

**WORKSHOP MINUTES
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 11, 2023**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 5:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Kevin Zabel

Council Members: Noah Her
Jake Ingebrigtsen
Andy Morcomb
Susan Olson

City Staff Members: Christina Volkers, City Administrator
Sara Ludwig, City Clerk
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Luke McClanahan, City Planner
Nick Newton, Police Chief
Lori Pulkrabek, Communications Manager
Jim Romanik, Public Works Manager
Kevin Wold, Fire Chief
Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Other: Ken Grieshaber, Project Director for SRF Consulting Group
Emily Maloney, Project Manager for Flagship Recreation

2024 BUDGET SCHEDULE

City Administrator Chris Volkers began by stating that the budget schedule is set to ensure everyone is on the same page, but that it can be adjusted as needed.

Finance Director Jason Zimmerman explained that there are several statutorily defined dates and activities taken into consideration when preparing the 2024 budget schedule. He reviewed a few dates including September 12th and December 12th. Mr. Zimmerman noted that there could be a delay in getting necessary data that assists with the preparation of the preliminary tax levy, but said staff will do everything they can to get that information from Washington County as early as possible.

In response to Mayor Zabel's question about any changes to OpenGov since the budget was adopted last year, Mr. Zimmerman stated that the end user perspective has not changed, but that it is more user-friendly from a budget development perspective.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about how remaining funds get allocated, Mr. Zimmerman noted that language in the adopted resolution for final budget 2022 transfers explains that remaining funds rollover into the next year.

Mayor Zabel noted that some items that are approved through the budget process may not come to fruition for a number of reasons which may result in a reevaluation of the budget.

Mr. Zimmerman said the budget schedule was created to avoid additional meetings outside of the normal Council meeting schedule, however there is a buffer built in for additional meetings if needed.

CITY PROJECT P2023-04: WILLOWBROOKE COMMONS PARK PLAYGROUND DESIGN

Community Development Director Andy Gitzlaff began by recapping the phases of development, both past, current, and future, for the parks within Willowbrooke as agreed upon in the Planned Unit Master Development Agreement. He noted that the placement of key park features and pathways has been adjusted to improve flow into the park and within the park, maximize design efficiencies, meet watershed district wetland buffer and stormwater management requirements, and accommodate placement of utilities. Mr. Gitzlaff added that additional public engagement was sought on playground equipment, and those engagement results were taken into consideration while preparing staff's recommendation.

Ken Grieshaber, Director of Landscape Architecture for SRF Consulting Group, reviewed the refined concept plan, going into detail about the site layout refinements. He noted that the refined concept plan organizes the layout of park amenities into two main program areas supporting active and passive uses in the park.

Mayor Zabel asked for clarification on the proposed community gathering shelter on the north side of the park citing historical discussions about past concepts and site layout. Mr. Grieshaber said that the movement of the shelter structure from previous designs is based on orientation. He noted that SRF is still working through the concept with various vendors and will bring proposed ideas back to Council for discussion.

Mr. Grieshaber moved on to review the park program relationship diagram including the trails, seating areas, and playgrounds, referring to the Concept 1 and Concept 2 playground designs.

Emily Maloney, Project Manager for Flagship Recreation, explained the online playground survey results and the rationale behind how the questions were written. She also explained how staff discussed the survey results and prepared their recommendations based on those results.

Ms. Maloney noted that staff recommends Concept 2 with the Super Netplex Double Tower based on the survey results and its accessible design. Other recommended components include the zip line, swings, musical instruments, roller slide, we-go-round, challenge course, adult fitness, and shade amenities.

In response to Ms. Volk's question about the material of the ground and the liability to the City if someone were to fall from the equipment, Ms. Maloney stated that all of the playground equipment requires impact attenuation. In this concept, staff is recommending a layer of synthetic, resilient surface topped with turf.

