



Council Worksession  
March 1, 2022  
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas  
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle  
Councilmember Graeme Allen  
Councilmember Pam Axberg  
Councilmember Emily Dunsworth

Absent:

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Terri Spangrud

Guests in Attendance:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held virtually.

Commissions – Applicant Interviews

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas welcomed Faycal Belkhous to the meeting.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Belkhous to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Mr. Belkhous stated he had many years of experience and expertise in the areas of business development. He noted he was a consultant/coach for businesses. He indicated he has been in Minnesota for 18 years and has lived in New Brighton for the past 2½ years. He explained he was a people person that gets along with everyone.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Mr. Belkhous to serve on a City Commission.

Mr. Belkhous commented his business was situated in New Brighton and he has been in Minnesota for quite some time. He stated New Brighton was a small City that has a lot of potential. He discussed how business helps the economy to flourish and creates new job. He believed his expertise would help the City and businesses make sound decisions, develop strategies, and financial projections if needed.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Mr. Belkhous what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Belkhous stated if there was something that, personally from experience, was missing or was not a win-win for businesses then he will bring this up. He would try to understand how all things come together and maybe the community would have to adapt to changes. He indicated there has to be room for an amendment. He stated the goal would be to create a win-win situation, because if the community member wins, the City wins.

Councilmember Axberg requested Mr. Belkhous speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Mr. Belkhous reported recovering from the COVID pandemic was challenging. He wanted to better understand what happened, are there businesses struggling, losing employees, are people buying homes, less people buying homes. He wanted to see the City sustain what they have while planning for growth.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Belkhous for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Sam Strong.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Strong to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Mr. Strong stated he has been a part of the community for the past 17 years. He noted he has gone through the Mounds View School District and has attended Bel Air Elementary, High View Middle School and Irondale High School. He explained he was a part of the New Brighton Police Explorers and was hoping to serve on the Public Safety Commission. He indicated he had a strong feeling about the public safety department and felt the department was doing a great job in the community. He commented his professional experience includes working at Adagio's and noted he was in the process of becoming a public safety officer with New Brighton.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Mr. Strong to serve on a City Commission.

Mr. Strong stated the reason he applied was because he wants to help people and he was extremely outgoing. He believed serving on a Commission was another step to helping others who may be in need, helping out the City, and making this a strong and safer community.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Mr. Strong what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Strong commented this would depend on the issue. He understood Commissions met once a month. He stated he would briefly explain his concern with the members on the Commission and would then bring this matter to the City Council and would go from there.

Councilmember Axberg requested Mr. Strong speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Mr. Strong explained the biggest opportunities are getting your foot in the door and helping out the community. He stated he chose the public safety side because he feels strongly about the public safety department and that they were tight with the community, especially with everything going on. He explained he wanted public safety to remain strong in the City of New Brighton.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Strong for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Michele Norman.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Norman to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Norman stated she was the owner of Adagio's Pizza Factory and her professional experiences were vast. She reported she has gotten to know many people in the community and what the community should have in the future. She indicated she has been involved with the New Brighton Lions for many years, along with the Stockyard Days Committee and assisted with hosting various fundraisers for the food shelf over the years.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Norman to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Norman commented she was made aware of an opening on a Commission and had a conversation with Mayor Kari. However, after learning more, she believed this would be an opportunity to not only get more involved in the community but to share where some of the future development in the community should go. She stated the area where her business was located would be redeveloped, and rightfully so. She wanted to learn more about the people in the community and to see and hear more about what people want for New Brighton's future.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Norman what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Norman indicated from her experience, when you have a problem, you get it on the agenda in order to have a conversation. She would want to discuss the concern with her fellow Commissioners to come up with ideas to fix the concern and this would then be brought to the City Council to be taken under advisement.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Norman speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Norman commented her main concern or challenge and opportunity are all in one, which are the areas up for redevelopment. She believed there has been a lot of miscommunication amongst citizens occurring in New Brighton. She understood last fall there were concerns that her building would be bulldozed and after investigating this further she could let her customers know what was actually going on. She hoped to take misinformation and provide accurate information to the public. She believed redevelopment and progress was most important to the community at this time. In addition, she recommended more diverse and ethnic focused activities be considered or hosted by the City.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Norman for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Zoey Tenebaum.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Tenebaum to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Tenebaum explained she volunteered with an organization called Bundles of Love which makes packets for new mothers if they are not completely prepared to have their newborn. She understood this may not be completely related to the work being done on the Commissions, but she believed it was important to give back to the community. She stated as a student she had a different perspective to bring to a Commission and would bring her younger views into the City.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Tenebaum to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Tenebaum stated in school she talks a lot about the environment and the community and what we would like to change, but she hasn't had a chance to make a difference. She believed it was important that younger

