



COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS THE CITY OF NEW BRIGHTON

Pursuant to notice thereof, a regular meeting of the New Brighton City Council was held Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the New Brighton Council Chambers.

Present: Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas, Councilmembers Abdulle, Allen, and Axberg
Absent: Councilmember Dunsworth

Also Present: Devin Massopust-City Manager, Sarah Sonsalla-City Attorney (attending remotely), Craig Schlichting-Director of Community Assets and Development, Ben Gozola-Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development (attending remotely), Jennifer Fink-Parks and Recreation Director, Jen Lehmann-Assistant City Manager, Hue Schlieu-DEI Coordinator

Call to Order

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Forum

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas opened the Public Forum for comments from the public. There were no comments from the public.

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the March 14, 2023 Council Agenda.

Motion by Councilmember Axberg, seconded by Councilmember Abdulle to approve the agenda as submitted.

4 Ayes, 0 Nays-Motion Carried

Special Order of Business

None.

Consent Agenda

1. Consider Approval of Payments.
2. Approve City Council Minutes:
 - a. February 28, 2023 Worksession Meeting Minutes.
 - b. February 28, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes.
3. Accept Receipt of Commission Minutes:

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment Forum

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the March 14, 2023 Agenda.

Special Order of Business

Consent Agenda

1. Consider Approval of Payments.
2. Approve City Council Minutes:
 - a. February 28, 2023 Worksession.
 - b. February 28, 2023 City Council.
3. Accept Receipt of Commission Minutes:
 - a. February 1, 2023 PREC Minutes.
 - b. January 9, 2023

a. February 1, 2023 Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission Minutes.

b. January 9, 2023 Public Safety Commission Meeting Minutes.

4. Consider Resolution Amending the Fund Balance Policy.
5. Consider Resolution Accepting a 2023 Stormwater Management Grant from Rice Creek Watershed District.
6. Consider Resolution Accepting Feasibility Study and Set Public Improvement Hearing Date for City Project 23-1, 2023 Street Rehabilitation.
7. Consider Approval of Agreement with Tenicity.
8. Consider Resolution to Remove Public Premises License Requirement from City Code.
9. Consider Request for Exemption from Lawful Gambling License – Knights of Columbus C-14250.
10. Consider Agreements with Soo Line Railroad Company (aka Canadian Pacific) for the Reconstruction of Old Highway 8.
11. Consider Authorizing Staff to Enter an Agreement with LHB Architects for Design of Hansen Park West Building.
12. Consider Resolution Appointing Individuals to Municipal Advisory Commissions.

Motion by Councilmember Allen, seconded by Councilmember Axberg to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

4 Ayes, 0 Nays - Motion Carried

Public Hearing

None.

Council Business

1. Consider recommended options for streetlight banner themes relating to the Ramsey County Critical Corridor Sense of Place Grant.

City Manager Massopust indicated Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola would be presenting this item to the Council.

Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola stated as part of a Critical Corridors grant program, Ramsey County recently awarded the City of New Brighton \$32,600 to fund the development and production of new light pole banners to create a sense of place along the Old Highway 8 corridor. This grant will fund the design and production of (at least) two (2) sets of banners to be used one or more times each year to decorate the Old Highway 8 corridor. The Economic Development Commission and the Equity Commission were both asked to participate in this project by informing Council what (if any) topics they would like one or both

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12. Consider Resolution Appointing Individuals to Municipal Advisory Commissions.

Public Hearing

Council Business

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the local watershed. Parks and Recreation Director reported the proposed plans have been reviewed and conditionally approved by the Rice Creek Watershed District. Councilmember Allen reported Hansen Park was the closest park to his home. He discussed the comments he has heard about the current condition of the trails and he hoped the renovation of the park would address these concerns. City Manager Massopust explained staff understands that current hydrology of the park and noted the new plans would address the flow of water through the park. Parks and Recreation Director Fink reported staff was working very closely with WSB on this project in order to have the right materials in the park to properly drain water away from the trails.

Councilmember Abdulle questioned if there were any creative ways to reuse water in the park. Parks and Recreation Director Fink explained this could be addressed with the watershed district in Phase II.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked how staff would be communicating with residents regarding the project timeline for this park. Parks and Recreation Director Fink reported site signs would be posted in the park and noted further communication would be sent to residents after bids were approved.

Motion by Councilmember Abdulle, seconded by Councilmember Axberg to adopt a Resolution making findings of fact and approving a site plan based authorizing renovation work at Hanse Park.

4 Ayes, 0 Nays-Motion Carried

3. Consider a resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants, discharging discriminatory covenants on city-owned properties, and approving participation in the Just Deeds Coalition.

