

City of Nowthen
City Council Meeting
March 9, 2021, 7:00 PM
19800 Nowthen Blvd NW, Nowthen, MN 55303

1. Meeting Called to order at 7:00 PM.

Members attended: Mayor Pilon, Councilmember Blake, Councilmember Alders, Councilmember Greenberg, Council Member Rainville (via Cell Phone)

Also in attendance: City Clerk/Treasurer, Lori Streich; Sheriff's Commander Wayne Heath; Sheriff James Stewart; 3 Police officers (named below); Fire Chief Dave Schmidt

MOTION BY ALDERS TO APPROVE MARCH 9, 2021 AGENDA, 2ND BY BLAKE. GREENBERG REQUESTED TO ADD THE CITY LOGO TO THE "GOOD OF THE COUNCIL" SECTION. ALDERS & BLAKE AGREED TO AMEND THEIR MOTIONS TO INCLUDE THE LOGO. ALL IN FAVOR. UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. PUBLIC HEARING OPENED for Carr's Tree Service, 19477 St Francis Blvd, for a Variance from the setback and paving requirements and outdoor storage surfacing requirements.

No Public Comments.

Council Comments:

There is a modification to the setback that was updated, and it now is just 20 feet varying from the 100 ft setback, which would work for the turnaround requirements and storage. Plan is to come back 80 feet. The variance criteria is necessary in order to be able to use that area because of the wetlands and the pipeline going through that parcel. Rainville requested that the grinding of the logs be limited to 9-5, Monday – Friday and not allowed on Saturday. Evan Amundson, Carr's representative, said that fits their business model anyway, and agrees with that limitation.

Public Hearing Closed.

Motion by Alders to add this variance to the two variances to be discussed under Planning & Zoning Section, Item a.; 2nd by Blake; Unanimous. Motion Carried

3. Motion by Blake to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; 2nd by Rainville, noting that the February 9, 2021 minutes were regular meeting minutes. Unanimous; Motion Carried.

4. No Floor Comments from Residents

5. Sheriff's Report:

Sheriff James Stewart addressed the Council, as this was "Meet the Deputy" Night. Stewart reported about the past year, policing challenges, policy changes, and the proactive nature of the Anoka County Sheriff Department. Council expressed appreciation from the City for the Sheriff Department partnership and presence in the City and their hard work. Stewart stated that Anoka County Sheriff Dept. acted in a leadership role with resolving the unrest in 2020, but now that there is a definitive approach in place, they will be in more of a support role.

Commander Heath, in his 17th year with Anoka County Sheriff Dept, also served 12 years elsewhere, said this was his favorite meeting of the year, as the people who are actually doing the work are able to be

recognized. The Deputies get to hear the support and praise from City personally. He decided to forego the monthly report, as it was submitted via email. Deputies that serve the City of Nowthen were introduced and each gave a brief bio on themselves, highlighting the best part of the career choice and why each one likes serving on the police department:

- Commander Wayne Heath – best part is service; still desires to serve despite opposition
- Deputy Jordan Abler – grew up in Anoka; Marine Corps; Lakewood, CO; Northwestern College; moved home; felt called to serve as a policeman; Anoka County for about a year; loves serving. Enjoys the people the best.
- Deputy Jesse Cutler and his partner Diesel (K9) – 8 years with Anoka County; Diesel joined him 3 years ago and is dual certified in narcotics and tracking/criminal apprehension. Started law enforcement with Fridley. Chose law enforcement because he was headed in a bad direction as a youth, and a police officer stepped in and helped him along the way. He wants to return the favor to people in crises or struggling in life. He enjoys coming to Nowthen to decompress and to allow Diesel to decompress and just be a dog. Blake asked about petting him, and Cutler said that he is very good about “flipping the switch” and can be quite social, under the right circumstances. Multiple foundations and individuals donate things for training.
- Sergeant Mike Slavik – 21 years with Anoka County Sheriff Dept. in jails, patrol, investigation, use of force instructor, taser instructor. Happiest times are spent on patrol. Enjoyed time spent serving in the jails, and it prepared him for dealing with people and having difficult conversations with them when they don’t want to hear it.

6. Fire Department

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt was introduced.

- a.) Approval of Policies for the Nowthen Fire Department - Chief Schmidt presented the request for approval of these policies, as a start to getting the Nowthen Fire Department kicked off. The policies contain an industry standard template which calls out actions, requirement standards for the firefighters to maintain in the City of Nowthen. One of the issues that is important to note is an anticipation of an upcoming \$15/hour minimum wage that is very likely to happen in the near future. The skill wage scale for firefighters was adjusted to be above that minimum wage, presenting unique challenges for part-time fire departments in the future. The desire was to provide a salary package that was attractive for those continuing to serve as part-time firefighters in Nowthen. Council had no questions regarding this for Chief Schmidt. This document, once approved, will be sent to the firefighters desiring to continue to serve Nowthen, so they can review it before the meeting March 10, 2021.

Motion by Blake to approve the Policies for the Nowthen Fire Department; 2nd by Rainville. Unanimous; Motion Carried.

- b.) Authorization to Hire Firefighters transitioning from Ramsey Fire – Chief Schmidt reported that the plan is to embark on a hiring process to begin transitioning the firefighters from Ramsey Fire employees to Nowthen Fire employees. The process will include an application, a criminal background check, a psychological exam and a medical check which are all industry standards for the position of firefighters. The anticipation is that all of the funding will come out of the existing approved fire department budget for 2021. On site

psychological examinations and medical checks are a potential reality, to make it a little bit easier for the firefighters to schedule their life around these things and to expedite the process. Schmidt anticipates the process to be completed sometime in April, and that the stand-alone fire department of Nowthen would be able to live shortly thereafter. Blake asked for clarification that all firefighters from Ramsey interested in transferring to Nowthen would be automatically hired. Schmidt responded that each would be automatically hired, contingent upon the successful completion of the criminal background check, psychological examination and medical evaluation. Schmidt plans to bring back for formal approval those that they actually hire to the April Council Meeting.