In response to Council Member Ingebrigtsen's question about the City's liability from playground injuries, Mayor Zabel noted that cities in Minnesota have a legal liability shield for active park

amenities. Ms. Volkers referenced an email from City Attorney Jim Thomson confirming that the City is not liable for injuries that occur on park amenities. Ms. Maloney added that all Flagship Recreation equipment meets the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Council Member Ingebrigtson expressed concern about the proposed musical instruments in close proximity to residents' homes. Ms. Maloney stated that these musical instruments are smartly designed and may not be as loud as other versions of this type of playground amenity. She offered to send a YouTube video to Council of what the proposed equipment would sound like.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about the drop off and grading from the park amenities area into the stormwater pond and wetland basins, Mr. Grieshaber said the grading is most likely only 2-2.5 feet for the entire park.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about the phased approach to building this park, Mr. Grieshaber stated that staff is still trying to determine what makes the most sense and when. He noted that the City may want to take advantage of purchasing the playground equipment through the State's contract which eliminates the general contractor markup. Ms. Maloney added that the equipment could be purchased now and stored for installation down the line which would allow the City to take advantage of 2023 pricing. Mr. Gitzlaff stated that staff is still working through the construction timeline. Mayor Zabel cautioned that due to the Planned Unit Master Development Agreement, staff may not be able to push the timeline out as far as desired.

Council Member Olson expressed concern about public works staffing shortages and staffing cost once the Commons Park is constructed.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about ways to prevent vandalism especially in relation to the restrooms, Mr. Grieshaber said there are a variety of mechanisms including security lighting and remote locking/unlocking features. Ms. Volkers noted that the City is going to try a demonstration period this summer of leaving the restrooms at Tanners Lake Park and Walton Park open on Saturdays and Sundays with no attendant.

Mayor Zabel stated that he would like to see an alternative to the gathering space on the north end. He envisioned the gathering space as more centrally-located near the water based on past conversations. Mr. Grieshaber explained that the refined concept plan was created in a way to utilize every aspect of the park space to avoid dead spaces and allow for a variety of programmable areas.

In response to Mayor Zabel's question about having a central gathering structure with restrooms attached, Mr. Grieshaber stated that type of structure may be too cost prohibitive. He offered to bring some other options back to Council for discussion.

Council Member Olson suggested that once the purpose of the central gathering structure is determined then Council may have a better idea of where it should be located within the park. Mr. Grieshaber encouraged the group to consider it for a multiuse purpose.

Council Member Morcomb echoed Mayor Zabel's sentiment that the central gathering structure is the main draw of the park, but he also said he does not want to see any dead space so he is okay with where it is positioned now at the north end of the park.

Mayor Zabel noted that if the central gathering structure is moved further south, then the space in the north end could be used for something else in the future.

Mr. Gitzlaff reminded the group that Commons Park is more community-centric versus a park like Walton Park which has a regional draw.

Council Member Her asked if the City is committed to the wetland and stormwater designations as seen in the concept plan. Mr. Gitzlaff confirmed.

Council Member Morcomb suggested the first phase start with the south end designs as Council agrees on what has been proposed there. Ms. Volkens added that staff bring back other options for the north end layout and amenities to a future workshop, and that can be the second phase of the development.

SHORELAND OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICT PROPOSAL

City Planner Luke McClanahan explained due to State statute, cities that have shoreland in their boundaries must adopt management controls that protect these areas. Currently, the City does not have an adopted shoreland overlay zoning ordinance in place. In this case, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains regulatory authority through their Model Ordinance. By adopting a local shoreland overlay zoning ordinance, the City would gain greater control over land use decisions on its shoreland.

Mr. McClanahan noted that there are three (possibly four, pending the DNR's determination) Public Water Basins that are subject to shoreland regulations – Tanners Lake, Armstrong Lake, Mud Lake, and potentially an unnamed water basin, DNR Basin ID 8201140. Mr. McClanahan stated that the State's ordinance standards are strict, but that cities can request flexibility on a case-by-case basis. He added that City staff has been working with the DNR on deviations from the state minimum standards, but mentioned that they recommended the Tanners Lake site be subject to a special district for shoreland purposes.

