

**City of Columbus
City Council Meeting
Alternative Meeting Format
MN Statute, Section 13D.021
05.25.2022**

The 05.25.22 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Mayor Jesse Preiner at the City Hall. Present were Councilmembers Robert Busch, Janet Hegland and Shelly Logren; Assistant to the City Administrator Jessica Hughes (via teleconference), City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, City Attorney Megan Rogers, City Engineer Kevin Bittner, Public Communications Coordinator Connor Keith and Public Works Director Jim Windingstad.

Also in attendance: Planning Commission Chairman Ron Hanegraaf, Park Board Vice-Chair Kris King, Planning Commissioner Barb Bobick and Steve Wagamon

Not in attendance: Councilmember Sue Wagamon

1. **CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**
 1. **Call to Order – Regular Meeting – 6:33 p.m.**
 2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 3. **Motion – Agenda Approval with Additions**
 4. **Motion – Approval of the 04-28-2022 LBAE Meeting Minutes**
 5. **Motion – Approval of the 11-22-2021 City Council Meeting Minutes**
 6. **Motion – Approval of the 12-29-2021 City Council Meeting Minutes**
 7. **Motion – Pay Bills as Posted**

Motion by Hegland to approve Consent Agenda items 3-7. Seconded by Logren. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

3. **PRESENTATION**
 8. **Public Open Forum**

No participation.

9. Planning Commission Report

Hanegraaf detailed the Planning Commission meeting that took place on May 18, 2022, sharing that a public hearing for a PUD for the Landings at Columbus apartment complex was discussed. Plans submitted at this meeting did not include handicap parking in the underground parking lot, and City Planner Dean Johnson ensured the applicants knew those needed to be included and six more stalls be added to the plan to meet parking guidelines.

10. Animal Control Contract

Hegland shared a contract template for Companion Animal Control (CAC) for them to replace North Metro Animal Control (NMAC) as the new animal control service. Technically, this contract is in two separate parts: one as an animal control entity and another as an impound holding entity since CAC does not have the ability to hold animals. The contract template in front of City Council at this meeting is

only for the animal control service, not detention. CAC is currently planning on holding any dogs they need to detain from Columbus at Otter Lake Veterinary Hospital in Lino Lakes but cannot start until renovations are complete. Northwoods Animal Humane Society may be used in the interim until Otter Lake's renovations are complete, but will not know until May 27, 2022, at the soonest. CAC can pick up more than dogs, including cats and farm animals. Cost with NMAC was between \$500-\$1000 per year, with the new contract being a flat fee for \$3000-\$4000 per year based on community size. Hegland recommended authorizing staff to review the contract and negotiate terms for final approval by City Council at the next meeting.

Logren inquired if a resident has requested Animal Control to pick up any cats. Mursko said NAMC did not pick up loose cats as part of their contract, so they only got involved if there was a group of feral cats or multiple cats in a house, but that hasn't been a major issue for the City in the past. Logren asked what the process would be with this new organization. Hegland said that CAC would try as hard as possible to ask around to see who the cat belonged to so it could be returned to its owner before taking the animal to the impound service, which is the same process it will use for a loose dog.

Motion by Hegland to authorize Staff and the City Attorney to negotiate the terms of the agreements and then bring back the final agreements to City Council on the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Preiner.

Busch asked, when CAC picks up an animal and a person claims it, how much that individual will be charged. Hegland said the impound facility usually is the one that charges that fee, but since that contract hadn't been drafted yet the City doesn't know what that fee will be at this time.

Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

~~11. Accounting Contract~~

4. STAFF & CONSULTANT REPORTS

12. Engineer's Report

Windingstad shared the procedure of a two-week speed study conducted on 170th Avenue after it was turned into a through street to Thurnbeck Preserve Phase II. Bittner prepared the data into a report, detailing that the average speed of all traffic for those two weeks was approximately 25 miles per hour, 10 miles per hour under the speed limit. While there was data indicating there was speeding during this period of data collection, the majority of speeds recorded were below the speed limit. Due to that, Bittner says there is not a significant speeding problem with this roadway and feels the speed limit of 35 miles per hour is appropriate.

Preiner asked if the next step was to arrange a neighborhood meeting with those that live on 170th Avenue. Mursko said that this process was started by a petition to re-close the road, but that it was up to the Council to determine if it wanted to organize a neighborhood meeting or send a letter. Hegland asked if the City had received any feedback since sending out the previous letter informing the neighborhood of another speed study. Keith said he hadn't and that the letter Hegland referenced did indicate a neighborhood meeting would be arranged.

Windingstad pointed out that since the petition stated the neighbors wanted the road to be closed, they would show up at the meeting with that goal in mind. Hegland requested an estimate be provided of what closing the street could cost, but felt the data already collected supported not closing the street and could be shared at a neighborhood meeting.

Motion by Hegland to direct City Staff and City Engineer to schedule a neighborhood meeting to relay information and discuss the request by residents to close off 170th Avenue. Seconded by Busch.

