

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

APRIL 12, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 12th day of April, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Mayor Tom Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Fischer, Council Members T. Miller, Kwapick, Gutierrez and D. Miller.
Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Chris Heineman, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell, Public Works Director Bill Dirks, City Engineer Eric Seaburg and City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller.

Mayor Fischer provided a brief overview of the workshop that occurred prior to this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

T. Miller introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-4-39 – APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 22, 2023 WORKSHOP AND THE MARCH 22, 2023 REGULAR MEETINGS AS SUBMITTED

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Gutierrez.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FAIR HOUSING MONTH PROCLAMATION

Becky Wegscheid, Government Affairs Director of the Saint Paul Area Association of Realtors (SPAAR), stated that this is Fair Housing Month and thanked the City for adopting the proclamation. She discussed the importance of the Fair Housing Act and her organization which promotes fair housing and contributes to organizations that also support fair housing. She highlighted activities sponsored by SPAAR this month related to fair housing. She thanked the Council for its time tonight and for its support.

Mayor Fischer read aloud the proclamation for Fair Housing Month.

The City Administrator provided other announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

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CONSENT AGENDA

T. Miller introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-4-40 – APPROVING THE CONSENT AGENDA WHICH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING:

- Approval of the Vouchers
- Approve Repair of Skylights at Little Canada Fire Station

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Kwapick.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

STAFF REPORTS

AWARD BID FOR TWIN LAKE BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The City Engineer explained tonight the Council is asked to consider awarding the bid for the Twin Lake Boulevard improvement project. He stated that the City received good, competitive bids for the project and provided a brief project overview. He presented the results of the bids, noting that there were nine bids, with Minnesota Paving providing the lowest bid. He noted that the low bid was just under the engineer's estimate. He stated that Minnesota Paving received the bid for the other street project in the city as well, therefore there would just be the one road contractor in Little Canada this season. He provided additional details on the trail funding, including the grant funds that the City received from Ramsey County, and explained that Vadnais Heights had also applied for grant funds for their portion of the trail but was not awarded any funding due to the high number of applications. He reviewed options to consider, which would be for the two cities to share the grant funds and split the remaining portion of the trail costs, or to remove the Vadnais Heights trail segment from the project. He stated that staff would support sharing the CDBG grant and split the remaining costs per the cost-share agreement. He stated that the City could use their Infrastructure Capital Improvement Fund to fund their portion which would be \$186,925. He reviewed the tentative project schedule and recommended actions before the Council tonight.

D. Miller asked if the landscaping would still be installed in Vadnais Heights if the trail were not to be constructed in that community. The City Engineer replied that would need to be worked out and perhaps some grading would occur to prepare for a future trail.

D. Miller recognized that even if Little Canada agrees to share the trail cost with Vadnais Heights, the other City Council could still reject that additional expense and asked what would happen in that instance. The City Engineer replied that he has received confirmation from Vadnais Heights staff that if the grant is able to be shared, they would approve the cost-share. He noted that the cost-share agreement would allow staff from that city to make that choice without needing additional Council action.

Mayor Fischer recognized the staff time necessary to apply for grants. He stated that he would support splitting the grant, but would also want to see a split of the cost to apply for the grant. The City Engineer confirmed that those costs are shared as Bolton & Menk has been submitting those grant requests on behalf of both cities.

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Fischer introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-4-41 –APPROVING AN ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM THE INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$186,925 TO FUND THE CITY’S SHARE OF THE PROJECT EQUALLY SHARING THE CDBG GRANT WITH VADNAIS HEIGHTS

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by T. Miller.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

Fischer introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-4-42 –AWARDING THE TWIN LAKE BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TO OMG MIDWEST INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,618,064.22

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by T. Miller.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

RESOLUTION CONDEMING THE USE OF DISCRIMINATORY COVENANTS, DISCHARGING DISCRIMINATORY COVENANTS ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY, AND APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN THE JUST DEEDS COALITION

The Community Development Director provided background information on the Just Deeds Coalition and the mapping prejudice that was completed by that organization. She stated that 21 cities in the metro have joined in this effort with hopes that more cities will join to address systemic racism in housing within Minnesota, removing discriminatory covenants from housing. She noted that there are three of such covenants that have been identified within Little Canada. She asked the Council to consider adoption of the resolution presented.