Mr. McClanahan provided an overview of the City's proposed setbacks in comparison to the DNR's standards (based on development type), noting that the City's proposals were more aggressive than those of the DNR. For example, City staff has proposed reducing the setback at Tanners Lake from the Model Ordinance standard of 50 feet to an average of 15 feet, with a minimum of 10 feet. In response, the DNR has recommended a setback closer to 40 feet.

Council Member Morcomb asked about the effect of the DNR declaring Basin ID 82011400 a Public Water Basin subject to shoreland regulations, as that is where MWF Properties is building senior living housing. Mr. McClanahan stated that due to the existing wetland the development was already going to be set back a good distance from the shoreline.

Council Member Morcomb asked for clarification in regards to the proposed setback of 15 feet. Mr. McClanahan stated it refers to parking lots, patios, pathways, or buildings, among other things being 15 feet from the shoreline.

In response to Council Member Ingebrigtson's question about the DNR's specific concerns with the City's proposed setbacks, Mr. McClanahan said the DNR's goal is to protect the shoreline, and increasing the distance between the shoreline and a building (or other man-made structure) is the number one way to accomplish this.

Mayor Zabel asked the group if they support the development of a shoreland overlay zoning ordinance. The Council was in agreeance to support this ordinance.

Council Member Her asked if there is a negotiation aspect between the City and the DNR when it comes to adopting the proposed setbacks in the shoreland ordinance. Mr. McClanahan stated that the DNR does a conditional review of the "near final draft" ordinance, and then after the Council formally adopts the ordinance, the City has to request final approval from the DNR.

Ms. Volkens asked what the interested developer in the Tanners Lake property needs in regards to the proposed setback distance. Community Development Director Andy Gitzlaff said they are figuring that out together, however there is most likely only a small portion of the development that will need the 15 feet setback standard. He added that although the DNR has approval authority over the City's ordinance, the City has local authority to deviate from the approved ordinance, through a variance process or Planned Unit Development (PUD) deviation.

In response to Council Member Ingebrigtson's question about the DNR intervening if the City were to deviate from the approved ordinance, Mr. Gitzlaff noted that once the City has an adopted and approved shoreland ordinance, the DNR's authority becomes review only.

Mr. Gitzlaff added that the DNR is open to finding compromise especially as it relates to the Tanners Lake property.

Ms. Volkens proposed letting staff continue negotiations with the DNR knowing that Council has flexibility if needed.

Council Member Olson asked about the properties that would be affected by the passing of this type of ordinance. Mr. McClanahan said there is almost always legal non-conforming lots created as a result, but those affected at the time of the ordinance are grandfathered in. If they want to expand after the fact, they can do so laterally or vertically, but cannot encroach any closer to the shoreline.

GIRL SCOUT BROWNIE TROOP 57987 PROJECT PROPOSAL

Council Member Olson asked the group if they were supportive of the Girl Scout's project proposal of adding a crosswalk across the driveway into Eberle Park on the west side of Hadley Ave N. The Council was in agreeance to support this project proposal.

Council Member Morcomb gave a brief recap of the meeting and shared how impressed he was with their presentation. Council Member Olson concurred.

Mayor Zabel asked Ms. Volkens to send a letter to the Troop letting them know their proposal has been accepted. The ribbon cutting ceremony will be planned at a later date.

Public Works Manager Jim Romanik confirmed that the project can be completed this spring.

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Communications Manager Lori Pulkrabek announced the Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce Spring Fling event is taking place on Thursday, April 20, 2023. She provided details about the event and stated she has tickets for purchase if Council is interested in attending. Mayor Zabel reminded the group that due to a previous discussion during Council Topics, Council pays for their own ticket to these types of events.