Logren commented that she felt the dirt road itself was a deterrent of increased traffic and speed. She felt the traffic counts weren't high and that the City has done its diligence in researching this project and any further discussions of closing the roads would be a waste of tax dollars. Hegland agreed, but felt that a face-to-face neighborhood meeting would be the best way to convey this message. Preiner requested confirmation that the City also had data of the number of cars using the road. Windingstad confirmed that those numbers were included in the City's last letter sent to the neighborhood.

Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Bittner continued, reporting on the 2022 Hornsby Project associated with the Loves Travel Plaza. A preconstruction meeting was recently held with the contractor, Park Construction, and intend for it to start in mid-June to be completed in July, coinciding with Love's opening. The binder course of 137th Avenue was paved May 24, 2022, as well as turn lanes from Lake Drive. St. Clair Lakes is installing utilities and progressing slowly.

Bittner turned to the closeout of last year's Hornsby project with Forest Lake Contracting. The City received a final pay estimate of \$12,654.74 and Bittner recommended making final payment to complete the project.

Motion by Preiner to approve the Hornsby Street final payment to Forest Lake Contracting in the amount of \$12,654.74. Seconded by Busch. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland -aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

13. Attorney's Report

Rogers started with a review of the proposed updates to the shoreland ordinance. Three substantive changes have been drafted: (1) variance standards, (2) subdivision standards and (3) creating more flexibility for handicap access from water bodies. No substantive impacts on existing properties are created by this new shoreland ordinance. Setback requirements from the lakes are remaining the same.

The variance standards add a number of findings and tie the ordinance to state variance standards that are regularly applied under zoning ordinances. They are different standards than are in the City ordinances today, but they are not different standards than what are required for all cities throughout the state. Shoreland authority comes from state law, which sets the minimum but allows cities to be more restrictive should they choose. Rogers recommends adopting the state minimum.

Busch inquired what specifically is meant by handicap access. Rogers said that the current shoreland ordinance prohibits any structure that would allow things like movable ramps to be installed along the shoreland. Since the DNR has allowed that sort of flexibility, this edit would adopt that flexibility.

Motion by Hegland to approve the draft shoreland ordinance and direct City Staff to forward the City ordinance to the DNR for the 30-day review and comment period. Seconded by Preiner. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Rogers continued, saying that City Staff was directed to draft a moratorium for Lake Drive at the May 11, 2022, City Council meeting pertaining to the Commercial/Industrial and Low Density Residential Mixed-Use Districts. As drafted, the moratorium would not go into effect until June 30, 2022, due to the number of active applications in the district. The moratorium would last one year and is eligible for an extension of no more than 18 months. Uses in these districts impacted by this moratorium include: building, trade and contractor offices with exterior storage; vehicle sales; vehicle repair; and machine shop uses.

Mursko added that an email was received from Bruce Malkerson, who represents Steve Wagamon. Considering his writing, the conversation he had with Rogers and Councilmember Wagamon not being present at the meeting, Mursko questioned if the Council wanted to continue the moratorium discussion to the City Council meeting on June 8, 2022.

Logren noticed that the moratorium didn't include everything she felt was going to be included, such as heavy industrial, another concrete company, aggregate crushing, asphalt companies, animal rendering, etc. Logren felt the Council wanted to remove heavy industrial uses, and she wanted to be rid of heavy trucking. She requested that the moratorium be "beefed up" to cover what she felt the Council wanted to avoid. Rogers said that heavy industrial is already prohibited in the district via the zoning ordinance and that the industries listed correlated with the concerns raised at the May 11, 2022, meeting, but that her office can go through the conditional uses to see if there's any others the Council wants to include.

Hegland added that miscommunication happens surrounding some of the technical terms in the zoning ordinance and wants the City to be clear in what is being listed in the moratorium. The goal of this moratorium is to look at anything that would have a high impact on the residential properties that border this zone. Logren furthered that, saying she wanted to protect the residential properties from trucks constantly going through County-managed thoroughfares.

Mursko requested Rogers generate ideas of policy questions the Council would want to research in the study. Busch asked what the City Council truly envisioned in this area.

Motion by Preiner to continue discussion of Ordinance 22-05 establishing a moratorium on development, construction or expansion of the building trade/contractor office, recreational vehicle sales and service, appliance and vehicles and services and repair, lumber yards and sales, and machine and welding shop facilities within the Commercial/Industrial and Mixed-Use Low Density Residential Districts as more fully described within the ordinance and directing staff to complete a planning study assessing the need for an amendment to the City's official controls to the City Council meeting on June 8, 2022. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – nay; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Rogers continued, sharing a building rental agreement that has been drafted for the Columbus Lions Club for usage of the Columbus Community Center allowing them priority registration to the Columbus Community Center for nine pancake breakfasts while obligating the Lions to maintain and care for the building while under their use, as well as using the kitchen equipment and make any necessary replacements. The rental is at no cost in recognition of the organization's longstanding commitment to the City.

