



Joint Council Worksession
May 2, 2023
5:00 pm

Joint Meeting Roll Call

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

Absent:

Commissioners in Attendance: EDC Chair Harry Carter, EDC Vice Chair Jacqui Sauter, PREC Chair Julia O'Rourke, PREC Vice Chair Mike Spooner, Public Safety Commission Vice Chair Karen Wagner, Equity Commission Chair Lindsay Spooner and Equity Commission Vice Chair Cami Miller

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Tony Paetznick, Hue Schlieu, Jennifer Fink, Ben Gozola, Jenn Lehmann

Meeting Goals

Massopust stated a Commissioner Satisfaction Survey was issued in February 2023 to ensure Commissioners are feeling valued and to solicit feedback on Commissions in general as staff began thinking about 2023-2024 Commission work plans. A few highlights:

- All respondents reported that they enjoy their role as Commissioner and feel they are treated respectfully.
- Commissioners were very complimentary of staff liaisons, Council liaisons, and other staff, with one respondent saying they "always do an outstanding job."
- A top interest from Commissioners is a more action and influence.

Massopust explained to develop the 2023-2024 work plan, feedback from the survey, draft ideas from staff, a prior conversation with all Commissioners, and consideration of staff/budgetary capacity were all considered. While Council will be discussing high-level topics during the work session, a more detailed work plan template that specifically identifies Commission-initiated topics and topics where the Commission is tasked with taking action will be shared as a Council resource later this month. He commented further on the goals for this meeting as being feedback from Council to capture clarifications, topics missing from work plans and comments on high priority topics.

Annual Work Plans by Commission

Massopust reported five citizen advisory Commissions play an important role in assisting the City Council and staff with achieving goals and objectives. Each Commission is also supported by a staff liaison and City

Council liaison. He explained this joint meeting between the City Council and Commission Chairs/Vice Chairs would provide a forum to review annual work plans. The Chair and/or Vice Chair of each Commission will present the 2023-2024 interests and anticipated meeting topics for their respective Commission. Presenters will rotate every 15 minutes as follows:

- Economic Development Commission
- Parks, Recreation, and Environmental Commission
- Public Safety Commission
- Equity Commission

1. Economic Development Commission (EDC)

Chair Harry Carter discussed areas of interest for the EDC which were to strengthen and expand the Business Outreach Program, to focus on pursuits that bring a “sense of place” to New Brighton, begin “what is the appeal” campaign in order to set New Brighton apart from other destinations, consider ways to connect local businesses and schools, shift from business retention and expansion to business relations, and to promote public transit options and service expansion as opportunities arise. He reviewed the proposed meeting topics for the coming year.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked what action would be taken next on the banners. Gozola reported the intent of staff was to bring this item back to the Council. He reported the EDC and Equity Commission have already weighed in on the themes for the banners. He noted the final selection on the banners would be made by the City Council.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas recommended staff speak with the Exchange Apartments to see if they would be interested in having a ribbon cutting ceremony this summer.

Councilmember Allen suggested the EDC connect with Officer Matt Farmer to see how the City’s multi-family housing can be brought into the fold. He stated he appreciated the fact the EDC would be working to address public transit. It was his hope a regional plan could be created for New Brighton and surrounding communities.

Councilmember Abdulle agreed it was good the EDC would be focusing on transit. He stated he was looking forward to working with the EDC in the coming year.

2. Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission (PREC)

Chair Julia O’Rourke reported the PREC interest areas were community art, enhancing city bike/walking trails and connectivity, inviting staff or community groups to discuss opportunities and successes monthly, and increased volunteer opportunities. She then discussed the meeting topics PREC would be addressing in the coming year. She thanked the Council for their continued support for the City’s parks.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated she supported the PREC work plan as presented. She explained she really enjoyed attending the park tour last year. She suggested the EDC be invited to attend the park tour in 2023.