people take a leadership role in the community because the community has given so much to them. For this reason, youth should look for opportunities to voice their opinions in order to make New Brighton a better place. She indicated she lives on Long Lake and she has had some opportunities to discuss environmental issues.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Tenebaum what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Tenebaum indicated she would research the policy or ordinance in order to understand why it was in place. After that, she would bring this concern to the Commission in order to have a discussion about what everyone thinks and if there were still concerns the matter could be brought to the City Council.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Tenebaum speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Tenebaum stated one of the biggest challenges that is also an opportunity is finding ways to protect the natural resources in the community, but still give people lots of recreational opportunities. She understood it was important to get people outside and supporting each other. She reported she would also like to work with Ramsey County to address issues facing the parks, such as increasing park hours.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Tenebaum for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Harry Carter.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Carter to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Mr. Carter stated he has a 40 year business career with the past 14 years serving as the CEO of Top Line Credit Union. He indicated he spent several years as the Chair of the North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce, and Chair of the Credit Union State Trade Association and was currently the Chair of Applewood Point in New Brighton.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Mr. Carter to reapply to serve on a City Commission.

Mr. Carter commented he has enjoyed the past six years on the EDC and he would like to continue this service.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Mr. Carter what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Carter indicated he would contact the staff liaison and would ask for guidance.

Councilmember Axberg requested Mr. Carter speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Mr. Carter stated the challenge of redevelopment in a fully developed City would be one. He explained a second would be including the increasingly diverse population in New Brighton in the City's plans and opportunities. He indicated he would address this through the collective knowledge and background of the entire Commission and working with the staff liaison.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Carter for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward.

The meeting recessed from 5:40 to 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained the next person to be interviewed was Anthony Pledger. She asked Mr. Pledger to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Mr. Pledger reported he believed public service was important. He stated his life has been dedicated to this as he works on the Executive Board of the Conflict Resolution Center of Minnesota. He commented being a member of this board helps him to see the community from a different perspective while offering assistance when it comes to mediation and other services offered through the CRC. He explained professionally, he was a business owner, a real estate investor, and he owned a home in New Brighton and other places. He stated he had a civic interest in the success of the community. He indicated he was an attorney so he was always trying to use this background, noting he was an EOE specialist. He stated he investigated discrimination investigations and looked at diversity and inclusion matters as well. He reported he brought all of these experiences for the benefit of New Brighton.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Mr. Pledger to reapply to serve on a City Commission.

Mr. Pledger stated he understood there was more work to be done. He indicated some headway was made in certain areas, such as addressing the value of living in the community. He commented as a resident he appreciated the responsibility and duty to participate in civic engagement. He appreciated offering suggestions and opportunities to the EDC given his professional and business experiences.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Mr. Pledger what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Pledger commented he would try to address those within the construct that was being provided through the EDC. He noted he has a liaison to the City Council so there was an opportunity to speak with this individual as well, either before, after or during a meeting. In addition, he could reach out to a Councilmember at the farmers market to have a more casual conversation that supports the City but concerns could be voiced. He anticipated the City Council's email boxes were always open and ready to receive information, requests or concerns from residents in the City.

Councilmember Axberg requested Mr. Pledger speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Mr. Pledger explained the biggest concern he saw in the community was to ensure that the disposable income within New Brighton doesn't leave the City or stays within the City as much as possible. He has tried to make suggestions to grow the City's business and entertainment sectors to match the residential demand. He believed the City was surrounded by opportunity and he hoped the City could do some new things. He wanted to see the EDC providing suggestions to the City Council in order to keep New Brighton growing, while benefiting from the growth inside of the City. He indicated he would like to see the City pursuing night markets, year round event partnerships and a "Buy New Brighton" campaign. He believed this would draw more business to the community.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Pledger for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Abe McEathron. She asked Mr. McEathron to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Mr. McEathron stated he was reapplying for PREC. He indicated he was an avid cyclist and member of multiple clubs. He reported he was an advocate for many clubs. He explained he got to see a lot of parks in New Brighton and other parts of the metro area. He reported professionally he helps with Boy Scouts and teaches 12 merit badges at this time.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Mr. McEathron to serve on a City Commission.

