

CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
DAKOTA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Minutes of the City Council Work Session
Tuesday, March 21, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Levine called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m. Councilmembers Lorberbaum, Mazzitello, Miller, and Paper were present.

Staff in attendance included City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson, Police Chief Kelly McCarthy, Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson, Finance Director Kristen Schabacker, Park and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence, and City Clerk Christine Lusian.

EVENT PROPOSAL - PAR 3 BOND PAYOFF

Parks and Recreation Manager Lawrence presented an event plan to celebrate final payment of general obligation bonds for the acquisition and improvement of the Mendota Heights Par 3 golf course.

Councilor Miller joined at 5:10 p.m.

The plan includes food, decorations, activities, giveaways, and ceremony with an estimated budget of \$1,200. Weather might make May 6 the better date over April 22 and the event will run 9-10:30 a.m.

Guest Robin Ehrlich co-chair of the referendum committee brought yard signs from the 2007 referendum and a framed ballot.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

City Administrator Jacobson provided an overview of city council's 2021-2022 strategic priorities and the city's vision and mission as a starting point for suggesting council priorities for 2023-2024. Jacobson noted that council members were asked to bring up to three strategies or goals for each priority area. Additionally, she encouraged the group to suggest changes to priority categories to better fit proposed goals.

Councilor Mazzitello began by suggesting a goal to reinvigorate the city's code enforcement program and creating a dashboard or tracking measure to report on code enforcement activities.

Councilor Lorberbaum suggested adding technology for hearing assistance and sign language interpreters in order to respond to the needs of the hearing impaired.

Councilor Paper recommended continuing to add content to the city's new website and for staff to investigate the implementation of propane vehicles or other alternative fuel powered vehicles. Jacobson stated that a prior discussion was to update the city's fleet management policy to incorporate electric vehicles and that staff in that update could add the suggested research.

Mayor Levine raised the question about public safety priorities and whether the council should have a priority area which focuses specifically on public safety. The group noted that police department building improvements would be a significant goal for 2023-2024.

Councilor Paper added cellular and broadband coverage, specifically referring to small cell technology and the desire to continue to focus on supporting resident and worker mobility as a priority.

Councilor Mazzitello added instituting utility franchise fees as a means to fund city programs such as natural resources. City Administrator Jacobson suggested adding the investigation of new and alternative revenue sources for programs as a goal.

The group discussed the addition of a new priority area titled "fiscal management" which may include the goal of investigating the implementation of utility franchise fees, a hotel and lodging tax, and charitable gambling.

Councilor Mazzitello suggested an educational service for residents to understand how city government works, like a civics academy or similar.

Mayor Levine suggested redevelopment as a new priority and the group discussed potential goals of completing a business survey, general economic development and business attraction and retention programs and incentives that would create or support a vibrant business community.

Councilor Miller asked about Tax Increment Financing and business incentives, and recommended looking into what other cities are doing to bring business in and evaluate whether similar programs or incentives would work for the city. City Administrator Jacobson noted that the city is competing against cities like Eagan which have more "tools in their toolboxes" to attract new business to their city.

The group discussed changing or adding a priority area focusing on connection and engagement, which would focus on the city's relationships, continuous improvement and trust.

City Administrator Jacobson noted that an overarching theme has been sustainability; impacting several areas of city operations and that a possible new priority area might be titled sustainability and stewardship of natural resources.

Miller excused himself 6:30 p.m.

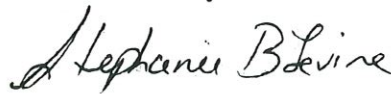
The group discussed the suggestion of implementing a citywide curbside organics collection program and the benefits and challenges of being a leading city in this area. Park and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence noted that if implemented, the city would be the first in Dakota County to do so. Mayor Levine noted that she wants every resident in the city to be able to participate in organics recycling as part of waste collection.

Councilor Lorberbaum suggested the topic of speed as a goal. Staff asked for clarification on the goal recommendation and discussed safety as a potential broader goal topic.

City Administrator Jacobson concluded the session by summarizing the next steps in the priority setting process.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Levine adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.



Stephanie B. Levine, Mayor

ATTEST:



Christine Lusian, City Clerk