

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on January 18, 2022. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, asking that everyone join in the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Whitlock, Norland, and Oachs, City Administrator Harrenstein, Community Development Director Fischer, Public Works Director Host, and City Clerk Van Genderen. Absent: Council Member Steiner.

Approval of Agenda

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Minutes from January 3, 2022, Council Meeting.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Norland, to approve the Council meeting minutes of January 3, 2022. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Proclamation

WHEREAS, all children in North Mankato should have access to the highest-quality education possible; and

WHEREAS, North Mankato recognizes the important role that an effective education plays in preparing all students in North Mankato to be successful adults; and

WHEREAS, quality education is crucial to the economic vitality of North Mankato; and

WHEREAS, North Mankato is home to a variety of high-quality public and nonpublic schools from which parents can choose for their children, in addition to families who educate their children in the home; and

WHEREAS, educational variety not only helps to diversify our economy but also enhances the vibrancy of our community; and

WHEREAS, North Mankato has many high-quality teaching professionals in all types of school settings who are committed to educating our children; and

WHEREAS, School Choice Week is celebrated across the country by millions of students, parents, educators, schools, and organizations to raise awareness of the need for effective educational options;

NOW THEREFORE I, Mark Dehen, Mayor of North Mankato, proclaim January 23-January 29, 2022 as:

NORTH MANKATO SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

And I call this observance to the attention of all of our citizens.

Consent Agenda

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Norland, to approve the Consent Agenda.

- A. Bills and Appropriations.
- B. Res. No. 8-22 Approving Donations/Contributions/Grants
- C. Approved Taxicab License for Friends Driving Friends for January-December 2022.
- D. Approved Updated Pay Equity Report.
- E. Approved Audio Permit for Mankato Brewery BBQ on June 4, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Public Comments Concerning Business Items on the Agenda

City Administrator Harrenstein reported the staff is requesting the Council determine where sidewalks will be installed on McKinley Avenue during the reconstruction project. He reported that during the first discussion concerning the installation of sidewalks, concerns were raised by residents. An additional neighborhood meeting was held concerning the installation of the sidewalk, with staff making a recommendation.

City Engineer Sarff reported that staff recommended installing the sidewalk on the north side of McKinley Avenue. He noted one comment at the neighborhood meeting and one written objection to the installation of the sidewalk on the north side due to concerns about snow removal on the sidewalk. He reviewed the presentation that was provided during the neighborhood meeting. The presentation included an overview of the project and a discussion concerning the existing sidewalk conditions. He noted unconnected sidewalks throughout the three-block designated reconstruction area and varying street widths. City Engineer Sarff stated that the Future Sidewalk System Development Map included in the Complete Streets Plan adopted by the City Council in 2016, it is recommended that the sidewalk be included on both sides of the street. He noted Council has desired to have a sidewalk on at least one side of the street that would meet the City's minimum standard and ADA recommended minimum standard. The sidewalk would need to be 5' wide with a 4' wide boulevard while maintaining at least 20' from the garage to the back of the walk. City Engineer Sarff reviewed four options: sidewalk on both sides, sidewalk only on the south side, alternating sidewalk blocks, and sidewalk only on the north side. Due to a variety of engineering difficulties including, sidewalks too close to garages or houses, utility conflicts, and continuity issues, the City staff recommended the installation of the sidewalk only on the north side of McKinley Avenue.

Sheila Yokum, 506 McKinley Avenue, appeared before Council and stated she was unhappy with the recommendation. She said she has a tiny backyard, and the addition of the sidewalk would decrease the value of her property. Ms. Yokum indicated that the City could not assess more than the increase in the property's value. She stated that there is little safety issue as there are few people walking the neighborhood, and most of them use the road and not the available sidewalks.

John Foderick, 947 Center Street, appeared before Council and indicated he was satisfied with the recommendation as it alleviated any issues he had with the installation of sidewalks.

No one else appeared before Council.

Business Items

Res. No. 9-22 Regarding Proposed Sidewalk Construction on the Project No. 21-06 ABCDEF McKinley Avenue Street and Utility Improvement Project.

Council Member Oachs reported she was not present at the Work Sessions where the proposed project was discussed and wondered if it would be necessary to install sidewalks.

Mayor Dehen stated in 2016, the City Council approved the Future Sidewalk System Development Map, which is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve the street. There are additional platting issues that were not seen on the previous reconstructions, and this is a more challenging street, and that is why the recommendation is to install sidewalks on one side, not both. He noted it is essential to provide safe pedestrian paths throughout the City and direct pedestrian paths to the parks. McKinley Avenue aligns with a Spring Lake Park entrance, and with the completion of the Swim Facility reconstruction, additional interest is taken in the park.

Council Member Oachs requested clarification on how the improvement would affect property value.

Mayor Dehen commented that the City caps the assessment well below the actual assessable amount. The project could be assessed at between \$27,000 to \$30,000, but the proposed cap for this assessment is \$7,500.