Ms. Volkens noted that the Washington County Open Book meeting would be held in Council Chambers on Wednesday, April 12th. Additionally, the Construction Manager At Risk interviews would be taking place that same night in the Hadley Room.

Mayor Zabel brought up the naming of the annual Spring Planting Event as this was something that was discussed in November 2021, at the time City Policy MIS-019 (Donations to Parks; Memorials in Parks; Installation, and Maintenance; Naming of Parks, Facilities, and Events) was being revised. He asked if Council would support changing the name to the Jane Klein Memorial Spring Planting Event, as previously requested by a former Council Member. If supported, Mayor Zabel said he will provide the information and language for the required resolution. Council Members Morcomb and Ingebrigtsen were supportive. At the request of Council Member Olson, Mayor Zabel explained the criteria for naming an event after a person, and listed a variety of contributions made to the City by the late Jane Klein. Council Members Olson and Her were supportive.

Ms. Volkens asked the group if they would like to do a naming event/contest for the Willowbrooke Commons Park. Council was supportive of staff coordinating this initiative.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Mayor Zabel provided context for Resolution 2023-42, the formal request of Independent School District (ISD) 622 for two School Resource Officers, that will be on the April 11th Council meeting agenda under consensus motion.

There were mixed opinions shared about the next steps to take following the approval of Resolution 2023-42, and the meeting between the Police Chiefs and ISD622 on April 20th. Past experiences in reference to previous requests were brought up. A variety of suggestions about negotiation and communication strategies were shared.

In response to Council Member Olson's question about the School Board's budget calendar, Mayor Zabel said their fiscal year runs July 1st – June 30th.

Mayor Zabel laid out the proposed next steps which will likely include a draft contract from ISD622 given that the current one will expire at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

Ms. Volkens said she would provide an update via email regarding the meeting between the Police Chiefs and ISD622.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen stated that Commissioner Karwoski was supportive of Washington County providing social workers for the City's Police Department. Ms. Volkens said she will make a formal request to the Washington County Administrator.

Council Member Morcomb asked if development within Willowbrooke will slow down due to the increased interest rates. Mr. Gitzlaff said development has not slowed down, but overall sale prices have decreased. In response to a follow up question, Mr. Gitzlaff stated that the developers do not have an obligation to build by a certain amount of time. The City would be able to tell if development was slowing down by the number of building permits that are submitted. Council Member Morcomb suggested that Mr. Gitzlaff keep an eye on the sale and pricing of these homes as that will be helpful in determining tax revenues during upcoming budget discussions. Mayor Zabel noted there is roughly a two-year gap between when the budget is set and the tax revenue is actually received by the City so there is time to make adjustments if needed.

Council Member Olson asked about the community solar gardens. Ms. Volkens stated that staff is working on getting the solar panels at City Hall fixed as well as getting a handle on the other ones at the community solar gardens. They are also looking into the details of the related contracts.

Council Member Her shared that he attended Asian and Pacific Islander Day at the Capitol and a recent Metro Gold Line meeting held at the Union Depot.

Mayor Zabel reminded the group of the Arbor Day Tree Giveaway Event on April 29th. He asked City staff to post notice of a quorum. Mayor Zabel also reminded the group about the Spring Planting Event on May 6th. He said at that time he will present the resolution renaming the event to the Jane Klein Memorial Spring Planting Event.

Mayor Zabel asked the group if there would be any support for a cigar club in Oakdale after receiving a call from a developer. The current City Code prohibits this type of establishment; however, the Council was open to exploring the changes that would need to be made to allow it. Mayor Zabel said he would direct the developer to City staff to continue the discussion.

Mayor Zabel asked if Council would like to look into changing the current City Code that restricts the number of recreational vehicles parked on a single property. Council Member Morcomb stated he would like to know if the City has received complaints about this. Council Member Her noted that an abundance of recreational vehicles can be a nuisance and safety concern. He would be open to revising the current Code. Mayor Zabel asked City staff to pull the current code for a future workshop meeting discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Ludwig, City Clerk