

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
ST FRANCIS MN

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
JULY 2, 2018

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Steve Feldman.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Mayor Steve Feldman, Councilmember Jerry Tveit, Joe Muehlbauer, Robert Bauer and Rich Skordahl

Also present: Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Anderson), City Administrator Joe Kohlmann, Community Development Director Kate Thunstrom, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Public Works Director Paul Teicher, Liquor Store Manager John Schmidt, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill and Acct Tech/Deputy Clerk Lori Streich

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION TO APPROVE TONIGHT'S AGENDA BY MUEHLBAUER, SECONDED BY BAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. City Council Minutes – June 18, 2018
- B. City Council Work Session Notes – June 11, 2018
- C. Accept the Resignation of Fire Fighter Harry Everth
- D. Accept the Donation from the St. Francis American Legion to the Fire Department
- E. Routine Equipment Maintenance – Generator Load Bank Testing
- F. Transfer from General Fund to Street Fund – Resolution 2018-23
- G. City Council Minutes –Special Meeting – June 25, 2018
- H. Payment of Claims \$221,612.20 (Check # 074376–074446)

Bauer said, in regards to consent agenda item D, as city employees and elected officials, it is important that all of our employees get told about someone being honored that used to be on the fire department. As a firefighter you are a family to this entire city and all of its residents, and to not be told that a donation was being made in honor of a fellow firefighter's death is a sad day.

Chief Schmidt explained that every firefighter was notified that they were receiving a donation. When they initially received word of the donation, notification went out to the leadership team, and then in the update this week, every firefighter was notified of this donation, along with the intention of how they were going to spend this money for the donation. He's not aware of what timeline he's being held accountable to for this notification, but notification was made to staff. The American Legion and Chief Schmidt never anticipated this to be an event. The American Legion simply wanted to exchange a check. That's why Schmidt sent it out to the executive leadership team and they met and accepted the check.

Schmidt stated that this is not the first donation they have received, and they didn't do anything different this time than they did with previous donations. If there is a timeline that he needs to be held accountable to, he needs to know that because then they will meet those expectations. But you can't keep moving the target and expect them to hit it.

MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA BY BAUER, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Leroy Schaffer, 4526 234<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, asked that anyone that is currently running for office, to get out there and do their best.

He also wanted to state that he's worried we are heading towards a dictatorship. The council are our leaders and they can make a statement to the State and Senate letting them know where the city of St. Francis stands.

Mayor Feldman added that mid-term elections are coming up. Get out and vote if you want your voices to be heard.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS

A. Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) Annual Report

An overview of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program was given by Kaci Fisher, Environmental Specialist from Hakanson Anderson. Fisher helps administer the program for the City of St. Francis.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Feldman opened the Public Hearing at 6:11 pm.

Ray Jones, 23725 Nacre Street NW, said that it rained two inches on his property the other day and none of the water ran off. It has nowhere to run off to. He is still charged a \$60.00 stormwater fee for that piece of land. He also rents land that has three different parcels on it that he has to pay another \$180.00 for stormwater. He's called around and read information and found that different cities don't charge for vacant land. He thinks it is unfair that he has to pay when the water stays on his land and is not running into the ditches. What benefit do we get, and where does this stormwater money go?

Mayor Feldman said that he will take the information that Jones has provided to them, and they will look into it. He asked City Engineer Jochum to expand on this topic.

Jochum said he wasn't specifically involved in how the fees were made. He does know that St. Francis tried to be fair across the board and that's why they charged \$60 per parcel. Other cities will charge by the acre. Every parcel has run off. It would be difficult to find the ones that maybe are a special circumstance.

Tveit said that he's on the Upper Rum River Watershed Management Association. This organization deals specifically with water quality. He's also a water treatment operator in his regular job and has been to school for this. When it comes to stormwater that falls onto the ground, there's a certain amount that runs off. You can't stop it. In addition to that, any water that's absorbed into the ground ends up in the aquifer. The aquifer is like a slow moving underground river. Depending on the layers of the aquifer, at the top surface, which is 10 feet below ground, ends up in the Rum River as well. Contaminants are put on the surface, like fertilizer, pesticides, etc. and with the rain that absorbs into the aquifer. That's why we have the well monitoring program.

Feldman said that this council and administration has always believed that everyone has a right to bring anything up, and it's the city's responsibility to give it their full due diligence. He has given the information to the City Administrator and they will look it over and discuss it with the Engineer and bring back their findings.

