

**WORKSHOP
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
March 12, 2019
5 PM**

Attendance

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at Oakdale Municipal Building, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota.

Present: Mayor Paul Reinke

Council Members: Jake Ingebrigtsen
Susan Olson
Colleen Swedberg
Kevin Zabel

Also Present: Jeff Anderson, Fire Chief
Susan Barry, City Clerk
Bart Fischer, City Administrator
Alyssa MacLeod, Communications Specialist
Dallas Pierson, Planning Commission
Bob Streetar, Community Development Director

Fire Department Introduction and Overview

Fire Chief Anderson provided an overview of the history, call volumes, and staffing levels for the Oakdale Fire Department. He noted a nationwide challenge attracting volunteers, particularly for coverage during the day, and that more departments are moving to career firefighters.

Communications Update

Communications Specialist MacLeod provided an overview of the city's communications program.

City Administrator Fischer commented on the importance of the City Council not making comments to the media until staff has provided them with talking points and full details, particularly in emergency situations.

Communications Specialist MacLeod added that, when inquiries are anticipated, she would provide talking points ahead of time to the City Council. She suggested providing media training to the City Council.

Mayor Reinke added that the City Council should feel comfortable sharing positive attributes about the city.

Council Member Zabel noted that staff should handle all media inquiries.

In response to a question from Council Member Olson about communities where council members speak to the media, Council Member Zabel explained that the council members are full-time and there is a mayor in lieu of a city administrator.

Council Member Swedberg asked that information be provided to the community about the removal of trees for the Hadley Avenue and Highway 36 interchange project.

In response to a question from Council Member Olson, Communications Specialist MacLeod explained that staff should only respond to comments on social media to correct inaccuracies or to answer questions.

Referring to the communications program, Mayor Reinke supported continuing to strive for consistency.

In response to a question from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Communications Specialist MacLeod indicated that the city's new logo would be applied to the water towers as they are updated.

City Owned Property

Community Development Director Streetar stated that the Community Development, Public Works, and Recreation departments would be doing an extensive inventory of the city's parks to learn how the parks are being used and by whom. He explained that the inventory would involve an intern observing park activity on a frequent basis and formulating data.

Annual Meeting with Tree Board

Also Present:

- Tree Board
- Jane Klein, Tree Board Chairperson
- Stan Karwoski
- Mike Saarela
- Marge Sagstetter
- Bob Stiglich
- Loren Cota, Staff Liaison

Tree Board Chair Klein explained that Tree Board procedures had been somewhat complacent; however, changes had been made to resolve that matter. She asked that the Tree Board remain a board, not become a commission, that the number of members be increased, and that members be allowed to serve with no terms or term limits.

Mayor Reinke stated that the Tree Board has been working well as a board.

Council Member Zabel supported the Tree Board becoming a commission to elevate its current standing and to be more visible.

In response to a comment from Council Member Ingebrigtsen, Mayor Reinke indicated that he would not want the Tree Board to be another level for developers to go through.

Council Member Swedberg supported changing the policy to allow city employees to serve on the Tree Board as a part-time city employee was interested in serving.

Council Member Zabel supported limiting it to only part-time city employees.

In response to a question from Mayor Reinke, City Administrator Fischer noted that the open meeting law applies to boards and commissions.

In response to a comment from Tree Board Chair Klein, Forestry Superintendent Cota indicated that he would clarify with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on the matter of tree board versus tree commission.

Council Member Zabel explained that he supported the Tree Board being a full-fledged commission to make it procedurally consistent with the city's other commissions. Also that he supported a residency requirement for members and making the ex officio seat a "citizen at large" seat with voting rights.

Tree Board Chair Klein asked that Tree Board members not have set terms or term limits.

In discussing increasing the number of members on the Tree Board, the consensus reached was 15.

Council Member Zabel supported having all seats occupied by "citizens at large" and no longer reserving one seat for a member of each of the city's other commissions.

The group discussed whether seated commissioners could serve on more than one commission. Currently, it is only allowed for one seated commissioner from each commission to also serve on the Tree Board.

Planning Commission Chair Pierson indicated that should the Tree Board be designated as a commission and persons allowed to serve on only one commission, the Tree Board would lose three to four of its members.

Mayor Reinke asked the City Council to weigh in on Tree Board versus Tree Commission. He supported a board.

Council Member Zabel supported a commission.

Council Member Olson supported a board.

Council Member Swedberg supported a board.

Council Member Ingebritson preferred a commission and added that he did not support persons serving on more than one commission.

Tree Board Member Klein reiterated that should the Tree Board remain a board, members from other commissions could continue to serve on both.

In further discussions, staff was directed to amend the policy to allow part-time city employees to be appointed to boards and commissions; making the residency requirement "to the extent possible", and making the ex officio seat on the Tree Board a "citizen at large" seat.

Other Tree Board Matters

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Tree Board Chair Klein announced that the evergreen being given away at the city's Arbor Day Tree Giveaway would need to be replaced with another variety. She also noted that the city would be partnering again with Rainbow Tree Care to offer residents discounts on Emerald Ash Borer treatment and information was made available at the Recreation Department's Indoor Markets.

The Tree Board was granted funding approval for the 2020 Arbor Day Tree Giveaway event.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Barry,
City Clerk