Council Member Norland noted she drove through the neighborhood and saw a young mom with children walking in the street, and it would be good to provide safe walking on a sidewalk.

Council Member Whitlock stated he drove through the neighborhood and said it would be difficult to alternate sides for the sidewalk as it would force individuals to cross the street or walk on the sidewalk. It would be more accessible for people with disabilities to navigate if it is on one side.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, to Adopt Res No. 9-22 Proposed Sidewalk Construction on the Project No. 21-06 ABCDEF McKinley Avenue Street and Utility Improvement Project. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Request to Zone Part of Section 3 & 4 as R-1, One-Family Dwelling. Ordinance No. 146 Zoning Part of Section 3 & 4 as R-1, One-Family Dwelling.

Community Development Director Fischer reported the applicant is in the process of annexing 7.63 acres of vacant property into the City limits to accommodate future residential development. To accommodate residential development, it is necessary to provide a zoning classification based on the property's intended use. The applicant proposes subdividing the property for single-family residential development; an R-1, One-Family Dwelling zoning classification is requested. Community Development Director Fischer reported the Planning Commission reviewed and approved the proposed zoning.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Adopt Ordinance No. 146 Zoning Part of Sections 3 & 4 as R-1, One-Family Dwelling. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Approving Preliminary and Final Plat of Burnett's Ravine Ridge No. 7.

Community Development Director reported the applicant is in the process of annexing 7.63 acres of land into the City limits to accommodate future residential development. The request is to replat part of Section 3 & 4 and Outlot A, Burnett's Ravine Ridge 6 as Burnett's Ravine Ridge No. 7. The plat consists of fifteen lots for future single-family residential development, including Legacy Court's addition for access. There are 15 foot-wide utility easements on the adjoining Lot 10 and 11 lot lines to accommodate the installation and maintenance of necessary underground utilities. All other side yard utility easements are 5 feet in width. The property is guided for R-1, One-Family Dwelling zoning; according to the City, the minimum lot size requirements are 90 feet wide, 100 feet deep, with a lot size of 9,000 square feet. As proposed, all lots within Burnett's Ravine Ridge No. 7 meet or exceed the minimum lot size requirements for an R-1 zoning district. He noted the Planning

Commission recommended approval. Council Member Oachs noted that Planning Commissioner Beal questioned the width of Lot 1, which is 70 feet. She noted that Community Development Director Fischer reported the lot has an arc that is 20 feet wide to meet the requirements.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Norland, to Approve the Preliminary and Final Plat of Burnett's Ravine Ridge No. 7. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Approving Conditional Use Permit Request CU-1-22, for 1901 Lee Boulevard.

City Administrator Harrenstein reported the Conditional Use Permit request is to utilize a portion of what is known as the old Neubert building as an automobile repair business. He noted the Planning Commission approved an additional request that the owner of Oak Terrace made, which is across the street from the proposed repair business. The proposal was to install a fence on the initial 100 feet on the north end of the property directly across from Oak Terrace.

Community Development Director Fischer reported the request is for a Conditional Use Permit to operate an automobile repair business at 1901 Lee Boulevard. The proposal comes from NKS, Inc. and DSL Properties. The property is owned by NKS and is commonly referred to as the former Neubert Millwork building, which has been vacant for several years. DSL Properties proposes purchasing the property and operating an automobile repair business in a portion of the building. According to the City Code, an automobile service or repair company is listed as a Conditional Use in a B-3 zoning district. The CUP allows the City to impose reasonable conditions on the operations to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses. All other automobile repair businesses within the City operate under CUPs and are recorded with the County. An issue with CUPs for the automobile repair business is the outdoor storage of vehicles on the property. At 1901 Lee Boulevard, there are two separate outdoor parking areas. One area is visible parking, and a fence screens one area. Staff believes parking in these areas should be regulated to address potential outdoor parking issues. Specifically, the number of times vehicles can be parked in each area. In the unscreened area, it is recommended that vehicle parking shall not exceed 48 consecutive hours. This would accommodate employees customers and the pick-up of customer vehicles. In the screened-in area, it is recommended that no vehicle shall be parked for a period of longer than four consecutive weeks. This area would be used for the longer-term parking of customer vehicles or employee parking.

Community Development Director Fischer noted the Planning Commission recommended approval of CU-1-22 with the staff recommended conditions which included:

1. The parking lot be striped to identify parking spaces and driving lanes.
2. No stacked or double parking of vehicles is permitted.
3. All parts, equipment, and materials shall be stored indoors or within an entirely screened-in area outside the building.
4. All automobile repair work shall be performed within an enclosed building.
5. In the unscreened parking lot, no vehicle shall be stored for longer than 48 hours. In the screened area, no vehicle shall be parked for a period of longer than four consecutive weeks.
6. There shall be no storage of boats, campers, trailers, recreational vehicles, or similar items on the property.
7. The existing chain link fence is modified to provide continuous screening for the contents within, including ongoing fence maintenance.
8. The installation of a fence to screen the initial 100 feet on the north end of the property.