Motion by Rainville to authorize the hiring process to begin transitioning firefighters from Ramsey Fire to Nowthen Fire; 2nd by Pilon. Unanimous; Motion Carried.

Discussion about the Relief Association and Retirement benefits, Auto Aid Agreements to help cover needs during the transition. The new Addition to Fire Station was funded by the CARES Act funds, and the reality is that additional funds are needed to complete the project that will need to come from the City Budget, including bringing the restroom up to Code.

Motion by Pilon to authorize up to \$15,000 from the City budget to complete the Fire Station addition, pending Clerk Streich and Chief Schmidt finding the appropriate spot in the budget for those funds; 2nd by Rainville. Unanimous; Motion Carried.

7. Planning & Zoning

- a) Carr's Variance Requests – Discussion for 20 foot variance from bufferyard setback previously noted. Variance for approved business hours and chipping limitations:

Motion by Alders to approve the Planning & Zoning recommendations for Carr's Tree service variances, with the adjust on Item #6 for core hours and the inclusion of the variance approved earlier in this meeting; 2nd by Blake. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

- b) Leistico – Preliminary and Final Plant, CUP for Street Paving Deferral

Motion by Rainville to accept the Findings and Recommendations by Planning & Zoning and Planner Stockman; 2nd by Greenberg. Unanimous. Motion Carried.

- c) Ordinance 2020-04 Snow Removal – Amending Chapter 5 of the Nowthen City Code relating to on-street parking requirements and snow removal.

Motion by Blake to accept Ordinance 2020-04, Amending Chapter 5 of the Nowthen City Code relating to on-street parking requirements and snow removal; 2nd by Greenberg. The graphic addition to the Ordinance makes it very clear what the text means. Unanimous approval. Motion Carried.

- d) Self-Storage Facilities expanded in the City of Nowthen.

Motion by Pilon to table this topic until the April Council meeting; 2nd by Rainville, and Clerk Streich will gather and present information from other cities and the League of MN regarding establishing a moratorium on storage facilities in the City to present . Unanimous approval. Motion Carried.

e) Illegal Habitation – 19111 Cleary Road (5270 189th Ave – no information available)

Resolution 2021-10 Regarding Illegal Occupation of Pole Shed, photos & details provided in packet.

Motion by Rainville to approve Resolution 2021-10 requiring the occupants of the accessory building at 19111 Cleary Road to cease using the pole shed as a residence for health and safety reasons, including numerous violations of the MN State building code, on or before April 22, 2021, subject to the findings and conditions outlined by the City Planner; 2nd by Greenberg. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

f) IUPs & CUPs

Discussion at the Council work session to pick up 20 of the most likely to be resolved quickly. Pilon couldn't remember how that was to be determined and asked Clerk Streich, who responded that Council was asked to take a look at the residents that they were aware of and knew if they were in business or not right off hand. Rainville will email Clerk Streich who will email to Planner Stockman her list of IUPs & CUPs and information, and Pilon will meet at Stockman's office to go over the list and select 20 permits for resolution. Council members were asked to review the list and send to Clerk Streich any information regarding residents who are not actively using the IUP or CUP.

8. Fee Schedule

Clerk Streich said that she made the changes that were recommended at the Council work session, and the most current update of the Fee Schedule is in their hands now. Appreciation for Clerk Streich's work and the professional presentation.

Motion by Blake to accept the Fee Schedule as presented with corrections; 2nd by Alders. Amended by striking "Not to exceed \$300" regarding litigation cases on page 11. Blake and Alders approved amending their motion to include this amendment. Unanimous approval. Motion Carried.

9. Employee Personnel Policy

Three items still need to be addressed/discussed:

- Emergency Medical Benefits vs. short-term & long-term disability
- Formation of a personnel committee – 2 Council members to resolve issues with staff
- Authorized expenditures staff can expend without Council approval

Alders asked Clerk Streich her input on the personnel policy presented, as she would be enforcing it. Streich said she is fine with the Personnel Policy as presented, but the 3 items still needing to be addressed, she would want to discuss them.

Motion by Rainville to approve the Employee Personnel Policy as presented, with the understanding that the above items still need to be addressed; 2nd by Blake. Unanimous approval. Motion carried.


Blake said that as these are things that are involving the employees, shouldn't the Council ask for staff input? Pilon said that Clerk Streich would provide that input and represent staff. Blake said that out of good communication with staff, she thinks it would be good policy to talk with staff and listen to them directly regarding this, especially the EMB situation.

10. For the Good of the Council

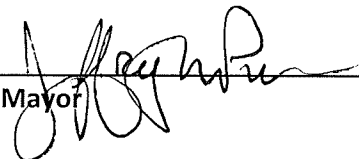
Greenberg presented the logos that had been presented previously. He and the mayor had talked and thought that if Council could focus on approving just the logo itself, City signage could be addressed later. This was an effort to bring Alders up to speed on the progress to date. Greenberg had attempted to take the barn logo and buff it up and modernize it, as the current logo is just clip art and we do not own the copyright to it. Greenberg demonstrated the progress of the options. Discussion on which one was preferred. The one on the right, which was described by Clerk Streich as "a little more rich" was the overall approved logo.

Motion to adjourn by Pilon; 2nd by Blake . Unanimous. Motion carried. Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori Streich, City Clerk/Treasurer



Jeff Pilon, Mayor