

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 March 15, 2021. City Administrator Harrenstein on March 31, 2020, under MN Statute Section 13D.021, declared the use of electronic meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., asking that everyone join in the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present remotely through Zoom for roll call: Council Members Whitlock, Oachs, Norland, and Steiner, City Attorney Kennedy, Finance Director McCann, and Public Works Director Host, present in the Council Chambers for roll call: Community Development Director Fischer and City Clerk Van Genderen. Absent: City Administrator Harrenstein. Citizen participation was available through teleconference.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Council Minutes from the March 1, 2021, Council Meeting.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the minutes of the Council meeting of March 1, 2021. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the monarch butterfly is an iconic North American species whose migration and metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly has captured the imagination of millions of Americans; and

WHEREAS, globally, pollinators are in decline due to pressures including habitat loss and climate change; and

WHEREAS, cities, towns, and counties have a critical role to play to help preserve the monarch butterfly habitat; and

WHEREAS, North Mankato has made significant efforts to increase pollinator habitats through prairie restoration of Benson Park and Bluff Park and incorporating pollinator plants in community gardens and green spaces; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor of North Mankato has taken the National Wildlife Federation's Mayor's Monarch Pledge to demonstrate North Mankato's commitment to creating habitat and educating citizens about how they can make a difference at home.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Dehen, Mayor of the City of North Mankato, Minnesota, declare March 15, 2021, the City of North Mankato a

POLLINATOR FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Public Hearing, 7 pm-Amend City Code Section 156.041 (J) and the Maximum Number of Stories Permitted in an R-4 Zoning District.

Community Development Director Fischer reported Select Management LLC's request to amend City Code Section 156.041 (J), located in the R-4 Zoning Regulations. The purpose of the R-4 zoning district is to create opportunities for high-density residential development. The current regulation pertaining to maximum building height states no building "erected or altered shall exceed three stories or 45 feet in height." The applicant is proposing to construct a new four-story apartment complex that will not exceed 45 feet in height. The staff compared North Mankato's building height regulations and those used by other cities in high-density zoning districts. Most other cities allow buildings up to 45 feet and higher in high-density residential districts. The Planning Commission reviewed the request and recommended approval of the code change, eliminating the language three stories and leaving just the maximum height at 45 feet.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, spoke before Council and stated her concern was not about the height or the number of stories permitted. She said the City should consider increasing the number of required parking stalls per unit.

With no one else appearing, Mayor Dehen closed the Public Hearing.

Consent Agenda

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

- A. Bills and Appropriations.
- B. Res. No. 23-21 Accepting Donations/Contributions/Grants.
- C. Approved League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust Liability Coverage Waiver Form.
- D. Approved Renewal of Caswell Sports On-Sale Liquor License from April 30, 2021, to April 30, 2022.
- E. Set Public Hearing for 7 p.m. on April 5, 2021, for Revision of Code of Ordinances.
- F. Res. No. 24-21 Setting Fees and Charges.

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

Public Comments Concerning Business Items on the Agenda

None.

Business Items

Ordinance No. 139, Fourth Series, Amending North Mankato City Code Chapter 156.041 (J) Height Regulations.

Council Member Norland requested clarification on if the development would have any garages or if it would just be parking. Community Development Director Fischer reported it would all be surface parking.

Council Member Steiner commented he is concerned about parking issues. Council Member Oachs asked if there was consideration for including a visitor parking lot.

Community Development Director Fischer reported the plan that he reviewed met the City Code design guidelines and has two parking stalls per dwelling unit.

Attorney Kennedy requested clarification on if there would be underground parking. Community Development Director Fischer reported there would be enough parking in the open to

satisfy requirements. Attorney Kennedy requested clarification on how long the two parking stalls per dwelling unit has been in City Code. Community Development Director Fischer noted it had been many years.

Council Member Whitlock requested clarification on the number of dwelling units and the number of parking stalls. Community Development Director Fischer noted he did not recall the exact number, but the development met the requirements and exceeded the required stalls. He noted the ordinance does not address parking, and it only addresses the height of the building.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Norland, to adopt Ordinance No. 139, Fourth Series, Amending North Mankato City Code Chapter 156.041 (J) Height Regulations. Vote on the motion: Norland, Oachs and Dehen aye; Whitlock and Steiner nay. Motion carried.

Res. No. 25-21 Concerning the Increase of the Minimum Population of Cities that Constitute the Core of Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) from 50,000 to 100,000.

Community Development Director Fischer reported the Office of Management and Budget is currently seeking public comment on a proposal from the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee which could eliminate the Mankato/North Mankato region as a Metropolitan Statistical Area. The proposal outlines changing the urban area population's threshold from 50,000 to 100,000, resulting in eliminating 144 Metropolitan Statistical Areas across the country, including Mankato/North Mankato. The City of North Mankato does not obtain CDBG funds, but the City is marketed as part of the MSA and leverages us among other businesses. The City is asking Council to adopt a resolution opposing the change.

Mayor Dehen commented the proposed change was discussed at a recent REDA meeting, and a key factor for the City is that as an MSA, Mankato and North Mankato apply for federal grant money. If the area is no longer an MSA, North Mankato will compete with small cities like Lake Crystal for funding which could be harmful to smaller cities.

Council Member Norland and Council Member Steiner expressed their support of resolving and maintaining Mankato/North Mankato as an MSA.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to adopt Res. No. 25-21 Concerning the Increase of the Minimum Population of Cities that Constitute the Core of Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) from 50,000 to 100,000. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 140 Annexing .42 Acres of Land Owned by North Mankato into the City of North Mankato, Minnesota.

Community Development Director Fischer reported that the City purchased the land in 1999 and is located near Benson Park. The land is adjacent to a stormwater holding pond, and the City located a lift station on the piece of property. The land did not get annexed at the time of purchase, and as the City has become aware of the oversight will proceed with annexation.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Adopt Ordinance No. 140 Annexing .42 Acres of Land Owned by North Mankato into the City of North Mankato, Minnesota. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 26-21 Approving 2021 Special Appropriation General Obligation Bond Grant-City of North Mankato.

Public Works Director Host reported the proposed resolution would be added to the documentation for submission to the Department of Employment and Economic Development to complete the application process to receive the funding. **Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Adopt Res. No. 26-21 Approving 2021 Special Appropriation General Obligation Bond Grant-City of North Mankato. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, Oachs, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.**

Open Forum

Bess Tsaouse spoke before Council and requested an appeals process be added to the natural lawn area ordinance.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Public Works Director Host noted the 12 inches of snow received is equivalent to a 6-inch rain event.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Norland reported she is researching the impact of plastics and styrofoam on the environment.

Mayor Dehen said the annual GMG report was included in the packet.

Mayor Dehen encouraged everyone to participate in the LoNo Strong celebration on Belgrade Avenue the week of March 15-20.

Mayor Dehen reported that the City and Finance Director McCann received the Financial Reporting Achievement Award from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. The award is given for excellence in financial reporting for the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year ended December 31, 2019.

At 7:24 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Norland, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting was adjourned.

Mayor

City Clerk