

**WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
April 27, 2021**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, April 27, 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
Linnea Graffunder-Bartels, Senior Community Development Specialist
Alyssa MacLeod, Communications Specialist
Chelsea Petersen, Administrative Services Director
Emily Shively, City Planner
Bob Streetar, Community Development Director
Bill Sullivan, Police Chief
Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent
Kevin Wold, Fire Chief (virtual)

John Shardlow, Stantec

SUMMERFEST

Communications Specialist MacLeod provided an overview of the proposed schedule of events for the Summerfest celebration at Walton Park on June 25 and 26. She stated that perimeter fencing and masks would be required at this time. She also reviewed alternatives for scaling down the event, if needed.

Mayor Reinke supported the proposed schedule but would support canceling if CDC restrictions so warrant.

Communications Specialist MacLeod noted that should the event need to be canceled, the city could potentially forfeit the cost for the fireworks show, fence rental, and deposits for musical entertainment.

Council Member Zabel supported the proposed schedule and canceling if so warranted.

Council Member Olson agreed and also supported not policing the fence or mask regulations.

Council Member Swedberg supported the proposed schedule. She provided data showing a downward trend of COVID cases in Washington County.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen supported the proposed schedule but expressed concern with the potential of protests at the event.

WILLOWBROOKE OPEN SPACE – LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

Community Development Director Streetar explained that the Landscape Framework being presented provides a comprehensive, long-term vision of the Willowbrooke development. He further explained that as development occurs on the 208-acre site, located north of County Road 14, open space would be established/landscaped concurrently in lieu of planting rye grass to stabilize soils, which would be a cost savings for the developer and add value to each parcel. Community Development Director Streetar encouraged the City Council to walk the woodlands and other public open space in Willowbrooke.

John Shardlow, Stantec, provided an overview of the landscape framework guidebook.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Community Development Director Streetar noted that typically developers offer homeowners choices from a landscape palette.

Council Member Zabel asked that a variety of tree species be offered.

In response to a question from City Administrator Volkens, Community Development Director Streetar explained that city crews would maintain open space areas but that the plantings would be low maintenance.

FREE MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAMMING

Recreation Superintendent Williams provided an overview of summer programs the city could offer to residents ages 10 to 14 at no cost due to concerns with isolation and mental health due to the pandemic. She explained that the groups offering the programs would cover staffing needs.

City Administrator Volkens added that if the city were to offer all summer youth programs to residents at no cost, lost revenue would be in the range of \$10,000.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, City Administrator Volkens noted that the new round of federal funding would not be available for this effort as the parameters for that funding has not yet been defined and we do not know when the funding will be received

In response to questions about offering all summer youth programs to residents at no cost, Recreation Superintendent Williams noted that staff could make modifications to the registration software and to the summer issue of the *Oakdale Update*. She suggested applying conditions to address persons registering but not showing up for programs.

The City Council supported offering all 2021 summer youth programs to Oakdale residents at no cost.

Council Member Zabel commented on the importance of making programs available to the youth in the community struggling due to COVID, especially those with limited resources. He asked that language be included that no taxpayer monies were being used to provide the programs no cost.

PROPOSED POLICY: ROOM RENTALS

City Administrator Volkens reviewed a request to amend Policy MIS-010 to allow outside groups to rent meetings rooms at the Discovery Center only, no longer renting meeting rooms at City Hall.

The City Council supported this change.

The City Council briefly discussed making the beach house at Tanner's Park available for rentals at some point.

AV UPGRADES

Communications Specialist MacLeod reviewed a request to upgrade audio and visual equipment in the Council Chambers at City Hall to better accommodate virtual and hybrid council, board, and commission meetings to improve audio quality as well as the set-up and operational processes. She explained that financing for the project, estimated at \$15,000, would come from cable franchise fees that may only be used for equipment and upgrades for broadcasting meetings. Communications Specialist MacLeod added that offering a virtual component would allow participation from persons from different localities or for those unable to come to City Hall and that she was aware of other communities that plan to offer hybrid meetings indefinitely.

Council Member Zabel supported the upgrades but asked that the matter be held off on until the Legislature weighed in on holding public meeting after the conclusion of the pandemic emergency declaration and whether advisory body members would be allowed to participate in meetings virtually. He commented on the need to discuss when the city's advisory bodies would resume in-person meetings.

City Administrator Volkens noted that she has had discussions with the city attorney on this topic.

Mayor Reinke supported continuing to offer a virtual meeting option to the public.

Council Member Olson commented on the significant increase in participation some committees experience when persons may participate virtually.

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel, Communications Specialist MacLeod indicated that she would contact the cities of White Bear Lake and Woodbury as they recently completed AV upgrades.

The City Council supported moving ahead with the AV upgrades after waiting until a decision is made by the Legislature on holding virtual meetings.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Utility Accounts

Council Member Swedberg inquired whether invoices for the city's utility accounts can include wording when they are assigned to auto pay as she personally has noted that characterization is not on her utility invoice.

City Administrator Volkers noted that staff would research the request.

Virtual Advisory Body Meetings

In response to a question from Council Member Swedberg, City Administrator Volkers noted that the City Council could talk with board and commission members at the May 19 joint meeting about whether to continue with virtual meetings until the emergency declaration is lifted. She further noted that training would be helpful if continuing with virtual meetings.

Council Member Zabel added that virtual meetings do not offer the same level of dialogue and engagement as in-person meetings.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen supported in-person board and commission meetings.

ISD 622

Council Member Olson asked about ways to partner with Independent School District 622 to share ideas and support one another.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen indicated that several residents contacted him with concerns about the walk-out at Tartan High School with the impression that the city oversees schools in the community.

Council Member Zabel suggested meeting informally with teachers.

Council Member Olson shared concerns with the detrimental effects the pandemic and hybrid learning are having on students.

Council Member Zabel noted that offering recreational programs for free and holding Summerfest are some ways the city is trying to help youth in the community.

City Administrator Volkers asked about meeting with ISD 622 in July. City Administrator Volkers will reach out to the School District 622 Superintendent asking for a joint school district/council meeting in July.

In response to a question, Communications Specialist MacLeod stated that the Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce had discussed offering a drive-in event in lieu of their annual community picnic.

Police Complaints

In response to a question from Council Member Olson, Police Chief Sullivan explained that there are a number of formats for submitting complaints about police officers.

Gold Line BRT

Mayor Reinke announced that the Gold Line project had received the next step in federal approval.

Finance Director

City Administrator Volkens informed the City Council that interviews of finance director candidates were completed earlier in the day and that the next step would be to conduct reference checks. She also requested that the agenda for the regular meeting be amended to move item F from the consent agenda and acted on separately with conditions added.

Advisory Bodies

In response to a question from Council Member Zabel about how the Willowbrooke landscape plan will be developed, City Administrator Volkens replied that she would discuss with staff. She suggested developing a process that would better utilize advisory bodies.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen asked that requests go to advisory bodies without a staff recommendation attached to encourage more discussion.

Council Member Olson agreed.

Council Member Zabel stated that the Planning Commission are governed by statutes and the comprehensive plan.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Respectfully respected,
Susan Barry,
City Clerk