mr. Haas stated the Park and Recreation Commission updated the spreadsheet and did a separate evaluation of the City Hall campus area to include pickleball, a splash pad and a signature playground.

Councilmember Butler asked about Coon Creek Park, Tom Anderson Trail, and if there could be canoe/kayak access. Mr. Berkowitz replied the City is working with the Coon Creek Watershed District and now is a good time for a discussion on access.

Councilmember Butler stated the City's trail signage is difficult to read and would like the City to use signage similar to the County. Mr. Haas stated signage is being worked on. Councilmember Holthus agreed the signage needs to be updated in the preserve to provide orientation.

REVIEW DRAFT OF 2021-2025 CIP

Mr. Dickinson stated the CIP is updated to reflect discussions from previous meetings and will need to be updated to reflect the park discussion this evening. He provided a summary of the updates and explained where the dollars in the CIP are going to be spent in the next five years. Mr. Dickinson said parks takes up 4% of CIP dollars and about 80% of discussion.

Mr. Berkowitz said the City is on the unofficial list for funding of a roundabout at Nightingale Street and Crosstown Boulevard from the Met Council in 2024-2025. He said he will begin discussions with the County on the intersection. He said there will be many public meetings on that project.

Mr. Dickinson stated the CIP document will not change much and asked the Council for questions.

Mayor Trude stated she does not see the benefit of paving the parking lot at Pine Hills Park and would prefer the funding to go to capital equipment. Councilmember Butler stated the design of the parking lot was intended to be paved and supports getting it paved at some point in the future. Mr. Dickinson stated it was also a goal of the Council and Commission to finish that park.

2021 SPECIAL REVENUE, DEBT SERVICE, CAPITAL PROJECTS, ENTERPRISE & INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS BUDGET DISTRIBUTION & DISCUSSION

Mr. Dickinson reviewed the 2021 Proposed Property Tax Levy the City Council adopted. He stated the Council is asked to discuss other City funds, outside the General Fund. Mr. Dickinson briefly identified the other City funds and explained the items within each fund: Special Revenue Fund, Debt Service, Capital Projects, Enterprise, and Internal Service Funds.

Mr. Dickinson stated the monument sign at Bunker Lake Boulevard and Crosstown Boulevard is having panel burnout problems and may need significant replacement at a cost around \$20,000. He stated the City's monument signs will need to be put on a rotation in the budget to ensure they are updated regularly.

Mr. Dickinson gave a brief overview of the Community Center budget and stated staff will have a more detailed presentation in October.

Mr. Dickinson explained Mr. Haas will be retiring at some point and will need to be replaced by a Councilmember or resident (not a staff member) on the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization (LRRWMO).

Councilmember Bukkila asked what construction was going on at Crosstown Boulevard and 133rd Avenue. Mr. Berkowitz stated he is unsure and will get back to her.

Mr. Dickinson stated Charitable Gambling is picking up again after being closed down by COVID for several months. He stated the City will have the funds to fulfill the budget commitments.

Councilmember Bukkila asked if the City would ever be able to pay cash for capital equipment instead of using bonds. Mr. Dickinson replied at some point the City can reduce, but likely not eliminate the Capital Equipment Bond.

Mr. Dickinson explained there is a lot of activity in the funds outside of the General Fund. He stated there will be additional discussions about the General Fund in October along with a presentation on

health insurance if it is resolved. Mr. Dickinson stated the City is looking at paying off one of the bonds in the water utility to save money.

Mayor Trude asked if some of the costs for teen and afterschool programming will shift from the General Fund to the Charitable Gambling Fund if the Charitable Gambling Fund remains stable. Mayor Trude questioned whether there would be teen and after school programming due to COVID. Mr. Dickinson stated there will be programming, it will just look different and be limited in numbers. Mr. Dickinson stated he hopes seniors will migrate to the Community Center rather than the Senior Center because the Community Center is more accessible and has more space and opportunities.

AUGUST 2020 GENERAL FUND BUDGET PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Dickinson reported 2020 revenue is at 57% through August in comparison to 60% at the same time last year. He stated new homes are at 95. He reported expenditures are at 54% through August 2020 and was at 61% at the same time last year. Mayor Trude asked if COVID expenses were covered by CARES dollars. Mr. Dickinson confirmed they were.

AUGUST 2020 CITY INVESTMENT REPORTS

Mr. Dickinson reported City Investments are in a safe location. He said he expects the ice deposit for the National Sports Center to be returned by the National Sports Association in 2022 instead of waiting until 2026.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Dickinson reported the Parade of Homes is going on now and Andover has 7 homes in it. He said the builder pulling the most permits is TH Homes in Catcher's Creek.

Councilmember Butler asked how many platted units have not paid their Park Dedication fees. Mr. Dickinson said there are approximately 100 lots unpaid within the City and revenue should be expected in the next three years. Mr. Dickinson explained the policy of allowing developers to delay paying on lots and the City charging an interest rate which began during the recession. Mr. Dickinson indicated a recommendation of eliminating the policy when the fee schedule is requested for approval. Council reached consensus to remove the policy.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Barthel, Seconded by Holthus, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Kunza, Recording Secretary

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TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.