

M I N U T E S  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
May 1, 2023  
5:30 PM  
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Laura Helle, Jason Baskin, Michael Postma, Joyce Poshusta, Geoff Baker and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill, City Attorney Craig Byram and Library Director Julie Clinefelter

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Minnesota Orchestra, Taggert Medgaarden, Susan Strandburg

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving the agenda. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving Council minutes from April 17, 2023. Carried.

#### AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Mayor King recognized the Minnesota Orchestra Common Chords. Bonnie Reitz thanked the orchestra for coming to Austin

Mayor King recognized Alice Hansen's retirement. She worked at the Austin Public Library from June 23, 1992 to April 19, 2023. Library Director Julie Clinefelter accepted the plaque on behalf of Ms. Hansen.

Mayor King read for proclamation for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Mayor King welcomed Josh Kunze as the new fire commander and Matt Wyse was the new fill time firefighter. Fire Chief McCoy stated both individuals are outstanding in the fire department.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving the consent agenda as follows:

### Licenses:

Food: Angry Hog Brewery and Taproom, 500 23th Avenue NW  
Food: Sudanese Community International Market, 501 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW  
Mobile Business: Classic Kitchen, 22133 State Hwy 56, Austin  
Mobile Business: Nel's Diner, 3407 Hoeger Lane, Albert Lea  
Mobile Business: Taco Lab, 1310 5<sup>th</sup> Place NW, Rochester  
Temporary Liquor: Gravity Storm on June 24, 2023  
Temporary Liquor: Gravity Storm on July 3-4, 2023  
Tree Service: Josh Linder Tree Removal, Wells

### Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Credit Card and Financial Reports.

### Event Applications:

VFW Armed Forces Day Car Show on May 20, 2023  
Downtown Farmer's Market – May 22, 2023 to October 30, 2023  
Cedar River Farmer's Market – June 2, 2023 to August 25, 2023  
Common Chords at Rotary Park – May 2, 2023

### Appointments:

Kris Heichel to the Port Authority term through December 31, 2027  
Megan Burroughs to the Charter Commission through December 31, 2026  
Thimonthe Noukoumonke to the Culture and Arts Commission through December 31, 2025

Carried.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for the proposed tax increment financing district for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Apartment project. Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert presented the proposed TIF district #17 document which would create \$1.2 million of tax increment over the 25-year period. He stated the revenue would pay back the City's \$615,000 loan, \$300,000 "grant" from the building fund, reimburse legal and consultant fees to set up the TIF district and possibly reimburse some site costs back to the HRA. He noted the Hormel Foundation is providing a \$600,000 grant and the City is providing an \$540,000 grant from excess TIF increment from TIF district #11. He stated without the TIF funding the project would not be possible.

Council Member Poshusta asked what the timeline is on the project.

Mr. Dankert stated the HRA is working on getting the land ready to build on and the redevelopment agreement needs to be finalized.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution establishing tax increment financing district #17 for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Apartment Project. Carried 7-0.

## PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

*The Minnesota Orchestra played at this point in the Council Meeting.*

The Council held a discussion on the proposed I-90 noise barrier. Public Works Director Steven Lang stated he recently sent a letter to the 11 impacted residents with a request for them to reply with a vote either in favor or against the project with funding 90% from the State, 5% from the City and 5% from residents as a property assessment. Mr. Lang stated 7 voted in favor, 3 against and 1 resident abstained.

Council Member Helle asked where the City's 5% contribution is coming from.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated it will be added in the 2024 tax levy.

Council Member Helle asked what distinguishes this neighborhood from other neighborhoods along interstate 90 and is the City prepared to offer the same deal to other neighborhoods requesting sound protection.

Mr. Lang stated the neighborhood is unique in that the houses are at the same level as the interstate and that makes it noisier. He noted that there are two or three other neighborhoods that are similar.

Council Member Baskin spoke in support of the project because there is a material benefit to the residences and there is 90% state funding.

Council Member Postma stated he doesn't feel its appropriate to use City funding for the project and is not in favor of the project.

City Administrator Craig Clark asked Mr. Dankert how the City would move forward with potential assessment objections on the project.

Mr. Dankert stated it is likely it will be assessed in a similar fashion as the street projects and anyone that does not want to pay for it will need to file in district court.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, to move forward with the proposed noise wall with 90% state funding, 5% City funding and 5% assessment funding. Carried 4-3 with Council Members Helle, Fischer and Postma voting nay.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert state the City has participated in the annual performance measurements program for additional local government aid.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution affirming participation in the Office of the State Auditor's Voluntary 2023 Performance Measurements Program. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving an off-site gambling license for American Legion Post 91 at the Mower County Fair. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council approve a contract with Sir Lines-A-Lot for pavement striping in the amount of \$13,403.20. He stated other miscellaneous pavement markings will be completed by the sign department staff.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving a bid for pavement striping with Sir Lines-A-Lot. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City received quotes to upgrade the lighting in Riverside Arena. He stated the City can purchase the fixtures directly from Dakota Supply Group for \$17,640 and Fox Electric provided the low quote at \$47,896. He recommended awarding the contract to Fox Electric.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, approving a contract with Fox Electric for Riverside Arena lighting upgrades. Carried 7-0.

#### CITIZENS ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL

Tim Sorgine spoke in favor of legal marijuana.

Saville Lord, 705 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, spoke on the Cedar River Farmer's date will change from Thursdays to Fridays this year. She noted the market is still looking for vendors.

#### HONORARY COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Honorary Council Member Denver Ritz thanked the Mayor of the proclamation. He stated there is an open house for the Parenting Resource Center on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. He also noted the Austin Bruins are in the playoffs this upcoming weekend.

#### REPORTS

City Administrator Craig Clark noted the Impact Austin speaker series continues and he encouraged the public to attend.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated construction season has begun with 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW being closed today. Other projects around town are also beginning.

Council Member Poshusta congratulated Alice Hansen on her retirement and the firefighters on their promotions.

Council Member Baskin stated the master plan open house was done well. He stated he represented the Spam brand at the Spam Jam in Hawaii.

Council Member Baker noted he treated his ash trees for emerald ash borer.

Council Member Postma noted he attended the Morning Star adult day care center earlier in the day. He stated the Riverland and HRA home will have an open house from 4-6 p.m. on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Council Member Helle stated 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Fest will be on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adjourning the meeting to May 15, 2023 Carried.

Adjourned: 6:26 p.m.

Approved: May 15, 2023

Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

City Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_