

**WORKSHOP MINUTES
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL
MAY 23, 2023**

The City Council held a workshop on Tuesday, May 23, 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 (excused at 5:53 PM)
Andy Morcomb
Susan Olson

City Staff Members: Christina Volkers, City Administrator
Sara Ludwig, City Clerk
Jesse Farrell, City Engineer
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director
Melanie Lee, Human Resources Director
Max Lohse, Community Development Specialist
Luke McClanahan, City Planner
Nick Newton, Police Chief
Lori Pulkrabek, Communications Manager
Jim Romanik, Public Works Manager
Kyle Stasica, Accounting Manager
Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent
Kevin Wold, Fire Chief
Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Others Present: Brian Corcoran, Project Architect, Firm Ground Architects
Jackson Cruikshank, Development Manager, JB Vang
Justin Fincher, Vice President – Development, JB Vang
Bao Vang, CEO/Owner, Peaceful Lodge

**JB VANG – HUDSON BOULEVARD NORTH PROPERTY – MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT
CONCEPT PLAN**

City Planner Luke McClanahan gave a brief background of the subject property. He reviewed staff's preliminary findings and recommendations including the necessary land use approvals if the development moves forward as proposed.

Justin Fincher, Vice President – Development with JB Vang discussed the development timeline, and the number of proposed market-rate units, including up to 25% reserved for individuals receiving Integrated Community Services (ICS) through the Minnesota Health Care Programs. He added that they are currently engaged in a market study and will conduct a traffic study at a later date.

Brian Corcoran, Project Architect with Firm Ground Architects noted the challenges with the shape of the site which could pose some density issues. He briefly touched on the amenities shown in the concept site plan.

Council Member Ingebrigtsen expressed overall support for the development as presented.

In response to Council Member Ingebrigtsen's comment about the opinion of neighboring properties, Mr. Corcoran noted that the plan is to retain the slope on the north to bring the overall height of the building down.

In response to Council Member Her's question about all units having access to a patio or balcony, Mr. Corcoran said they are looking into that option.

In response to Council Member Olson's question about a physical barrier between the development site and the properties to the north, Mr. Corcoran said there is currently some chain link fencing, but there are no plans to add an additional barrier.

Council Member Morcomb expressed support for the proposed development and asked about onsite operator management. Bao Vang, CEO/Owner with Peaceful Lodge, indicated that she will be the owner and her business partner will be the onsite operator. Council Member Morcomb asked about any plans for outreach about the development's ICS component. Ms. Vang added that those 25% of reserved units may also be rented out to seniors who are on a fixed income. She stated that in being the owner of the Peaceful Lodge next door she turns away a majority of seniors looking for affordable housing due to Peaceful Lodge's lack of available units.

In response to Mayor Zabel's question about the need for a traffic study, Mr. McClanahan said it would help determine if the proposed parking is sufficient. Community Development Director Andrew Gitzlaff added that this would be considered a light traffic study.

Mayor Zabel expressed overall support for the development as presented, especially the ICS component.

In response to Council Member Her's question about street parking, Mr. Corcoran indicated that according to the Gold Line BRT plans, Greenway Avenue North has planned street parking, but Hudson Boulevard North does not.

In response to Council Member Her's question about an onsite gathering space, Mr. Corcoran touched on several amenities that would allow for this.

In response to a question from Mr. Corcoran about the Gold Line BRT construction timeline, Mr. Gitzlaff offered to connect him with individuals who may have better insight.

2024 BUDGET DISCUSSION

City Administrator Chris Volkens explained that the memo is a reference for council members to use during the entirety of the 2024 budget process. The memo will be updated along the way, but is organized in such a way to highlight the categories that will require discussion. Finance Director Jason Zimmerman provided an overview of the budgetary resources and information available to staff, council members, and residents on the City's website through the OpenGov software. He reviewed the various types of funds that are used in government finance, and within the City's budget, and shared examples of how these funds can be spent. Mr. Zimmerman shared some advantages related to the OpenGov software, including the ability to provide a transparent environment, allow the City to "tell its story" through customized department pages, and the ability to link to third-party websites. Ms. Volkens noted that the OpenGov software (and all its capabilities) was not available prior to the 2023 budget.

Mr. Zimmerman discussed the general fund expense baseline assumptions, the general fund revenue baseline assumptions, and the general fund "other" and "other financing sources" categories, noting the overall theme of the general fund is increased expenses and decreased revenues.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about the difference between a preliminary levy and a final levy, Mayor Zabel said that State law requires cities to set a preliminary levy by September 30. The final levy must be at or under the preliminary levy. Mr. Zimmerman added that the proposed levy (aka preliminary levy) is published with the property tax documents that is sent to residents each Fall.