Mr. McEathron commented previously he served two terms (6 years) on PREC and after that time he took a year off. He stated after taking this time, he learned he liked being on PREC.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Mr. McEathron what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. McEathron stated he views the Commission as a team and if someone has a team this is discussed as a team. He noted Director Fink could be brought in to assist with the Commission with this task.

Councilmember Axberg requested Mr. McEathron speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Mr. McEathron indicated the City's parks were in need of updates and noted these would provide quality of life upgrades. He discussed how important it was for the City to have interconnectivity between its parks. He stated he wanted to push for a path between Hansen Park and Long Lake Park.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. McEathron for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward.

The meeting recessed from 6:17 to 6:25 p.m.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained the next person to be interviewed was Aisha Oromia Ali.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Oromia Ali to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Oromia Ali thanked the Council for allowing her this opportunity. She reported she was a registered nurse and has a public health background. She indicated she has management skills and has served on the Spring Lake Park Planning and Zoning Commission. She believed the skills she has from her professional career as well as personal life make her well equipped to serve on a Commission in the City of New Brighton. She indicated she has worked in the community, and has also volunteered.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Oromia Ali to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Oromia Ali reported she has always loved working in a community environment. She liked making a difference in people's lives. She stated when you are in a leadership position, you are able to make the right decisions, especially with community involvement. She believed these Commission positions allows

Commissioners to influence and advise the City Council on making the right decisions for the community. She stated one of her main motivations was just to make a difference in the community and the society she lives in. she believed representation was also important. She discussed how important it was for society to reflect the community that you live in. She indicated she has an Australian accent and was from Australia, and her background was from eastern Africa and she was of the Muslim faith. She believed all of these factors made her unique in the community she lives in and she would be able to bring a different perspective from others to the Commission, should she be appointed.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Oromia Ali what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Oromia Ali explained she would research the matter, find facts and evidence and would consult with the Commissioners on the topic. She would hope to reach a mutual consensus among the Commission and would then present the information to the City Council.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Oromia Ali speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Oromia Ali commented she was new to the area so she was still trying to figure out the main issues or concerns in the community. She understood crime has become a concern in the twin cities and this may always be an outstanding issue. She wanted to see safety maintained while also addressing how safety officers liaise with the public. She indicated the City needed to better understand what programs were needed to decrease crime while increasing public safety. She stated public health could also be further considered and what programs were needed for the elderly or children. She reported finding the concerns of the public would be important. She believed the City had a lot of potential, it had attractions that brought revenue to the City like the ice castles. She stated for public safety, having public health programs and working with law enforcement, human rights advocacy, and having sessions with the public would assist in making the community aware of the benefits public safety.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Oromia Ali for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Victoria Presek.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Presek to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Presek reported she studied business in school. She indicated she has had experience with companies going through transitional phases, one being with startup from October 2020 through March of 2021. She noted this was not a long time, and this business did not make it off the ground, but we tried. She stated she learned a lot about this experience, working with people and now she owns her own LLC to conduct freelance work. She indicated her interest is helping businesses in New Brighton, to work with the City to make this an environment for businesses.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Presek to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Presek stated she wants to give back to the community. She explained she grew up in Mounds View but attended Irondale and she believed now was the time for her to do something for the community. She also wanted to make the community better for every citizen, to make this a great place for the next generation.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Presek what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Presek explained she would want to learn more about why the ordinance was in place, to get background information to better understand why it was in place. She indicated this may change her mind, but if not she would bring this up in an objective way to get feedback from the Commission.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Presek speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Presek stated one of the biggest opportunities was the community. She discussed how great it had been to see the community coming together during COVID digitally, at the farmers market, at the ice castles and at the community center. She believed one of the challenges facing the community would be that it was seen as a chunk included in the surrounding communities or suburbs. She suggested New Brighton work to have a bigger media presence and working with local businesses to get the City's name out there, to make its own entity within the northern suburbs.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Presek for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Karen Wagner.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Wagner to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Wagner stated she has a background in public safety and municipal government. She reported now she works at the university. She indicated she has been a public servant for a number of years. She commented she has an interest in this and she enjoys giving back to the community.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Wagner to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Wagner stated she has enjoyed her years on the Public Safety Commission. She finds it fascinating how technology tools can be used in public safety. She reported she has the background and was interested in the topics addressed by this group. She commented she likes to be involved and to know what is happening in the community and was willing to voice her concerns or opinions.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Wagner what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Wagner explained as an appointed member she could raise concerns, while not letting person opinions or personal experiences overriding this. She reported she would have a civil conversation about the matter and if you aren't on the winning side you move on. She commented she did not have one issue that she was greatly concerned about, she does not serve to be in a corrective position, but rather to be collaborative, to be a good listener and to seek input from other people. She wanted to see all voices being heard.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Wagner speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Wagner stated all of the new housing developments was bringing new residents to the community and she



saw this as an opportunity for new engagement and involvement. At the same time, having more people and drivers on the road posed challenges for public safety. She reported with the redevelopment of Silver Lake Road there were opportunities and challenges as well.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Wagner for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward.