D. Miller asked for details on how the website can be reached. The Community Development Director replied that the coalition website is justdeeds.org. She confirmed that there is a tool on that website where homeowners can identify if there is a restriction on their deed.

Kwapick stated that he was made aware of this work in February as a coworker used this tool. He stated that it is shocking to see the language on some titles which would restrict who the property could be sold to. He stated that his coworker went through the process to remove that language and believed that this is a wonderful tool for people to use. He was happy to see people acknowledging the systemic things that have occurred in Minnesota and working to correct those things.

Gutierrez introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-4-43 –CONDEMING THE USE OF DISCRIMINATORY COVENANTS AND APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN THE JUST DEEDS COALITION

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The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by T. Miller.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

APPROVE CONTRACT FOR BUILDING DEMOLITION AT 2750 RICE STREET

The Community Development Director explained the Council is asked to consider a contract for building demolition at the City owned property located at 2750 to prepare for redevelopment. She provided details on the preparation that staff has begun and the demolition that would occur including asbestos removal. She noted that once the building is demolished, the City would realize a cost savings in things that are currently being paid for, such as insurance.

The City Administrator stated that perhaps jersey barriers should be placed at the entrance to ensure vehicles visiting the adjacent commercial property do not park on the area while the seed is being established. The Community Development Director noted that this cost would come from the TIF balance from 2022 and 2023.

D. Miller asked the cost for insurance and other things the City is paying for at that property currently. The City Clerk replied that the insurance for that property is \$3,500 annually.

Mayor Fischer asked if the asbestos removal costs would be reasonable or whether there could be any additional costs to be anticipated. The Community Development Director replied that the contractor did walk through the building to review the conditions and provided a cost estimate. She stated that if more asbestos were found there would be an estimated cost provided but that it should be minimal.

T. Miller introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-4-44 –APPROVING CONTRACT WORK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,045 PLUS ABATEMENT COSTS FOR NITTI COMPANIES TO PROVIDE DEMOLITION WORK FOR THE EXISTING STRUCTURE (PAWN SHOP) LOCATED AT 2750 RICE STREET

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Kwapick.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

DISCUSS NEW COMMUNITY RELATIONS MANAGER POSITION

The City Administrator stated that this item does not require action, but direction from the Council. He noted that this new position would have a long-term fiscal impact which is why it is being discussed. He provided background information on the process that began with the consultant in October of 2022 as a follow up to the discussions at the strategic planning meetings. He explained that there are some outstanding initiatives and responsibilities that would benefit from this additional staffing position. He stated that staff reviewed position descriptions from other communities with similar positions and then tweaked that to better fit this community. He stated that if the Council supports this action, staff could bring a final position description back at the next meeting for approval.

D. Miller commented that in reading the position description, it would be clear as to the intent of the position for those interested.

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Mayor Fischer commented that there is a lot here and it is clear as to the top priorities for the position. He appreciated the work that has gone into this development. T. Miller noted that this would be a higher-level position and would be commensurate with what they are asking for. Kwapick stated that he could see how this position would help take the load of existing staff as well. D. Miller commented that he agrees that this should be a leadership position that works with other staff.

The City Administrator commented that this position would not have direct reports, but would work with other similar level staff members. Mayor Fischer asked and received confirmation that this staff member would report to the City Administrator as part of the administration department. He referenced the information provided related to compensation and stated that there has to be a balance in seeking qualified individuals and finding equity with the other department heads.

The Council provided direction to staff to continue to bring this item forward for consideration.

COUNCIL REPORTS AND MEETING UPDATES

Gutierrez provided an update on a recent meeting of the Fire Department long-range planning committee.

Mayor Fischer provided additional details on the pension discussions of the Fire Relief Association.

Kwapick provided an update on recent Ramsey County activities and his recent meeting with the Ramsey County Commissioner.

D. Miller provided an update on recent discussions of the North Suburban Communications Commission (NSCC).

ADJOURN

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Thomas Fischer, Mayor

Attest:

Christopher Heineman, City Administrator