

**WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
March 23, 2021**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 5:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Susan Olson
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Also Present: Christina Volkens, City Administrator
Susan Barry, City Clerk
Brian Bachmeier, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Jeff Koesling, Parks Superintendent
Alyssa MacLeod, Communications Specialist
Chelsea Petersen, Administrative Services Director (Virtual)
Bob Streetar, Community Development Director
Bill Sullivan, Police Chief
Jim Thomson, City Attorney
Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent

INTERVIEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION APPLICANTS

The City Council interviewed the following applicants interested in serving on the Economic Development Commission:

Lynn Stafford (virtual)
Gary Severson
Erin Voca

Applicant Jim Lovold was not available to be interviewed; his application will be kept on file.

SUMMERFEST UPDATE

Communications Specialist MacLeod reviewed the plans for Summerfest 2021 which is a transition year due to the pandemic and a longer term change in this event:

- Discontinuation of Carnival
- Incorporation of 10 to 20 Food Trucks
- Length of Event Shortened from Four Days to Two Days
- COVID challenges: barriers, defined points of entry, mask enforcement
- Proposed Schedule of Events, including: no parade, variety of musical entertainment, fireworks, beer garden, medallion hunt, scavenger hunt, kid's events and programs, art fair; and if needed to meet COVID regulations, hold events at different locations.

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Communications Specialist MacLeod announced that the city would soon begin promoting Summerfest.

Recreation Superintendent Williams added that the Summerfest Committee would be reaching out to, and monitoring, other communities to learn how they plan to address COVID regulations for their respective events, as well as how to best deal with mask enforcement. She added that the committee is planning for the restrictions that are currently in place, but restrictions could change at any time.

Mayor Reinke asked that the next update include the status of the ball tournament.

Police Chief Sullivan indicated that Summerfest would occur between two significant trials and cautioned that Summerfest could attract protestors.

Mayor Reinke supported to continue to plan for Summerfest and that the event could be canceled, if need be.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen supporting proceeding with plans to hold Summerfest.

Council Member Zabel supported holding the parade and not scaling back the event due to changes that will occur by June and increased vaccinations.

Council Member Olson supporting not holding a parade.

Staff was directed to bring the parade discussion back to the April 13, 2021 work session in addition to further updates on the planning

Communications Specialist MacLeod stated that the current COVID regulations would not allow for a parade at this time and should that change after the end of April, staff would not have the time needed to accept applications from parade participants.

In response to a question from Council Member Olson, Communications Specialist MacLeod noted that results from the community survey ranked the parade fourth on the list of Summerfest attractions.

PROPOSED POLICIES: Holiday, Walton Park Ads

City Administrator Volkert reviewed a request to amend the wording for "Holidays" in the city's policy to give the City Administrator the authority to determine when city offices will be closed when Christmas Eve falls on a Friday or Saturday, as occurs every few years. Currently, this scenario is not outlined in the policy.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen suggested that city offices be closed on the same holidays as the stock market. Staff responded that those closures do not coincide with state or federal law for official holidays.

Staff was directed to bring the policy amendments back to the City Council for adoption.

City Administrator Volkens reviewed a request to update the city's policy regarding the sale of ads at the Walton Park ballfield complex. She added that sign size needs to be determined and whether a private person or entity may purchase a sign.

The City Council discussed whether political ads would be allowed and freedom of speech.

City Administrator Volkens noted that she would get input from the city attorney.

Council Member Zabel suggested using wording derived from Summerfest parade application relating to sponsorship guidelines.

After further discussion, due to the very low number of ad space sold, the City Council supported no longer offering ads at the Walton Park ballfield complex and directed staff to bring back action to repeal the policy to the April 13, 2021, meeting.

Staff was directed to research whether other communities allow political participants in their parade and associated cost.

Communications Specialist MacLeod noted that the Summerfest Committee planned to do a comprehensive review of all event fees.

GOLF CARTS AND ATV/UTVs ON CITY STREETS

City Administrator Volkens reviewed a request from the City Council to provide an initial report on allowing golf carts and ATV/UTVs to operate on city streets, which included a survey of communities that allow golf carts or ATV/UTVs. She asked that the City Council provide direction on whether staff should continue to research the topic.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen provided information on the top speed of a number of golf carts, all which may exceed 19 miles per hour with adjustments by the dealer. He supports allowing golf carts to operate on city streets as they are a great amenity and akin to allowing bicycles on roadways and safer. Council Member Ingebrigtsen also supported allowing golf carts on streets with a posted speed limit of 30 MPH or less and would like additional information on the topic, particularly on what the city could allow and specifics on what surveyed communities allow.