City Manager Massopust indicated DEI Coordinator Schlieu would be presenting this item to the Council. DEI Coordinator Schlieu stated in 1968, the US Federal Government passed the Fair Housing Act, which protected people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, etc. The 1968 Act effectively made discriminatory covenants not enforceable, but did not remove the language from property deeds. Discriminatory covenants created long-lasting consequences and a legacy of inequity between White persons and Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC). Discriminatory covenants promoted and established residential racial segregation, which continues to prevent access to property ownership, accumulation of wealth, property transfers, mortgage eligibility, rental eligibility, property values, property tax base, education, transportation, medical care, home ownership, internet access, environmentally healthy spaces, and more. There are fifty residential properties and two City-owned properties identified to have discriminatory covenants in their deeds. The Resolution shows the City's commitment to dismantling systemic racism and discrimination in housing, provides the education to help acknowledge the history of racism, and connects property owners in New Brighton to access free legal and title services to help find and discharge discriminatory covenants from their property titles. The Resolution also authorizes staff to take next steps toward discharging the racial covenants on the two City-owned properties located at Hidden Oaks Park. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners voted to join Just Deeds June 14, 2022, and approved an action exempting residents from paying a filing fee to discharge a restrictive covenant, as stated in Minnesota Statute 507.18 subd. 5. Just Deeds is a coalition of community stakeholders committed to acknowledging and addressing systemic racism in housing in Minnesota. Twenty municipalities in Ramsey and Hennepin County have joined the Just Deeds Coalition since 2020. Staff commented further on the request and recommended approval of a Resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants. Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked staff for their efforts to address this matter and for engaging with the Equity Commission. In addition, she thanked the City Attorney for offering her

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runs of signs to focus on. Staff presented recommendations from both commissions, reviewed suggested banner themes and requested Council direction on the final theme(s) to be pursued as staff continues to work on this project.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if the City was looking to have a single or double banner for its light poles. Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola explained the City would have a single banner for each light pole.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if additional banners could be considered for other corridors in the community. Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola stated he did not believe Ramsey County would object to this expansion. Further discussion ensued on how the City would need to budget for banner stanchions for other roadway corridors in the community.

Councilmember Abdulle indicated the City received a one time grant in the amount of \$32,500. He asked how the City would fund future banners. City Manager Massopust stated the City had a one-time grant and any future banners would require a new budgetary funding.

Councilmember Allen thanked staff for their efforts on this grant. He explained he supported the "I Am New Brighton" and "Welcome to New Brighton" campaigns for the banners along with "Building Tomorrow Today". He stated he appreciated how the community would be involved with creating the banner designs.

Councilmember Abdulle questioned how an "I Am New Brighton" campaign would move forward. Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola reported the City would have to hire a local photographer in order to take photos of New Brighton residents for the banners.

Councilmember Abdulle stated he supported all four banner themes. He thanked the EDC and Equity Commission for their work and valuable ideas. He indicated he supported an "I Am New Brighton" or the "Welcome to New Brighton" banner campaigns moving forward.

Councilmember Axberg supported all four themes from staff moving forward. She believed this would bring about the best and most inspiring submissions from the public.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked staff for their efforts and engagement with the EDC and Equity Commissions. She indicated she supported the "I Am New Brighton" and "Welcome to New Brighton" campaigns, along with the "Building Tomorrow Today". She reported she was less concerned about branding corridors in the community and was more concerned about branding the City. She supported the City building something fun or beneficial into winning the banner contest, such as riding in the stockyard days parade.

2. Consider a Resolution approving a site plan for phase one of rehabilitation work in Hansen Park.

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City Manager Massopust indicated Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola would be presenting this item to the Council.

Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola stated the City of New Brighton is seeking authorization to rehabilitate facilities at Hansen Park in accordance with the recently approved 2040 Park & Trail System Master Plan. Staff reviewed the plans in detail with the Council and reported the Planning Commission recommended approval of the site plan for phase one at Hansen Park.

Councilmember Axberg asked if this approval would cover Phase I and Phase II of the project. Assistant Director of Community Assets and Development Gozola explained this approval would only cover Phase I of the project.

Councilmember Axberg stated she was proud of the fact the City was continuing to invest in its parks and open spaces in order to benefit the community's health and wellness.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if all trails would be accessible. Parks and Recreation Director Fink reported all new trails would have to meet ADA accessibility requirements.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas requested further information on the importance of Hansen Park to

services to assist with addressing this matter.