Council discussed the screening of the first 100 feet and how it can be revoked if the owners do not conform to the CUP.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Norland, to approve the Conditional Use Permit Request CU-1-22 for 1901 Lee Boulevard as recommended by the Planning Commission. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Receive North Mankato Housing Study.

City Planner Lassonde presented the 2021 North Mankato Housing Study. Mr. Lassonde reported the study began in mid-2020, and staff completed work by October 2021. The staff utilized a variety of data sources, including U.S. Census Bureau, ERSI, City Data from North Mankato, Mankato, and Eagle Lake, information from the Real Estate Association of Southern MN, Nicollet County, and Blue Earth County Assessors, Community Partners Research and the Minnesota State Demographer. Between 2010 and 2020, the population has increased by 1,085 people, an 0.8% annual growth between 2010 and 2020. The City would like to target annual growth of between 1.1%-1.6% over the next decade. He reported households increased by 8.9% between 2010 to 2020. Changes in the ages of households included a decrease in household ages for the 15-24 and the 45-55 age group and increases in the 35-44 and 55 + age groups. City Planner Lassonde reported that the median household income increased 21.4% between 2015 and 2019, with a median income of \$67,728, higher than comparison geographies. Estimates for a household income of \$67,728 could afford \$1,680 per month for mortgage or rent in 2019. City Planner Lassonde reported the city currently captures 18-19% in base or “market” area (Mankato, North Mankato, and Eagle Lake). The City hopes to increase the percentage to 23%.

Home ownership housing demand remains strong, with single-family homes remaining the most constructed housing option over the past decade. The City’s target is 35 single-family detached and 14 single-family attached owner-occupied units per year. The City’s rental housing shows very low vacancy rates for all bedroom sizes, indicating the need for more options. The City’s Tax Credit Units (185 units) had only one vacant unit during the survey indicating a need for additional tax credit units. The City’s subsidized housing has 73 units, and at the time of the survey, had two vacancies but did have a waiting list. The City has a target of 25 units per year. A review of the specialized senior housing showed an unused capacity both pre-pandemic and during the pandemic in Greater Mankato. The City will reevaluate this target at a later date.

Council Member Oachs thanked City Planner Lassonde for his work and noted the Planning Commission discussed what the City wants for the community's future.

City Administrator Harrenstein commented that North Mankato is known for its stable single-family home development but noted that all housing options are needed. He noted the City’s goal by growing North Mankato will continue to maintain 23% of the regional population.

Mayor Dehen stated it is a natural cycle of the housing market to have a turnover in homes so the older population can move to patio homes, younger generations can enter lower North’s affordable housing stock. The City needs additional housing to continue the cycle of homeownership.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to adopt the North Mankato Housing Study. Vote on the motion Whitlock, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Receive Splash Pad Concept.

Public Works Director Host reviewed the proposed splash pad design, which included 2,800 square feet of spray area, 26 features, and three different shaded cantilevers. He noted that the City would be using the cooperative purchasing process, and the materials should be delivered in 8- 12 weeks. Once the frost is out of the ground, the site can be prepared for the contractor to begin work. A competitive bidding process will occur, and staff will bring the final bid back for approval. City Administrator Harrenstein reported the project would cost between \$300,000 and \$350,000, but the Ward Family has generously donated \$150,000 toward the project. The Splash Pad will be up by the Fallenstein Playground.

Receive Staff Update on the Plans for the Emerald Ash Borer Grant.

Public Works Director Host reported the City received a 50,000 dollar grant which must be combined with \$16,000 City funds for the removal and replacement of ash trees. The City has identified 70 ash trees for removal in lower North Mankato. Residents have been notified of the removal and offered the chance to replace the tree, at no cost, with one of a selection of trees. Public Works Director Host reported the plan is to remove the trees and dispose of them before the ash borer's hatch in the spring.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Public Works Director Host noted that North Mankato is hosting some events for Hockey Day Minnesota at Spring Lake Park on Saturday morning. He noted the Anthony Pond Hockey tournament would take place on Saturday, January 29th, and Sunday, January 30th.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Whitlock thanked the Ward family for the donation for the splash pad.

Council Member Whitlock thanked Governor Walz for including the North Mankato Caswell Fieldhouse in his bonding proposal.

Councilmember Oachs reported the Planning Commission received a report from Community Development reviewing the statistics for 2021.

Mayor Dehen said that Hockey Day Minnesota is set to take place in Mankato on January 19-23, 2022, and the event will be an economic benefit to the region. He reminded everyone that the Anthony Ford Pond Hockey Tournament would be at Spring Lake Park on January 29-30, 2022.

At 8:42 pm, on a motion by Council Member Norland, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting was adjourned.

Mayor

City Clerk