



Council Worksession
February 7, 2023
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle
Councilmember Graeme Allen
Councilmember Pam Axberg (arrived at 5:02 p.m.)
Councilmember Emily Dunsworth (left meeting at 6:20 p.m.)

Absent:

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Jennifer Fink, Kelly Distad

Guests in Attendance: Emily and Sylvia

Update on Tobacco Policy with Katie Engman, Program Director – Policy & Compliance at Association for Nonsmokers MN

Massopust explained the Council has been discussing its tobacco policy and was considering putting a cap on the number of standalone tobacco shops in New Brighton. He reported a moratorium was in place at this time in order to give the Council time to explore this topic further. He stated Emily Anderson and Sylvia Ames from the Association for Nonsmokers Minnesota (ANSR) were in attendance to discuss this topic further with the Council.

Emily Anderson, Association for Nonsmokers MN, introduced herself and her organization to the Council. She reported the ANSR was dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of commercial tobacco, nicotine and other drug use in Minnesota. Her group was committed to protecting young Minnesotans from a lifetime of addiction, ensuring that all Minnesotans can breathe clean, smoke-free air, and to reduce health inequities and other disparities in relation to commercial tobacco, nicotine and other drugs. She believed effective commercial tobacco prevention happens when interventions are layered together to create a healthy tobacco free community. She commented on the benefits of the North Suburban Tobacco Compliance Project.

Councilmember Dunsworth questioned why compliance checks were not conducted more than once a year. Ms. Anderson reported state law requires compliance checks to be completed once a year, but noted New Brighton conducts compliance checks twice a year. She commented further on the cost to conduct the compliance checks.

Councilmember Dunsworth requested further information on how hookah is regulated. Massopust discussed how hookah was regulated in New Brighton and noted the City does not allow hookah lounges in the community.

Ms. Anderson described the new vape products that were on the market and commented on how they were appealing to young people. The impact of nicotine on the adolescent brain was discussed. Further discussion ensued regarding the marketing and targeting efforts of the tobacco industry. She reported the tobacco industry spends nearly \$1 million per hour marketing their products. She estimated these marketing efforts were leading

to \$3 billion in excess health care expenses each year in the State of Minnesota. The marketing efforts for menthol were discussed and it was noted it was harder to quit menthol products. She reviewed data from the St. Anthony-New Brighton and the Mounds View School Districts from 2022 that showed students who had vaped in the past 30 days were using flavored products. She explained the best tobacco prevention practices would be to address price, flavors and age. She indicated the age concern was addressed when Tobacco 21 was passed. She reported some communities were restricting the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products. She commented on how discounts and coupons impact tobacco use.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if Ramsey County had taken any actions to address tobacco sales. Ms. Anderson explained the County was not able to regulate the sale of tobacco, but has passed resolutions of support.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas requested these resolutions be passed along to the City Council.

Councilmember Allen commented on how the sale of THC products was in need of further regulation.

Ms. Anderson discussed how some communities were putting a cap on the number of tobacco licenses. She commented on what other cities have done to cap the number of tobacco license holders. She explained through attrition and time, these communities were working to reduce the number of tobacco license holders in their communities. She reported another approach to address the number of tobacco licenses in a community would be to set limits on proximity or location of tobacco shops and to address the sign code. She summarized the best practices available to the City in order to address the appeal, access and affordability of tobacco. She explained the City could end the sale of flavored tobacco, limit the number of licensed tobacco retailers, set zoning standards for the proximity to youth oriented uses, address the City's sign code, and address price discounting and coupons within the community. She commented on the benefits of addressing tobacco locally, noting prevention was key.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of hookah in the community.

Sylvia Ames, Association for Nonsmokers MN, discussed her history with tobacco noting she has never smoked. She explained her mother started smoking when she was 11 years old and died of lung cancer after smoking menthol cigarettes. She stated she understood how her community has been targeted and it was important for her to fight for change, in order to keep young people from tobacco use.

Councilmember Allen asked how many teens were using cigarettes versus vapes. Ms. Anderson reported only 5% of teens were using combustible cigarettes. She stated this was a huge public health win, but noted the vaping epidemic was harming the next generation of tobacco users. She reported the threat with both products was the nicotine in these products.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented on how several of her family members have tried to quit smoking by switching to vapes and noted this has only escalated their use. She anticipated this was the intention of the tobacco industry. Ms. Anderson reported this was the case. She stated she did not want New Brighton to be known for its tobacco shops, just because the City allows them. She supported the City putting further regulations in place to address the number of tobacco licenses in the community. She commented on the investments the City was making to improve its parks and believed an effort to address the number of tobacco establishments in the community would align with the City's vision.