Skordahl said he was on the council when this first started, and the requirement first became reality. There were still some misconceptions about if this money is going to just pay for the gutters and things that the people in the sewer and water served part of the city had. This is not the case. There's different parts of this, like education for example. When they knew they had this unfunded mandate that they had to deal with for the state, they didn't want to levy for it. They were going to generate dollars to put into a specific fund, and the way they chose to do that was to charge every parcel equally, at least to get off the ground. It doesn't mean it's going to be like that forever. This is only year three. If they were to look at each individual parcel, where do you draw the line when deciding who pays what. So they decided that every parcel would pay \$5.00 per month, \$60.00 per year, to get the funds started and do all the things that the state is mandating us to do, now that we have met the population threshold along the Rum River. That doesn't mean it can't be looked at in the future, but for the time being, everyone is in the same boat. We are all part of the same community trying to protect what goes into the Rum River Watershed.

Feldman asked Engineer Jochum if there are two sides to the stormwater. The stormwater runoff through gutters and pavement, and the part that absorbs into the ground.

Jochum confirmed that everyone has run off, as Councilmember Tveit had said. The drainage may not go anywhere. Every property is unique and it would be difficult to look at it parcel to parcel. It would take a long time and a lot of money.

Public hearing closed at 6:31 pm.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Nothing

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Water/Sewer Utility Rates – Ordinance 241, Second Series Amending the Fee Schedule 2<sup>nd</sup> Rdg.

Kohlmann explained the timeline will be 30 days after the publication to be implemented and the final result will be a 20% decrease on water and sewer utility bills.

Councilmembers had no questions or comments.

Feldman said that this has been checked and double checked, and safety guards have been put into this. Because of the developments that are in play right now, this has been made possible. There's good development potential for now and in the future, but we are always susceptible to the economy. As of right now, these rate reductions seem to be the right thing to do, but it took 18 months of work to get to this point. If we go into a recession we will have to look at this in a different light. If a rate increase is needed, it would be done in a gradual rate basis, not dumping 45/85 on anybody. This will be looked at on an annual basis and adjusted accordingly.

MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE 241, SECOND SERIES AMENDING THE FEE SCHEDULE 2<sup>ND</sup> READING BY BAUER, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

ROLL CALL AYES: SKORDAHL, BAUER, FELDMAN, MUEHLBAUER, TVEIT  
NAYES: NONE

B. Development Design Standards for Bridge Street Corridor

Thunstrom explained the development design standards for the Bridge Street Corridor. A design standard is an overlay that works to guide our districts over our existing zoning codes. The proposal is from Sambatek, who is our current planner, and the benefit of using Sambatek is that they are familiar with our existing codes. The timing to complete this process is very efficient right now as we are having to look at all of our zoning codes at the same time with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Feldman said that this would give us basic policy and criteria, but would we have flexibility as we see development coming forth? For example, if a restaurant came in, could they use their own theme?

Thunstrom said that this does offer flexibility. If you were to go into some of the downtown areas like Anoka, you would see potential signage, streetscape, or lighting that the city would put out that is uniform and directs to a certain district visually. There's a lot of best practices out there, and working with Sambatek, our design team, and those best practices, we can put together something that would allow us the flexibility to not over regulate but still have that ultimate goal and create that vision of a downtown. How it's laid out would enhance that downtown feel.

A restaurant would be able to use their own theme, but we may tell them we want their parking in the back or support a streetscape that would include lighting in the front that would enhance our district.

Muehlbauer said it's straightforward and a good idea to try and guide the district so we don't have spotty development with ten different looks. As long as we can be flexible work with people.

Tveit is wondering if St. Francis is looking at rebranding their look, similar to what Anoka did with their downtown district to make it more historic. Anoka went through a rebranding campaign. As Tveit was looking through the proposal, it almost seemed like that's what we were getting at but not saying it.

Thunstrom said this is just related to the Bridge Street District. It's not intended to be a new image or marketing campaign.

Skordahl asked where the \$14,000 is coming from to pay the bill. It sounds reasonable, but he's assuming there's a plan to pay for it.

Thunstrom said there are funds in the Community Development Department that could possibly be used.

Bauer was also concerned about the branding or not allowing businesses to keep their brand. In speaking with someone, he was enlightened that White Castle wanted to open a business in a city that had a little more stringent requirements for their look. They were going with a red theme. But White Castle wanted to build their White Castle, so they didn't actually develop in that city. He wants to make sure that we aren't being that stringent. Other than that, it looks really good.

Feldman said this is a tool and since we have future development coming, we have to be prepared. He believes we are where we are is because we discuss things and do our due diligence, and are flexible where we can be without changing policies and ordinances.

MOTION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE BRIDGE STREET CORRIDOR BY SKORDAHL, SECONDED BY TVEIT; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
NOTHING

Mayor Feldman asked the members of the animal control committee, which include Police Chief Schwieger, Councilmember Tveit, and Mayor Feldman for a meeting date to discuss the animal control situation and chart a course. The meeting was set for Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm at the public works department.