At the request of Mayor Zabel, Mr. Zimmerman explained the timeline for property assessments, taxes paid, and taxes collected, and its impact on the budgeting process.

Ms. Volkens explained the transition process from equipment certificates which were used to purchase new equipment and vehicles for the City, to the current VERF (Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund) program which uses a prefunding method to make these purchases instead of debt.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's question about the tracking of the Local Option Sales Tax within OpenGov, Mr. Zimmerman said it will have its own fund within the Debt Service Fund.

Mr. Zimmerman reviewed the capital improvement fund and levy assumptions. Mayor Zabel noted that although it's a five-to-ten-year plan, staff annually reevaluates their needs which allows for some flexibility within the fund.

Ms. Volkens introduced the six position requests starting with the two from the Police Department. Police Chief Nick Newton explained the rationale behind the requests for an additional Patrol Officer and Sergeant. He noted that the preliminary findings from the staffing study indicate that the City is lacking in supervisory positions within the Police Department.

Ms. Volkens explained the reasoning for the Public Works Director position request. She added that the City is conducting a Public Works cultural assessment with the goal of retaining employees within the Public Works Department. She went on to address the requests for Public Works Maintenance Worker, HR Intern, and Assistant City Administrator responsibilities added to a Department Head position.

It was proposed that the specific department requests and enhancements be discussed at a later workshop once the entire Council has had time to review the document provided last week.

Mayor Zabel requested that Ms. Volkens share the previous budget discussion document from 18-24 months ago that forecasted future personnel needs to provide a comparison to what is being asked for presently.

Ms. Volkens requested that Council Members Her and Morcomb meet with her and Mr. Zimmerman to go over OpenGov in more depth. Additionally, she asked the Council to review the enterprise and special revenue funds, and the department requests and enhancements.

CITY POLICY MIS-011: TRAINING AND EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Ms. Volkens suggested removing Section 2.4. After a brief discussion, Council agreed. Staff was directed to remove Section 2.4 of the current City Policy MIS-011: Training and Education Reimbursement for Elected Officials.

Council Member Morcomb noted that he would like to ensure that there is a policy in place to allow council members to engage with the community regardless of their personal financial situation.

RECESS FOR REGULAR MEETING AT 6:50 PM

WORKSHOP RECONVENED AT 8:00 PM after the Regular Council Meeting

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Ms. Volkens briefly reviewed the lobbyist summary of the most recent legislative session and asked the group if they had any questions or comments.

Mayor Zabel suggested a special workshop to discuss a few of the legislature's decisions that have policy implications. Adding that, in reference to the February 28, 2023 workshop discussion about reviewing the City Code relating to liquor and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) consumable products regulations after the State passes the omnibus cannabis bill, now may be an appropriate time to circle back and have this discussion. Ms. Volkens stated that the League of Minnesota Cities attorneys have advised against cities establishing policy in relation to recreational cannabis until the State has determined their parameters. Council Member Olson expressed her desire to revisit the City's current regulations of liquor and THC consumable products. Staff was directed to review the upcoming workshop calendar and propose a date for this discussion.

COUNCIL TOPICS

Council Member Her stated that last week he spent some time with the Tartan High School Asian Student Alliance at their end of the year picnic.

Council Member Olson requested that a copy of the Mayor's correspondences (whether it be with a resident or official City business) be disseminated to the rest of the Council.

Discussion was had about past practices regarding City proclamations and the possibility of establishing an internal process or formal policy for the approval of City proclamations going forward. Staff was asked to send additional information including legal counsel's opinion on the subject. For now, Ms. Volkens will send all proclamations to Council before they are included in the agenda.

In response to Council Member Morcomb's comment about discussing Walton Park improvements, Mayor Zabel asked Ms. Volkens about the status of the park play equipment that was requested in 2022. She indicated everything is ready to go aside from available personnel to conduct the study. After a brief discussion, Ms. Volkens and Recreation Superintendent Julie Williams will meet to go over the possibility of hiring a parks and recreation graduate student to conduct the park study.

Mayor Zabel and Police Chief Nick Newton provided a brief summary of their meeting with Independent School District (ISD) 622 regarding School Resource Officers (SRO) for the 2023-2024 school year. Chief Newton said a follow up meeting would take place in the next two weeks.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Ludwig, City Clerk