

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in Fire Station #2 at 1825 Howard Drive on May 13, 2019. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The following were present for roll call: Mayor Dehen, Council Members Steiner, Norland, Oachs, and Whitlock, City Administrator Harrenstein, Community Development Director Fischer, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

### **Joint Economic Development Services Agreement Regarding Greater Mankato Regional Marketplace**

Mayor Dehen reported he represents the City on the REDA board and reviewed the proposed changes. The changes include allowing elected officials and chief administrators to participate in REDA in cases where elected officials are unable to participate, and strengthen and prioritize the work of GreenSeam. Mayor Dehen noted the agreement would be presented to Council for approval, but this provides a preview for the agreement. Council Member Norland noted the City of Le Sueur dropped out and Waseca is interested in joining.

### **V-1-19 Variance Request to Allow Dynamic Display Sign: A Request from Holy Rosary Church**

City Administrator Harrenstein reported on May 9, 2019, the Planning Commission reviewed a request from Holy Rosary Church to install a dynamic display sign. Community Development Director Fischer reported Holy Rosary Church is working to update and redo the front of their church which is located at the corner of Sherman Street and Grant Avenue. As part of the remodel the church is requesting a dynamic display sign to replace their small lighted sign. A dynamic display sign is a programmable display and is not permitted in residential areas. The church reported the intent for the sign is that it is static, but can be easily changed to announce different events. As part of the variance process, letters were sent out to neighbors of the church, and several residents responded with letters or comments during the public meeting. Neighbors expressed concerns about brightness and flashing lights. Representatives from the Church were present, and they reported they understood the concerns. The Planning Commission recommended the variance with the following conditions:

1. The sign shall have a black and white display only.
2. The sign message will change no more than one time for every three hours.
3. The brightness of the sign is reasonable.
4. The sign be turned off 1-hour after sunset each night.

Council Member Oachs, who is the Planning Commissions liaison reported there may have been some confusion as to the meaning of dynamic signs; neighbors do not want flashing signs. She noted the Planning Commission seemed to have prepared a reasonable response. Council Member Steiner reported he read an adamant letter to the editor that reported the sign would violate the beauty of lower north. Mayor Dehen requested clarification if the church was okay with the recommendation. Community Development Director Fischer reported they approved of the recommendation. Council Member Steiner requested clarification on the size of the proposed sign. Community Development Director Fischer reported he would find out the size of the proposed sign before the Council Meeting. Mayor Dehen noted there are similar signs used by churches in town, they are not in as major of residential areas. Community Development Director Fischer reported dynamic display signs came to the City's attention in 2007 or 2008, and the City considered the displays and determined to restrict the size and not allow the sings in residential neighborhoods. Lighted signs are not allowed in residential neighborhoods except at schools or churches.

**Request to Amend City Code Section 152.20 (F) Separation of Mobile Homes: A Request from Cal-Am Homes.**

Community Development Director Fischer reported the new owners of Avalon and Camelot, Cal-Am Homes, are in the process of removing traditional single wide trailers and bringing in double-wide manufactured homes. The applicants requested the reduction of the minimum building separation in Camelot and Avalon parks from 20 feet to 10 feet. Community Development Director Fischer reported the City surveyed surrounding cities and found a mix of minimum building separation from 10 feet to 20 feet. The Planning Commission discussed the appropriate separation between accessory buildings and homes, he reported currently, garages can be built as close as 3 feet from a dwelling unit if the garage is constructed properly to meet current fire and building code. The Planning Commission recommended denying the City Code Amendment request but Amend Section 152.20 (F) to include: *Accessory structures may be as close to the primary dwelling as allowed by State Fire and Building Code provided there is a minimum 10-foot separation between any other structure.* City Administrator Harrenstein reported the current minimum separation between dwelling structures on the hill is 20 feet and the Planning Commission did not want to deviate. He noted there was community pride with the distance between units and the size of the lots; the Planning Commission wanted to maintain the neighborhood feel.

**Update on North Mankato Art Projects**

Twin Rivers Council for the Arts Executive Director Noelle Lawton reviewed the three North Mankato Art Projects. The loon being painted on the side of the NaKato is already a favorite of residents. Ms. Lawton reported the installation at Storybook Park would feature four youth artists, and the first group of artists is from Somalia. The artwork will rotate focusing on different cultures. Ms. Lawton reported Kevin White is working on the plans for his Anamorphic Graphics at Wheeler Park. Once that work is complete, the Council will be informed.

**Commerce Drive Art**

City Administrator Harrenstein reported there are three areas designated for art on the Commerce Drive reconstruction plan. He reported Executive Director Lawton has been gathering feedback on preferences. Discussion was held concerning the type of art that should be included in the redesign. It was determined that Executive Director Lawton would prepare some possible options and present them to the City Administrator. Discussion was held concerning extending the definition for the City Center corridor further down Belgrade Avenue, possibly as far as the library.

**Storybook Art Mural**

Executive Director Lawton reviewed a proposed painting for the side of Water Plant #1. The proposed location would be directly behind the Storybook Park playground equipment. Discussion was held about moving the mural to the side of the park facing the library.

**Tour of the Fire Department**

Fire Chief Inman provided a tour of the Fire Department.

Mayor Dehen closed the Council Work Session at 1:00 p.m.

---

Mayor

---

City Clerk