Councilmember Abdulle stated he concurred with many of the Mayor's comments. He explained he appreciated the presentation from ANSR and all of the data that was presented. He stated he was disappointed to learn how targeted the tobacco industry's marketing efforts were on the black community. He believed

public officials had to look out for the best interests of all people in the community, especially those who were most vulnerable. He asked if there were any State-wide efforts to address the sale of flavored tobacco. Ms. Anderson reported there were efforts to introduce a State law that would end the sale of all flavored commercial tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes.

Councilmember Allen stated he appreciated the fact New Brighton supported the Tobacco 21 ordinance. He explained he supported the City addressing how tobacco products were being advertised within the community.

Councilmember Dunsworth explained tobacco use was an adult choice, just like alcohol and gambling. She indicated she supported the City having a cap on the number of tobacco licenses. She reported she liked the attrition model. She stated she really appreciated this informative presentation and all of the data that was presented. She then excused herself from the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Anderson for her presentation.

Sports Field/Signage Policy Draft

Massopust stated Director Fink would be reviewing this draft policy with the Council.

Distad explained the Irondale Baseball League approached the City, inquiring about placing sponsorship banners on the outfield fences of City of New Brighton ballfields. The Department does not currently have a field signage/sponsorship policy. The purpose of the proposed policy is to allow organizations the opportunity to include signage in their sponsorship packages as long as signage guidelines in the policy are followed. Staff recommends discussion and feedback on the policy. It was noted the policy will be brought to the February 14 City Council meeting for consideration pending any recommended changes.

Councilmember Axberg questioned who would receive the money for the proposed signs. Fink explained if the policy were approved by the City Council, staff would work with the baseball association and all monies for the outfield signs would go to the Irondale Baseball League.

Councilmember Axberg inquired how the City would regulate what organization can benefit from the sign revenue, if numerous organizations were to approach the City, and where the signs would be located. Fink reported the City would be allowed to choose where the signs go and if the City had another organization approach them requesting signs, the funding would have to be split. She commented further on how staff can work with future organizations and noted this policy could be amended in the future if need be. She discussed how this policy would assist in growing relationships with the communities local sports organizations.

Fink explained that some communities do not have a sign policy in place, but rather have handshake agreements with the different sports organizations in their community. She believed it would be in the City's best interest to have a policy in place. She provided further comment on the proposed policy noting the City would have the final approval for all advertising.

Distad reviewed the ballfield locations that would be able to host signage, which included Freedom, Hansen, Lions, Sunny Square, Totem Pole and Veterans Park.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas recommended that the sports organization be responsible for any damage that is caused to the City's fence. She suggested an intention or philosophy be written into the policy that speaks to how the City wants youth sports in New Brighton to grow or that the City was working to grow its relationships with local youth organizations. She understood that teams needed money, but she questioned

what the City wanted the outcome to be from this program. Massopust reported staff has not had a philosophical discussion regarding this policy but rather staff drafted a policy after receiving a request from a local sports organization.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas stated she would like the City to think through the purpose of this policy in order to consider the long-term ramifications of this program. She anticipated that once this policy is put in place, every sports association in New Brighton will want to be a part of this program. Fink noted that the policy could be amended if future considerations had to be made.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if the City would allow advertisements for local churches.

Councilmember Allen stated the policy did not speak to this.

Councilmember Axberg commented another thing to consider was if the City would allow an organization outside of New Brighton to request signs within City parks. She encouraged staff to think this through because they would be administering a program that they would be receiving no revenue for.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas indicated she was concerned with how the revenue captured through the advertising could not be controlled by the City. She suggested the City consider putting goals within the policy as to how the funding would be used such as for scholarships.

Fink explained she wanted to see the City support the Irondale Baseball Association because they were offering programming that was not available through the City. In addition, this organization was utilizing the City's facilities. She noted this organization was not in place five years ago and they were working to become established in the community.

Councilmember Abdulle encouraged staff to clarify within the policy who would be collecting revenues and questioned if this policy would address digital signs. Fink reported the policy could be amended in the future if digital policy signs were to be requested.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas recommended the policy state clearly that the City would be taking a percentage of the revenues at some point in the future so that this is not a surprise to the youth organizations.

Councilmember Allen recommended that the City not allow any advertisements that focus on the use of alcohol or tobacco. He explained he would like to hear the legal perspective on what the City could and could not reject within the advertisements.

Worksession adjourned at 7:02 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Spangrud
City Clerk