11. REPORTS

A. Councilmember Reports -

B. Upcoming Events –

July 4	City Offices Closed
July 16	City Council Meeting @ ISD #15 Central Services Center 6 pm
July 18	Planning Comm. Mtg @ ISD #15 Central Services Center 7 pm
Aug 6	City Council Meeting @ ISD #15 Central Services Center 6 pm
Aug 7	Night to Unite
Aug 14	State Primary – Polls are open 7 am to 8 pm

Skordahl reported that the notice of capital improvement plan is out for review. He read through all 72 pages, and it was easy to understand and follow. Thanks to staff for all of the work that was put into that. Wednesday is the 4<sup>th</sup>, so please be safe. One thing to consider, is that if you have a Veteran in your neighborhood that has PTSD, keep them in mind in your celebrations.

Bauer also wanted to let the residents know to get out and celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He has been working on a couple items. One is that he contacted Anoka County regarding trying to get a bike path and walkway underneath Bridge Street as that development comes in. Anoka County will come out and do a study to see if that's feasible. The other item he has been working on is that he put a call in to emergency services of Anoka regarding the siren.

Muehlbauer just wanted to thank staff for everything they do. He's especially appreciative of the work on the water rates. He wanted to reconfirm that over time, if things go as planned, there will come a point where rates may have to be raised very slowly. He will post that information on his social media page if anyone is interested. Safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July wishes to everyone.

Tveit stated that the Upper Rum River Watershed District had a meeting that he attended. They are still trying to do their 10 year Comprehensive Plan. Council needs to understand that the management watershed organization doesn't have any staff. They hire someone that types the minutes, but everything else is done by the committee, and they all have full time jobs. There are proposals that have been raised to hire a staff person because there are a lot of meetings that happen at the State & County level. Our watershed management organization doesn't have any representation there, or any resident experts. There are some possible grants we could qualify for, that we don't even know are out there. In the future, they are asking for the Anoka County Conservation District to help them with that. Somebody from the watershed management organization or the County may come out and present a proposal to the city about hiring a staff person to help up tackle a lot of these organizational issues. The problem is that comes with a cost. When you hire someone, you have to pay wages. Tveit thinks this is something that's needed.

Tveit also mentioned that he had a citizen talk to him about the community park bathrooms. Since it's a city park and bathroom, they are asking if they can be unlocked. Tveit explained to this citizen about the vandalism that has occurred in the past and that is why they are locked now. Maybe there's a way to try to resolve those issues and at least during the summer months when the park gets used a lot, perhaps it could be open.

Tveit wished everyone a safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Watch your drinking and driving, put on sunscreen if you are at the beach, watch for pedestrians, etc.

Feldman said they have a meeting on July 10<sup>th</sup> with the police department, the Lions Club, the Ambassador Program and the Chamber of Commerce, and they will be talking about the bathrooms being open. The idea came up that the entities could split the bill, and have a third party clean it up. From past experience, the messes that were made were difficult to take care of. But everyone is open for discussion.

Feldman said that the capital improvement plan was good, but there's one item he wanted to plant the seed on. The capital improvement plan is for us to look out ten to twenty years to project what our costs and expenditures are going to be for capital improvement. One thing he would like to look at is electronic water meters. He understands that there is a big cost factor to that, but there's always the possibility that we could have a failure on the meters we have now. There's also the possibility that the meter reader may make a mistake, by writing the wrong number down. He would like to emphasize to the public that if you see something erratic in your bills, call City Hall or Public Works. Instead of complaining on Facebook, give us the opportunity to work with you. There are helpful water tips on the website under Public Works. People and machines do make mistakes occasionally.

Feldman also asked the residents to be careful with fireworks and drinking, and to be responsible. The police will be out and he's been looking at the police reports and is blown away at how many people are driving home from the bars drunk. Safety is important for you and the pedestrians.

Skordahl mentioned the Riverbank work session meeting on Monday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:00 pm at the Community Center.

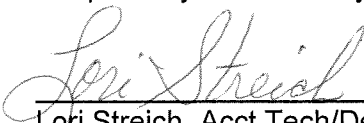
Feldman said that the city has purchased the church on the corner of Ambassador and Bridge Street. He has heard some comments on the Facebook page asking why the city bought that. It may have been a church 100 years ago, but it's not anymore. It's an eyesore and a hazardous building, just like the gas station that used to be in front of City Hall was. Now we have a Kwik Trip building in the lot across from City Hall in the Spring of 2019. As far as the church, we have a long term development plan along Bridge Street. We are clearing the way of old hazardous buildings to make way for development. Looking at the broader picture, the church going down makes for a better retail district and that's why they are doing it. That building does not fit with the St. Francis forward plan.

Feldman ended by saying that if anyone has any questions on anything, please contact the Community Development Department, the City Administrator, City Clerk, or anyone at the City. We are here to help you and answer your questions. We are here to spend your money wisely and make the city grow in a positive way.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm

Respectfully submitted by



Lori Streich, Acct Tech/Deputy Clerk