

CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS  
DAKOTA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Held Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regular meeting of the City Council, City of Mendota Heights, Minnesota was held at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights, Minnesota.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Levine called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilors Lorberbaum, Paper, Mazzitello, and Miller, were also present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council, the audience, and staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Levine presented the agenda for adoption. Councilor Mazzitello moved adoption of the agenda. Councilor Lorberbaum seconded the motion.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Levine presented the consent calendar and explained the procedure for discussion and approval. Councilor Mazzitello moved approval of the consent calendar as presented, with Councilor Lorberbaum pulling item F.

- a. Approval of March 7, 2023 City Council Minutes
- b. Acknowledge February 14, 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
- c. Acknowledge January 18, 2023 Airport Relations Commission Meeting Minutes
- d. Acknowledge February 8, 2023 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes
- e. Approve Out of Metro Area Travel Request for City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator
- f. ~~Approve Resolution 2023-17 Consenting to the Amendments to the City's Multifamily Housing Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2013 (Lexington Heights Apartments Project) and Authorizing Execution of Documents Related Thereto~~
- g. Approve the Hiring of a Parks and Recreation Intern
- h. Acknowledge January 2023 Fire Synopsis
- i. Approval of Claims List

Councilor Paper seconded the motion.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

#### PULLED CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

F) APPROVE RESOLUTION 2023-17 CONSENTING TO THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S MULTIFAMILY HOUSING REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2013 (LEXINGTON HEIGHTS APARTMENT PROJECT) AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS RELATED THERETO

Councilor Lorberbaum stated that due to her employment she will need to recuse herself from this item.

Councilor Paper asked for a quick explanation on this item.

Finance Director Kristen Schabacker stated that the City issued conduit debt for the Lexington Heights Apartment Complex in 2013. She stated that these documents will approve a different mechanism to calculate the interest rate as the current method will cease existence in June.

Councilor Paper moved to approve RESOLUTION 2023-17 CONSENTING TO THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S MULTIFAMILY HOUSING REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2013 (LEXINGTON HEIGHTS APARTMENT PROJECT) AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS RELATED THERETO.

Councilor Mazzitello seconded the motion.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Councilor Lorberbaum rejoined the Council.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one from the public wished to be heard.

#### PRESENTATIONS

##### A) POLICE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Police Officer Peter Renteria reviewed the department's current mission statement and the issues that he found with it, explaining the process that he followed to solicit input from the members of the department to create a new mission statement. He then presented the new mission statement.

Councilor Miller commented that it was well done.

Councilor Paper asked the percentage of response for the survey.

Officer Renteria replied that not everyone replied but some members also provided input in person or through a department meeting.

Councilor Lorberbaum thanked Officer Renteria for taking initiative to improve something he felt needed improvement.

Mayor Levine agreed that it was great to see that Officer Renteria took the things he learned in training and implemented them to make something better.

#### B) PARKS, RECREATION, AND PAR 3 ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence presented the 2022 Year in Review for parks and recreation as well as the Par 3 Annual Report.

Councilor Miller appreciated the thorough presentation.

Councilor Paper asked if the City has a women's softball league.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that there is not as registration numbers for the women's league continued to dwindle. She noted that slot was opened for other field users.

Councilor Lorberbaum thanked the parks and recreation staff for being creative, getting people involved, and generating revenue.

Councilor Mazzitello echoed the appreciation and commented that it is great to see the participation and interest in these programs. He commended parks and recreation staff for those efforts. He referenced the chart for field and facility use and confirmed that information to be for reserved usage. He asked if there is a way to track the use of pickleball courts.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that pickleball open play is not tracked.

Mayor Levine commented that three members of the Council previously served on the Parks and Recreation Commission and recognized the growth of events and programing in 2022 while staffing has not increased. She commented that the community is participating in large numbers for these new events. She acknowledged that the legacy events are occurring in each season, which rounds out the free programing opportunities for the public. She thanked staff for the amazing efforts. She commented that it has been great to watch the growth and success of the Par 3 as well.

#### C) INTERSTATE VALLEY CREEK STABILIZATION AND VOLUME REDUCTION STUDY

Joe Barton, Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization (LMRWMO) introduced himself and provided background on the LMRWMO. He provided a presentation on the Interstate Valley Creek (IVC) Stabilization and Volume Reduction Study including potential projects and grant funding opportunities. He noted that partnerships between the WMO, its member cities, and the County could also assist in funding potential projects.