Hegland said that the City wants to stipulate a checklist for cleaning standards. Rogers said this can be added as an appendix or exhibit, as could parking or entry/exit requirements.

Motion by Preiner to approve the Columbus Community and Senior Center Lions lease agreement as presented and amended with a checklist of cleaning priorities. Seconded by Logren. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

As referenced in the Planning Commission report, the City has a potential apartment project. The City has a purchase agreement that contemplates a June 1, 2022, completion date of the project going through the City’s planning process. However, the project will not complete that process by that deadline, so a second amendment of the purchase agreement has been submitted to extend the date for municipal approval to September 1, 2022.

Motion by Preiner to approve the Second Amendment to the David Harchanko purchase agreement and authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to take all the necessary and expedient measures in furtherance of the intent of the second amendment. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – nay; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

14. Mayor and City Councilmembers’ Reports

Logren shared that she and Wagamon met to discuss special events. She said that after Wagamon constructed a preliminary structure for an Events Coordinator and committee and in anticipation of recruiting volunteers, they advised that it was not the time to pursue this effort because of existing pressures on exploration committee members and City Staff. If/when the City has the adequate workforce to support an event planning entity, then the topic of special events can be readdressed.

Motion by Logren to approve the Events Committee report’s recommendation to postpone moving forward at this time with the Events Committee agenda due to City Staff and Councilmembers’ time and workload constraints allowing time spent on higher priority projects set by City Council. Seconded by Preiner.

Hegland inquired what the trigger would be resume planning an Event Subcommittee. Logren indicated she did not know, but it could resume if the Park Board took over the subcommittee or if it got volunteers. Hegland said that it’s hard to say there’s no volunteers since the City has not tried to recruit for this initiative. Busch echoed Hegland, saying he liked the idea of setting a resumption date or condition that could be met. Logren expressed that she felt there wasn’t community interest.

Hegland suggested this discussion be continued at the June 14, 2022, City Council workshop meeting as part of the overall staffing conversation.

Motion by Logren to approve the Events Committee report’s recommendation to postpone moving forward at this time with the Events Committee agenda due to City Staff and Councilmembers’ time and workload constraints allowing time spent on higher priority projects set by City Council with the understanding that there will be a workshop meeting held on June 14, 2022, to discuss these issues. Seconded by Preiner. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Busch shared that Viking Industrial's open house went well and that there were a lot of local contractors there. Busch also mentioned Running Aces and that their exterior remodeling is coming along well. Finally, Busch said he was approached by the CPTO for the Council to have representation at next year's Columbus Family Fun Night.

Hegland shared that she and other councilmembers had attended the EcoFun ribbon cutting.

Preiner had no report.

Hegland shared that an applicant for the Associate Planner position was interviewed this afternoon. Frank Koenen has a Master's degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs with a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree. The Personnel Committee recommends making a job offer to Koenen at Step 1.

Motion by Hegland to direct City Staff to extend an employment offer at Step 1 of the Associate Planner job scale. Seconded by Busch.

Logren inquired if Columbus is "urban." Mursko said that while Columbus is rural, in the hierarchy of planning, that an urban planner is appropriate. Logren expressed nervousness about hiring someone with this specific degree and with limited experience. Hegland shared that Koenen has roots in a small town and that he was impressive during his interview with his research of Columbus.

Roll call: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

15. Public Works' Report

Windingstad provided an update on the trees for Columbus City Park. The trees have been ordered, but are not yet in stock at Rum River. He inquired if the Council found it acceptable to plant nine trees on the north side of Kettle River Boulevard instead of six on the north side and three to the south as the original map indicated. Doing this would provide the most shade for the park trail.

Busch asked if everyone on the Park Board wanted all the trees planted this way. King confirmed everyone is on board.

Logren asked if the trees' crowns would allow for all nine trees to be planted in the same row. Windingstad confirmed that the 500 feet of space should allow for the 50-foot canopies.

16. Public Communications Coordinator's Report

No report.

17. Assistant City Administrator's Report

Hughes provided an update on the abatement at 16657 Iverson St. The scope of work and request for quotes was sent to vendors on May 25, 2022, with a deadline of June 1, 2022, for quote submission. Property owner will be put on an approximate two-weeks' notice once a vendor has been selected, with work hopefully being completed the last week of June. Busch asked if there is any update on the junk in the yard. Hughes referenced the status of the court case regarding this address, indicating the property owner and renter did not appear at their court date.

If remittance must be collected via property taxes, Logren asked if that charge would incur in one year or spread out over multiple. Hughes' understanding is that it would be a single charge on the following year's taxes.

18. City Administrator's Report

Mursko had no report.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

19. Planning Commission Meeting 06.01.2022 at 6:30 p.m.

20. City Council Meeting 06.08.2022 at 6:30 p.m.

21. City Council Workshop 06.14.2022 at 5:30 p.m.

22. Calendar of Meetings

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Hegland to adjourn. Seconded by Busch. Roll call vote: Logren – aye; Hegland – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted:

Connor Keith, Public Communications Coordinator