



Council Worksession

October 13, 2022

5:00 pm

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

Absent:

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Terry Spangrud (attending remotely)

Guests in Attendance: Matthew Arndt (attending remotely), Tom Harkins, Ellie Dostal Dauer, Robert Harrison, Kevin Dostal Dauer, Brian Krohn, Randell Wyatt

Commission Interviews

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Matthew Arndt for applying for this position.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Arndt to provide the Council with a brief history on how his personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Mr. Arndt stated personally he would like to give back to the community and be involved in some capacity. He explained he hasn't filled a position like this before but he has attended council and neighborhood meetings in the past. He reported he was an architect by trade and he has an appreciation for the city process and he would like to help the City.

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

Mr. Arndt stated he moved to the City of New Brighton and he just bought a house in May. He indicated he joined the Next Door App and realized there were a lot of strong opinions in the community with fairly active neighbors. He stated he researched City zoning and planning policies and was interested in how the community was aging.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Mr. Arndt what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Arndt stated communication was critical. He believed it would be most effective to go out and find case studies or similar ideas. He would then bring this information forward to communicate with the City Council.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Mr. Arndt to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Mr. Arndt stated aging infrastructure, climate change, public safety and equity in the community were all concerns. He believed coming in with common sense solutions would be valuable, while also hearing the concerns from the public in order to improve everyday lives.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Arndt 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 Tom Harkins.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Harkins to provide the Council with a brief history on how his personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Mr. Harkins stated he grew up in a police and fireman's community in North Minneapolis. He explained the rule used to be if you wanted to serve the City as a police or fireman you had to live within the City limits and he was in one of those pockets. He reported he has police and fireman in his family. He personally believed that most people in public service need to be held accountable, but they also need to be thanked and trained for what they are doing. He was of the opinion he had a good understanding of where the accountable was and where it came into play.

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

Mr. Harkins explained he moved into New Brighton in 1993 and he has been a 28 year resident. He indicated he has been very active in the community, coaching youth baseball, coaching youth football for a lot of years. He noted he was involved with boys scouts for 16 years. He reported he also worked as a youth mentor at Christ the King Church for four years. He stated right now he was done serving and was looking for a new way to serve the community.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Mr. Harkins what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Harkins commented he would go to the head of the Commission or a City Councilmember to ask questions. He stated he would try and gather information and request an explanation.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Mr. Harkins to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Mr. Harkins reported the City has challenges within the community due to how public safety was being viewed. He believed there were little steps that could be made to address this concern. He supported a public health individual assisting the police department when the timing is right. He stated the City also needed to talk to the public to learn their concerns. He commented on how important it was to model good behavior and be accountable within the public safety department because everyone was watching at this time. He suggested the force consider putting drones into large community gatherings in order to monitor and evaluate behavior.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Harkins 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 Ellie Dostal Dauer.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Ms. Dostal Dauer to provide the Council with a brief history on how her personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Ms. Dostal Dauer stated she has done a lot of different things around the community. She explained she participated in Youth in Government at her school, played tennis and danced which helped her have an overarching view of the community.

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

Ms. Dostal Dauer explained in AP Economics she completed an urban plan where she had to design an entire City block based on fictional preferences and zoning. She noted she served as the city planner and she highly enjoyed this project. This led her to consider applying for a commission position.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Ms. Dostal Dauer what she would do if she disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Ms. Dostal Dauer reported she might ask some other people on the Commission what they knew about it and she would then bring her concern to the entire Commission.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Ms. Dostal Dauer to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Ms. Dostal Dauer commented one thing that makes New Brighton unique is that the City can't expand and the problem with this no parks and greenspace can be added. For this reason, she wanted to make sure the City was properly maintaining its parks and greenspaces.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Dostal Dauer 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 Robert Harrison.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Harrison to provide the Council with a brief history on how his personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Mr. Harrison stated professionally he has a finance background. He reported he has an undergraduate degree in finance and a graduate degree in city planning at the University of Minnesota. He explained he worked for the DOT for a time and worked with a lot of city planners when he lived in California. He commented after some time, his career led him back into finance, but he was interested in planning and land use issues. He stated personally he was relaxed and easy going. He reported he was working to find balance as his own family was taking up less of his time and he wanted to be engaged in the community.

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

Mr. Harrison explained he engaged in a couple of other activities with the schools and park cleanups. He liked to be involved with meeting new people in the community. However, when he saw there was an opportunity to apply to be a planning commissioner, he thought this was more within his wheelhouse and he was interested in these topics.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Mr. Harrison what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Harrison discussed how he addressed this type of concern at his place of employment (City of

Minneapolis) noting he would best address this by talking to the staff members who were responsible for interpreting the policy or ordinance, or the City Councilmember responsible for the policy or ordinance.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Mr. Harrison to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Mr. Harrison reported there were a lot of opportunities for the community. He believed the Midtown Village was a great new development for the City. He stated the Silver Lake Road corridor plans were exciting. He anticipated the City was facing concerns with its single family housing and the need for more destination restaurants and retail. He discussed how the community was cut up by the federal highways and how this impacted the City. He explained he appreciated all of the work the City was doing and he looked forward to being able to help the City continue moving forward if appointed as a planning commissioner. He indicated he would serve as an ambassador for the City.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Harrison 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 Kevin Dostal Dauer.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Dostal Dauer to provide the Council with a brief history on how his personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Mr. Dostal Dauer stated he works as the Director of International Health and Safety at the University of Minnesota. He explained he deals with crisis emergency response situations for his students that are both in the US and abroad. He reported he works with health and safety teams and has relationships with public safety on campus. He indicated he has lived in New Brighton for the past 17 years and he enjoys making connections with his neighbors. He anticipated serving on a commission would be another community building experience as he brought comments or questions to the Commission and Council that could be acted on.