The meeting recessed from 6:51 to 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained the next person to be interviewed was Youssef Enanna.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Enanna to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Mr. Enanna stated professionally he has been in the hospital world for 22 years as a compliance person and analyst. He deals with how to work with the State and federal laws, policies and procedures. He commented personally he sees himself as an excellent listener, which served him well as a Commission. This helps him to tackle problems, solve problems and how to understand an audience.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Mr. Enanna to serve on a City Commission.

Mr. Enanna explained he enjoys being involved in the City, being a part of shaping policies and procedures. He sees the service as a bridge between being a resident and the City. He appreciated being part of the interests of residents and businesses in the community and trying to come up with nice solutions. He discussed the recent cases the Commission discussed which included Midtown Village and US Bank. He stated the Commission had a sincere effort on each of these planning cases.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Mr. Enanna what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Enanna commented there was a collaborative between the members of the Planning Commission. He stated changing policies and procedures was an evolving process. He indicated the approach would be to collaborate and there has to be something that will serve the population of the City. He stated there would be a multiple step process and the initiation would require discussion with all the stakeholders at the table.

Councilmember Axberg requested Mr. Enanna speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Mr. Enanna stated he has been serving the City as an election judge for years. He indicated he has been in the City since 2004, for the past 18 years. He commented from his time in the community has been outstanding. He understood it takes time to tackle problems. He believed the City's future was bright. He recommended the City consider pursuing solar power. He encouraged the City to continuously engage residents in order to keep residents involved.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Enanna for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward.

The meeting recessed from 7:12 to 7:17 p.m.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained the next person to be interviewed was Hayden Anderson.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Anderson to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Anderson stated she does not have a lot of professional experiences, but has personal experiences at school. She indicated this was through the problems at her school, which included racial identity matters and sexual orientation issues. She believed she was good at confronting those problems head on, especially in the past month because she has gone to the principle and administration to try and make change. She indicated she has been doing this type of thing since elementary school and has learned from these experiences over the years.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Anderson to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Anderson stated she wants to be engaged in the community and provide a voice that speaks out about more things that have been going. She explained as a kid she does not have a lot of power over things and she does not have a big voice, but speaking out would draw awareness and she would like the opportunity to do that.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Anderson what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Anderson indicated she would want to get to the root of the problem, to learn if it is affecting people and would work to explain how this is a problem. She would then work to find a solution or change. She would address or start by discussing the problem and then would find solutions to it.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Anderson speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Anderson believed the biggest challenge was figuring out what the City wants to do, problems and how to fix them. She believed one of the biggest opportunities was addressing these problems and having a chance to find solutions, building up ideas, and trust within the community.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Anderson for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward. She explained the next person to be interviewed was Jeanne Frischman.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Frischman to explain how both personal and professional experiences will help you be an effective Commissioner if appointed.

Ms. Frischman commented she was interested in staying on the Planning Commission. She reported she worked as a real estate agent and has lived in the community for a fair number of years. She indicated she was grounded in the community and she cared about this community. She stated she had a heartfelt feeling and wanted to participate in the community.

Councilmember Allen asked what motivated Ms. Frischman to serve on a City Commission.

Ms. Frischman explained she was on PREC for 12 to 14 years. She indicated she has been on the Planning Commission for the past six years. She commented she does not have to keep her seat, if there was a younger resident that now wants to be involved. She reported if the City doesn't have someone else to take her seat, she

explained she was someone who brings neutrality and was a true voice for the residents. She hoped to bring practical, thoughtful processes to the conversation. She indicated she would rather be a neutral party sitting in a seat but ready to give this up if there was someone new who wanted to participate.

Councilmember Abdulle stated each Commission is tasked with making recommendations to the City Council that comply with policies, rules or ordinances already adopted by the City Council. He asked Ms. Frischman what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Frischman stated she believed she had a good relationship with City Councilmembers and City staff. She commented indicated she would be comfortable picking up the phone and having a conversation with people. She did not see this as being a road block or a default.