Councilor Paper asked for clarification on bank erosion mentioned.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek provided more specific location information.

Mayor Levine stated that it was her understanding that as the City works with the County on the trail, that would include a certain amount of vegetation on either side of the trail. She asked if that would include the water issues.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that it would not. He stated that the County would provide 90 percent funding for implementing natural resources within 100 feet of a County greenway trail. He stated that would not include stabilization or other projects identified in the report.

Mayor Levine commented that the City recently completed a large volume reduction/stabilization project in Valley Park and would think that would provide benefit to this area.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek clarified that was a stabilization project and did not include volume reduction. He stated that this report looks to use natural methods for stabilization rather than rip rap armoring. He confirmed that work only stabilized that area and would not have impact downstream.

Mayor Levine asked what the desired action would be.

Mr. Barton stated that his intention was to introduce the Council to this information and advise them of potential collaboration efforts in the future with the trail project.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek replied that he has been including \$100,000 in the City's CIP for these purposes to ensure that the City could provide matching funds should grant funds be received.

Councilor Miller stated that he would be in favor of marrying these two projects as it would seem that it would make sense to coordinate efforts rather than trying to complete this project after the new trail is in place. He asked if this would be similar to the Trout Unlimited project that was completed.

Mr. Barton replied that Trout Unlimited would focus more on habitat restoration. He explained that this would use more natural methods of stabilization which in turn would provide habitat.

Councilor Mazzitello applauded the effort. He stated that volume reduction is an excellent approach as that would also reduce erosion. He referenced the matching funds and asked the method used to determine who would contribute to the matching funds.

Mr. Barton provided details on the JPA which forms the calculations and determines the cost-share between communities. He noted that typically the agreement is developed informally between the city engineers and then solidified in a formal document.

Councilor Lorberbaum thanked Mr. Barton for the presentation which was very informative. She asked who would do the work.

Mr. Barton replied that the WMO can assist in drafting grant applications or hiring a consultant to draft the applications and grant administration.

Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek commented that plans would be developed that would be competitively bid for a project.

Mayor Levine commented that it seems there are great opportunities and this would seem to be good timing to coordinate these projects with the trail project. She stated that she would like to see them work together as it would make sense to address the water issue prior to the new trail. She confirmed the support of the Council in applying for grants.

## PUBLIC HEARING

No items scheduled.

### NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### A) VALLEY VIEW HEIGHTS PLAYGROUND RECOMMENDATION

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence explained that the Council was being asked to approve a proposal from Flagship Recreation (Landscape Structures) for the replacement of the playground at Valley View Heights Parks.

Councilor Lorberbaum referenced the cost of \$82,000 and received confirmation that does not include the cost of additional swings. She asked if there is an estimate on what those swings could cost.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that they would need more container space and mulch as well as the swings and estimated about \$7,500 as the cost.

Councilor Paper asked if they are looking at one or two shade structures.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that there would be one main covered canopy over the larger equipment section and a smaller shade structure over the younger equipment.

Councilor Paper asked for the reason on the teal color.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that the price is the same regardless of color. She stated that there were three residents in attendance at the Commission meeting that are neighbors to the park and the Commission solicited their input on the colors. She noted that the Council could choose a different color scheme.

Councilor Paper stated that he likes more vibrant colors but was concerned with teal. He stated that if the residents chose that color, he could support that. He referenced the benches inside the container and asked the benefit in placing them in the container rather than outside the edge.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that there is benefit for maintenance as staff does not need to mow around them. She stated that it also increases safety as parents are more easily accessible to small children.

Councilor Paper asked if the swivel feature replaces the spring riders.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence noted that some proposals included the spring riders while this proposal did not. She noted that the vendor stated that the swivel has been a popular feature which is why it was included. She noted that there are spring riders in other park locations in the community.

Councilor Paper asked if the swivel could be moved to include more swings.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that she did ask that question of the vendor but was told that it would not provide much additional space but could be enough to add swings if the space is limited.

Councilor Paper asked if all the swings shown require the same fall zone.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence explained that the fall zone is determined by how high the swing is and since the swings are the same height, the same fall zone would be required. She stated that the hope would be to replace the belt swing in the middle with a bucket swing and then add an additional bay with two belt swings.