Councilmember Abdulle thanked staff for their great work. He explained this may seem simple, but he believed this was an important action for the City to take. He stated it was important for the City to consider what next steps should be taken in order to address Ordinances with lenses towards racial equity, to identify contemporary discriminatory systems, and to dismantle systemic racism practices and policies in New Brighton. He wanted to see the City exploring its housing corridors and what opportunities were available to provide more housing and more housing types for New Brighton residents. He appreciated the fact that this Council has shown the importance of equity and inclusion and he appreciated staff's expertise in bringing this action forward.

Councilmember Allen thanked staff for their efforts and for bringing this item before the Council. He believed it made a tremendous amount of sense for the City to work with Just Deeds on this issue in order to address the injustices of the past.

Councilmember Axberg discussed the work she did during COVID to learn more about racial covenants and prejudices in the community. She thanked staff and the Equity Commission for their efforts and she appreciated the fact that there was a call to action.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked how the City would be communicating with residents regarding this matter. She supported the City posting a sign in Hidden Oaks park stating that the racial covenants on the property had been discharged.

Councilmember Abdulle reported he believed there was value in people knowing the history of the Hidden Oaks property. He indicated there were people that had a hard time understanding discrimination was real. He discussed how transportation corridors went directly through low income communities and how families lost their homes. He explained while he appreciated the proposed signs, he believed it was more important for the City to take concrete policy actions.

Councilmember Allen indicated he supported the City reaching out to the 50 identified properties via mail and recommended the City post information regarding this initiative on the website. He stated if a monument sign was created for Hidden Oaks park, the history of this park could be shared.

Councilmember Abdulle commented on a recent trip he took to Washington DC noting he visited the Museum of African American History and Culture. He stated the exhibits were very triggering to him. He explained he was an African immigrant to the United States and he was not a descendent to slavery. He commented further on how the inhumane mistreatment of black individuals was written in vivid detail throughout this museum. He feared that by posting signs in Hidden Oaks park, this may be triggering to people of color that visit and use this space. He stated he did not want the City to create or do more harm. Assistant City Manager Lehmann reported the Equity Commission spoke about the trauma and triggering, even when notifying property owners. She indicated the education and awareness campaign would be further addressed by the Equity Commission at their next meeting on Thursday.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas stated she fully supported the City notifying people regarding the racial covenants that may be in place. She understood these property owners may not be aware of the covenants and she wanted to see the City having a very sensitive approach when communicating with property owners. She suggested the City offer office hours in order to have questions and concerns addressed. She encouraged staff to provide residents with a firm definition on what it means to discharge the covenants. She recommended the City hold some type of educational event, perhaps in cooperation with the Historical Society in order to reach a broader audience regarding racial covenants. DEI Coordinator Schlieu thanked the Council for their feedback.

Motion by Councilmember Abdulle, seconded by Councilmember Allen to adopt a Resolution condemning the use of discriminatory covenants, discharging discriminatory covenants on city-owned property, and approving participation in the Just Deeds Coalition.

4 Ayes, 0 Nays-Motion Carried

Commission Liaison Reports, Announcements and Updates

Devin Massopust

City Manager Massopust reported he would be at the Capitol with the Mayor on Wednesday, March 15. He explained on Friday, March 17 City Clerk Spangrud would be testifying to the elections committee. He stated last Friday, Jennifer Yang, a full time license clerk with the City passed away. He noted she was a force of light, a friend to all and she will be dearly missed.

Graeme Allen

Councilmember Allen reported the Public Safety Commission met on Monday, March 13 and the group received an update on the department's drone program. He thanked Julie Forbor for her 27 years of dedicated service to the Public Safety Department and wished her well in her new position with the Public Safety Commissioner Bob Jacobson. He offered his condolences to Jennifer Yang's family and friends.

Pam Axberg

Councilmember Axberg reported the EDC met on Wednesday, March 1 and noted the group discussed his goals and visions for the coming year.

Abdullahi Abdulle

Councilmember Abdulle reported the Planning Commission would meet next on Tuesday, March 21. He offered his sincere condolences to Jennifer Yang's family, staff members and friends.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas

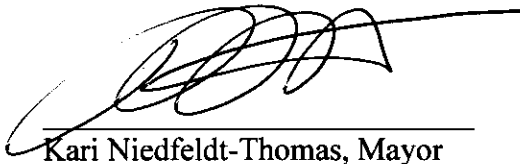
Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas offered her condolences to Jennifer Yang's family, friends and colleagues. She reported the Equity Commission would meet next on Thursday, March 16. She explained she would be at the capitol on Wednesday, March 15. She commented on the topics that were discussed at the north metro eight city manager/mayors meeting. She thanked the ice castles for being a part of the community again this winter. She encouraged residents to review the most recent edition of the City's newsletter. She stated the Council would be meeting next on March 28.

Adjournment

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas, Mayor

ATTEST:



Terri Spangrud, City Clerk