Councilmember Axberg requested Ms. Frischman speak to the biggest opportunities and challenges facing New Brighton and how do you hope to address these serving on a Commission.

Ms. Frischman commented the biggest challenge was affordable housing and how people view new housing/people coming into the community. She understood the Council has heard from residents about how long they have lived in the community and encouraged the Council to be thoughtful in how they move forward. She stated she would like the City to work to hear from all voices in the community, even if they were new to the community.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Frischman for coming in and applying for this position. She noted City Clerk Spangrud would be in touch with further information on how the Council was moving forward.

Ms. Frischman expressed concern with the fact Chair Nichols-Matkaiti would not be coming back to the Planning Commission. She wondered who would serve as the Chair for this group and noted she did not want this responsibility to fall to her.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas reported this was the last interview. She explained there were four individuals who applied to two Commissions. She recommended the Council begin with the PREC appointments.

Councilmember Axberg suggested the Abe and Zoey be placed on PREC and Hayden be placed on the Planning Commission.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas supported this recommendation. She noted this would leave one three year term for PREC. Massopust reported this is the case.

Councilmember Abdulle commented PREC has more of a variety of topics to discover that youth are more interested in and noted the Planning Commission can be more dry with long discussions.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if the student commission member appointed to the Planning Commission would have voting rights. Massopust reported the student commissioner on the Planning Commission did not have voting rights. He indicated Hayden could also be appointed to the Equity Commission instead of the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Dunsworth believed this would be a better fit. She indicated she did not believe the Planning Commission needed a student Commissioner.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas recommended staff speak with Hayden regarding being placed on the Equity Commission. She asked who should be appointed to the Planning Commission. She stated she believed Aisha

spoke more about public safety related matters and Victoria talked more about EDC topics throughout their interviews.

Councilmember Abdulle stated she was thinking about the Public Safety Commission for Aisha.

Councilmember Allen agreed and he noted Victoria's interests were more aligned with the EDC.

Councilmember Dunsworth agreed Victoria would be great for the EDC. She explained Aisha could be appointed to Public Safety, but noted she had experience on the Planning Commission with the City of Spring Lake Park. She believed this was invaluable because there was a steep learning curve for this group.

Councilmember Axberg agreed Aisha's experience on the Planning Commission was valuable.

Councilmember Allen stated the Planning Commission was statutorily required and it was good to find people interested in serving with this group. However, he also understood there was a lot of openings in Public Safety and having a new voices would be valuable.

Councilmember Abdulle supported Aisha being appointed to the Public Safety Commission.

The consensus of the Council was to place Aisha on the Public Safety Commission and to reappoint Youssef and Jeanne to the Planning Commission. The Council also supported Karen and Sam being reappointed to the Public Safety Commission.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned what would happen when Sam graduates from high school in June. Massopust reported Sam could fill a vacant position on the Public Safety Commission at that time.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked who should be appointed to the EDC. She noted the Council had two members that had reapplied, three new members and no student. The Council supported appointment of the five individuals that had applied to the EDC.

Councilmember Axberg suggested the two renewing members be given the three years terms. The Council supported this recommendation.

Councilmember Allen did a random number generator and proposed the remaining three year term be given to Michele, with the two year terms going to Faycal and Victoria.

Councilmember Dunsworth supported Michele having the three year term because she was a local business owner. She understood that Faycal was also a business owner, but she recommended Michele be given the three year term.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if Faycal was a resident and business owner in New Brighton. Spangrud reported this was the case. She indicated Michele was the only business owner who applied for the EDC that was not a resident of the community.

Councilmember Dunsworth took back her statement and suggested Faycal be given the three year term on the EDC.

Further discussion ensued regarding the EDC appointments and terms. Council consensus was to appoint Faycal to the three year term with Michele and Victoria both receiving two year terms.

Councilmember Axberg asked if staff could offer Victoria a two year term on EDC or a three year term on the Planning Commission. The Council supported this recommendation and asked staff speak to Victoria before the appointments are made by Council.

Councilmember Dunsworth anticipated it would difficult to find a student commissioner for the EDC given the fact this group met at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesdays.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas noted she would be reaching out to DECA at the high school to see if there were any students interested in applying. She encouraged the Councilmembers to pursue additional volunteers to fill the remaining open seats. She stated she was very pleased with the candidates that applied.

Councilmember Dunsworth commented she was very impressed by the students that interviewed stating they did an excellent job.

Worksession adjourned at 8:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Terri Spangrud".

Terri Spangrud  
City Clerk