Mayor Levine asked if the double swing could be removed and replaced to support two belt swings, and the belt swing in the other bay could then be replaced with a bucket swing.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that could be done but the concern would be that residents voted for this and part of that vote could have been based on certain features. She asked that the green swing not be removed as it provides ADA access.

Mayor Levine commented that she thinks the bucket swing is an important feature and should be a priority over the parent/child swing. She stated that she would also like to remain within budget.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence noted that \$75,000 was budgeted from the city's fund balance and noted that about 25 percent of the project could be funded through special parks fund.

Mayor Levine commented that they are still taxpayer dollars and wants to be responsible.

Councilor Lorberbaum asked who does this work.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence replied that the installation is included in the cost from the vendor. She stated that the vendor must complete installation to ensure the proper standards are met.

Councilor Mazzitello moved to approve THE BID ALTERNATE PROPOSAL THAT INCLUDES SHADE FROM FLAGSHIP RECREATION (LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES) WITH A NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$82,332.74 AND FURTHER INSTRUCTION TO STAFF TO WORK WITH FLAGSHIP RECREATION FOR THE POTENTIAL TO ADD TWO ADDITIONAL SWINGS, ONE OF WHICH IS A TODDLER SWING.

Further discussion: Councilor Paper stated that he feels strongly against the teal color.

Councilor Mazzitello stated that he intentionally did not include the color palette in his motion so it could be altered.

Mayor Levine commented that she did not believe the color should be a Council discussion and should be deferred to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence noted that sending it back to the commission would cause a project delay as the color will need to be known in order to begin assembly. She provided details on the color scheme at Marie Park. She stated that another color palette was shown in the base bid from the vendor, which would be another option.

Councilor Paper stated that he prefers primary colors as they stand the test of time.

Councilor Mazzitello stated that the base bid color scheme is predominantly yellow while the alternate has a lot more teal. He asked if Councilor Paper would support the base bid colors if the teal were changed to royal blue.

Councilor Paper stated that he could support that and explained that he just does not want to see teal as the main color.

Mayor Levine stated that she also prefers the color scheme in the base bid, changing the teal to royal blue.

Councilor Miller stated that he would support the colors chosen by the users. He stated that he would also agree with the colors shown in the base bid.

Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence noted that the residents voted on the base bid option.

Councilor Lorberbaum stated that at the Parks and Recreation Commission she heard the statement that they wanted vibrant colors, which would still be in agreement with the base bid color scheme.

Mayor Levine confirmed consensus of the Council to choose the base bid colors changing teal to royal blue.

Councilor Miller seconded the motion.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

#### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson announced updates and upcoming events and activities.

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Paper wished all the spring school teams luck.

Councilor Lorberbaum welcomed the new Park and Recreation Intern. She thanked the residents that attended the Chips with the Council event, noting that she appreciated the conversation and looked forward to more. She noted an article about the struggle to recruit volunteer firefighters and the workforce challenges across the market. She appreciated the firefighters in the community and recognized the increasing cost of equipment for the department and training. She stated that applications are currently open for the Mendota Heights Fire Department.

Councilor Miller echoed the comments that the Fire Department is hiring and noted that applicants do not need skill, just a willingness to help. He recognized that people have less time to volunteer but noted that emergencies do not take days off. He encouraged those interested to apply.

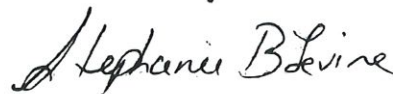
Councilor Mazzitello thanked the City Administrator for her update on the legislative process and how the City stays involved. He stated that if there is any bill that would take away local control, he would voice opposition. He stated that during the past few weeks there have been challenging snow events and the public works team continues to do an excellent job, even with equipment failures. He noted that because of the action of public works staff the failures were able to be fixed in house in a matter of days and at a lower cost.

Mayor Levine commented that residents can also donate to the Fire Relief Association. She stated that parks and recreation continues to be a great amenity in the community and the report was a great showcase.

ADJOURN

Councilor Mazzitello moved to adjourn.  
Councilor Paper seconded the motion.  
Ayes: 5  
Nays: 0

Mayor Levine adjourned the meeting at 8:57 p.m.



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Stephanie B. Levine  
Mayor

ATTEST:



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Christine Lusian  
City Clerk