Council Member Zabel did not support golf carts operating on city streets as they are not designed to operate on streets. He commented about a resident asking to operate a UTV which he supported as it would be able to travel up to 55 miles per hour and offered numerous safety features.

Council Member Olson noted that the research would only benefit a few residents at this point but would potentially consider it, at least in the future.

Council Member Swedberg did not support golf carts or similar vehicle operating on city streets due to the layout of the city, traffic speeds on main thoroughfares, and safety concerns.

City Administrator Volkens noted that data provided by Council Member Swedberg was under review by the city attorney.

Mayor Reinke did not support golf carts due to police enforcement needed, other drivers, and the population compared to several of the communities that allow golf carts.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen predicted that all cities would allow golf carts to operate on streets over the next decade.

Staff was directed to research allowing UTVs on city streets.

CODE BOOK REVIEW PROPOSAL

City Administrator Volkens reviewed a suggestion to commence a comprehensive review of the city's code book by assorted teams of staff members, advisory bodies, and a council liaison for each Chapter.

Council Member Zabel expressed concern with individual councilors being involved in the review process of respective chapters. He added that in checking with other cities, code review has typically been done by the entire city council, or community groups, or staff driven.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen supported having a council liaison on the review team.

Mayor Reinke supported holding off the reviewing the code book for the time being due to the other significant projects that are underway.

Community Development Director Streetar suggested that specific code updates be identified by the City Council and staff as they arise.

Council Member Swedberg also supported holding off on a comprehensive review of the code book for the time being.

Council Member Olson agreed to holding off on reviewing the code book but supported having council liaisons when the process commences.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen offered to invest the time needed to keep the code review project moving forward.

Council Member Zabel supported addressing updates on an as-needed basis.

Council Member Swedberg agreed to updating the code book on an as-needed basis.

The meeting recessed at 6:50 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 7:32 PM.

10TH STREET CLOSURE

City Attorney Thomson provided an overview of the access on 10th Street, just west of the I-694 interchange, and the intention of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to close the access, per a limited use permit issued by MnDOT to the city in 1993. He explained that MnDOT had planned to close the access in 2005 as part of building an off-ramp, which did not occur; now with the HOM Furniture project going into that site, MnDOT states it will be closed for “safety reasons”. City Attorney Thomson indicated that he planned to speak to the MnDOT attorney on the matter.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, City Attorney Thomson explained that a road could be built to connect the 10th Street access to Helmo Avenue; however, it would require the approval of MnDOT.

Commenting on MnDOT’s concern expressed about safety at the 10th Street access, Public Works Director/City Engineer Bachmeier added that over 10 years, 11 accidents have occurred at that location; if the access is closed, traffic would function at acceptable levels; however, traffic signals might be needed at the 11th and Helmo location or it is simply a shifting traffic from one intersection to another. Community Development Director Streetar indicated that KinderCare and the Animal Emergency Hospital did not have any concerns when asked about the potential of the access being closed; HOM Furniture expressed some concerns. He added that if the access is closed, truck traffic would enter on 12th Street, behind the HOM Furniture store.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen supported the city oppose closing the access. He also asked to be provided with the related documents referenced by City Attorney Thomson.

Council Member Olson stated that the existing crosswalk at 11th and Helmo would become more dangerous with the added traffic after the closing of the access on 10th Street.

Council Member Swedberg supported waiting until more information was available from the MnDOT attorney.

Council Member Zabel agreed.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROPOSAL

City Administrator Volkens provided an overview of the city's past strategic planning processes; the proposed facilitator, Executive Management Systems, Inc.; and the process for an upcoming session(s). She suggested that a member of the City Council serve on the P2P (Prepare To Plan) Team.

Council Member Zabel requested that each member of the City Council speak individually with the facilitator as an introduction. He added that he did not support having a member of the City Council serve on the P2P Team.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen commented on the important role liaisons play in bringing forth information from Point A to Point B.

Staff was directed to schedule 15-minute meetings with the facilitator and each council member.

Staff was directed to not include a council member on the P2P Team.

REVIEW OF EDC APPLICANTS

Staff was directed to bring the appointments of Lynn Stafford, Gary Severson, and Erin Voca to the April 13, 2021, City Council Meeting.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Council Member Zabel asked that staff explore having a community group take over running Summerfest.

Mayor Reinke indicated that he provided additional information to the Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce Board about the city's request for Local Option Sales Tax to fund the construction of a new public works facility and police department expansion.

Mayor Reinke noted that he would be seeking input from the City Council on an upcoming performance review of City Administrator Volkens.

City Administrator Volkens proposed that her annual performance review be held each December or January.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Barry,
City Clerk