Councilmember Abdulle thanked PREC for all of the work they complete on behalf of the community. He encouraged PREC to consider not just parks but also open space in the City that is utilized by residents. He was pleased there was an interest in trails and connectivity.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if PREC and Public Safety have discussed crime data within the City’s

parks. Fink discussed how increased use of the City's parks assists with keeping crime low. She noted she has not held a joint meeting between PREC and the Public Safety Commission since she has worked for the City.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas supported PREC and the Public Safety Commission holding a joint meeting in order to review crime data. She requested further information on the EV charging stations roll out and what roll PREC would have in this project. Fink stated the City was waiting for equipment to arrive and staff would encourage all Commissioners to spread the word on the new charging stations.

Councilmember Allen thanked PREC for the ambitious work plan. He stated it would be important for PREC to get information to the public as the climate action plan nears completion, in order to make them aware of energy savings plans/programs. He appreciated the fact PREC was interested in planning and supporting volunteer events.

Councilmember Axberg thanked PREC for pursuing partnerships in order to offer tennis courts and ski trails that the community can use. She encouraged the City to continue finding partnerships to bring additional services to New Brighton residents.

3. Public Safety Commission

Vice Chair Wagner reviewed the areas of interest for the Public Safety Commission which included the Ramsey County 911 Appropriate Response Team, community demographics and engagement, use of force policies and training, traffic stop enforcement alternatives, continued policing openness and transparency through the LISTEN website, Public Safety Center operational tours, and emergency communications center and Allina Ambulance base visits. She then discussed the meeting topics that would be addressed by the Public Safety Commission in the coming year.

Councilmember Abdulle requested further information regarding the data was collected during traffic stops and how this was utilized by this Commission. Paetznick commented on how the Commission reviews traffic stop and census data in order to better understand the changing needs of the community.

Councilmember Allen stated one major obstacle with traffic stop data was that the department did not track a person's residence.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked how this Commission would collaborate with the Equity Commission for the coming year. Massopust reported certain topics could allow for cross conversations.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated when the opportunity arises, she would like these two groups holding discussions together given the fact there would be overlap between these two Commissions. Lehmann reported the Equity Commission was interested in meeting with the Public Safety Commission.

Councilmember Allen suggested the Public Safety Commission address the growing concern of overnight parking and the City's parking policy.

Councilmember Abdulle agreed overnight parking was a topic that should be addressed by the Public Safety Commission.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas recommended the Commission speak with Hennepin County in order to address the changes being made surrounding youth crime. She suggested the volume of policing within Long Lake Park also be discussed.

4. Equity Commission

Chair Lindsay Spooner reviewed the areas of interest for the Equity Commission which included the intersection of schools and government related to youth equity, data, Equity Strategic Action Plan review and implementation, public safety, Just Deeds Coalition education campaign, tour of parks with PREC and volunteering at the farmers market and at Juneteenth. She then discussed the meeting topics that would be addressed by the Equity Commission in the coming year.

Commissioner Abdulle requested further information regarding land acknowledgement. Chair Spooner stated the Commission would like to have dialogue on how the City can be more intentional regarding land acknowledgement and would be making a recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioner Abdulle commented on how exclusionary practices impacted the City's housing stock. He questioned what the City wanted to do about that and what was the City's role in this matter.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated brought Just Deeds to City Manager Massopust and she would like to see the City hosting a free legal clinic at City Hall in order to assist residents with having their racial covenants discharged. Schlieu reported she was working on an education campaign for racial covenants and noted the City Attorney was offering free services to assist residents.

Councilmember Abdulle stated he appreciated this, but noted the people being helped was the person who owned the house and not those who were dealing with housing insecurity.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas commented further on the work the City was doing with Just Deeds in order to assist residents with removing racial covenants within their deeds. She stated there were over 50 properties in the City of New Brighton that have racial covenants that need to be discharged. She reported this program was not about shaming anyone, but rather to bring this issue to light and to offer free services.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas understood there was a concern with one local business and their public art display. She suggested the Equity Commission and PREC work jointly on community art. She suggested the Equity Commission also work with the Public Safety Commission on multi-family-housing partnerships.

Schlieu thanked the Commissioners and Councilmembers for their input and commented further on how all members of the City were tied to the work of creating equity.

Worksession adjourned at 6:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Spangrud
City Clerk