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

Mr. Dostal Dauer commented his children were getting older and his time was freeing up. He explained he enjoyed giving back to the community that he has lived in for so long. He stated he was very interested in the work being done by the Public Safety Commission, because it was closely aligned with the work he does on a daily basis.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Mr. Dostal Dauer what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Dostal Dauer explained he would have to look into the history as to why the policy or ordinance was put in place. He stated he would look into the background and after that he would ask questions.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Mr. Dostal Dauer to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Mr. Dostal Dauer discussed how the last three years changed how people interact as individuals and as a community. He explained he was partly motivated by this but he also wanted the City to try to recapture how they look at community and to see how people exist with each other in space. He indicated there has been concerns for three years on how people should or should not gather and now was the time to learn from the civil unrest and COVID to find ways to engage again. He stated he had some personal reasons for coming to

this commission because the speed of traffic in his neighborhood was a concern. He hoped that public safety could be thought about in a different way that was community focused. He asked if Commission members would be allowed to attend meetings remotely if he had to be out of town for work.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas stated meetings could be attended remotely. City Manager Massopust explained the times have changed and there was more flexibility in place for meeting attendance.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Dostal Dauer 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 Brian Krohn.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Krohn to provide the Council with a brief history on how his personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Mr. Krohn stated he did his PHD at the University of Minnesota where he studied environmental economics. He explained he would like to bring this locally and see how things work on the ground.

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

Mr. Krohn explained he moved to New Brighton three years ago. He has a six year old daughter and three month old. He wanted to put down roots and hoped to stay in the community while his kids went through school. He stated he was interested in becoming involved in the community and to see how things work in the City. He indicated he lived on Mississippi Street and many of his neighbors have lived in the neighborhood for 30 or 40 years.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Mr. Krohn what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Krohn reported he was a researcher at heart and he would have to look into the ordinance, why it was there and what were the concerns. He explained a lot of his research for his PHD was looking into tradeoffs, which was interesting. He stated he would first do research and then would speak to the stakeholders.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Mr. Krohn to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Mr. Krohn stated one of the biggest opportunities was that New Brighton was in the suburbs and was a very livable community. He commented that in speaking with his neighbors, they don't want to lose the sense of community they have enjoyed over the past 30 years. He indicated he was interested in the City pursuing sustainability measures. He anticipated one of the City's challenges was to continue to update and upgrade the City without losing its sense of community.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Krohn 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 Randell Wyatt.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked Mr. Wyatt to provide the Council with a brief history on how his personal and professional experiences will help him be an effective commissioner, if appointed.

Mr. Wyatt stated he was a retired veteran so he was well versed in following orders and he leads well. He

explained he knows a bit about teamwork, being a leader and overcoming obstacles. He anticipated these traits would be valued as a Commissioner and being of service.

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

Mr. Wyatt explained he has never served, except in a church capacity. He stated he found himself retired and he has time available to serve. He indicated he thought about serving in the schools, but he would rather serve with the City.

Councilmember Axberg 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. She asked Mr. Wyatt what he would do if he disagreed with a policy or ordinance already in place.

Mr. Wyatt commented he was a chain of command kind of guy. This meant he would go to his immediate supervisor to get input on what he should do. He stated in the service he called this the backwash of information, meaning he would get his boss on his back to make sure they understood the problem and how it should be handled. He believed it would be important to understand all perspectives and to better know how long the ordinance has been in place.

Councilmember Abdulle requested Mr. Wyatt to speak to the City's biggest opportunity and biggest challenges in New Brighton.

Mr. Wyatt stated he believed the human race has lost some of its civility and can do attitude. He feared people were no longer willing to work across the aisle with people who we don't agree with. He explained his service taught him how to get along with people who he may be opposed to, which meant he was able to listen to others perspective. He believed people did not appreciate each other as much as we once did, and this could be due to the nation the way it is, or because of COVID. He stated he recalled being in the service and how much this meant to him, and he valued being a part of a team.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Mr. Wyatt 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.

### Appointment Discussion

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas discussed the Commission openings at this time and noted the Equity Commission may have an opening in the near future. She noted there were also two student Commission openings.

Councilmember Axberg suggested Randell Wyatt be appointed to PREC. She recommended Ellie Dostal Dauer be appointed to the Planning Commission as the Student Commissioner. She supported Brian Krohn being appointed to the EDC. The Council was in agreement with these recommendations.

Further discussion ensued regarding the Commissioner member terms.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented on the Public Safety Commissioner applicants. She noted she asked both Kevin and Tom to apply for this Commission.

Councilmember Allen stated all of the candidates would serve the City well. He suggested Robert Harrison serve on the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Abdulle supported this recommendation noting Robert has a history in municipal planning. The Council supported appointing Robert Harrison to the Planning Commission.

Massopust asked if the Council wanted to ask Matt to serve on the EDC. The Council supported this recommendation.

The Commission next discussed the appointment for the Public Safety Commission.

Councilmember Allen commented on the current makeup of the Public Safety Commission.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked if the City has ever had alternates to City Commissions. Spangrud stated City Code does not allow for City Commissions to have alternates.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned what City Code has to say about attendance at City Commission meetings. Spangrud reported attendance statistics is compiled at the end of the year for each Commission. She reported if someone misses four meetings or more in one year, they are subject to removal by the City Council.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas suggested staff speak with Matt, Kevin or Tom to see if either was willing to serve on the EDC and then the other person could be appointed to Public Safety Commission.

Worksession adjourned at 6:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri Spangrud", written in a cursive style.

Terri Spangrud  
City Clerk