

CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA
OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Saint Peter was conducted in the Governors' Room of the Community Center.

A quorum present, Mayor Nowell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Keri Johnson, Darrell Pettis, Ben Ranft, Brad DeVos, Emily Bruflat, Dustin Sharstrom and Mayor Shanon Nowell. The following officials were also present: City Administrator Todd Prafke, City Attorney James Brandt, and City Engineer Jeff Domras.

Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Bruflat, to approve the agenda. With all in favor, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Sharstrom, seconded by Ranft, to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2023 regular City Council meeting. With all in favor, the minutes were approved. A complete copy of the minutes of the August 28, 2023 regular City Council meeting is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Proceedings 20.

Visitors – Peter Rheume, 419 West Jefferson Avenue, addressed the Council to question the City's policy when snowplows strike mailboxes or curbs. Rheume reported that a few years prior, he had witnessed a plow driver strike a mailbox and curbs and continue driving before Rheume "flagged" him down and the driver told him that the City's policy was to do nothing when such an incident occurred. City Administrator Prafke assured Mr. Rheume that City policy was for employees involved in any incident to fill out an incident or accident report.

City Administrator Prafke administered the oath of office to new Police Officer Austin Buss. Following the ceremony, the Council meeting was recessed to allow Officer Buss to take photos with his family. The meeting was recessed at 7:08 p.m.

The meeting was called back into session by Mayor Nowell at 7:14 p.m.

Mr. Rheume again asked to address the City Council to question why the bids for the old fire station were allowed to change after they were submitted and to express his opinion that the "very nature of this is kind of volatile in a way and I think you owe it to your constituency to answer each and every question openly and publicly...". Rheume questioned what zoning issues or ordinances were relative to this particular project and expressed concerns about calls to prayer, parking issues and his belief that allowing a mosque in the old fire hall wasn't a compatible use. Rheume suggested that the Police Department should be the leader in deciding whether or not a mosque should be located at the old fire hall and provided comments concerning property taxes to be generated by the proposals and high utility rates among other concerns.

Consent Agenda – In motion by Ranft, seconded by Sharstrom, Resolution No. 2023-139 entitled "Resolution Approving Consent Agenda" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-139 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

MnDOT Truck Station Development Agreement – Community Development Director Baker presented recommendations for execution of a development agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for a new truck station to be located in the North Industrial Park Subdivision; approval for sale of City-owned land in the subdivision to MnDOT in the amount of \$250,000; approval of the preliminary and final plats for North Industrial Park No. 2 Subdivision; vacation of Hubbard and Sibley Streets; and annexation of property currently located in Traverse Township that is directly abutting the City-owned land.

Baker noted the truck station site included 13.05 acres of which 6.55 acres is in Traverse Township and 6.5 acres is in the City's North Industrial Park and that a development agreement had been negotiated with MnDOT to address all of the actions necessary to develop the site and have it within the City limits.

Councilmembers discussed the revenue stream for sale of land within the Industrial Park with City Administrator Prafke noting that because property in the subdivision remains unsold, the fund was technically in a deficit, but revenues from any future sales, including the MnDOT sale, would be placed into the debt service fund which is currently being funded by General Fund reserves.

In motion by Pettis, seconded by Ranft, Resolution No. 2023-140 entitled "Resolution Authorizing Execution Of MnDOT Truck Station Development Agreement" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-140 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

MnDOT Land Purchase – In motion by Johnson, seconded by Pettis, Resolution No. 2023-141 entitled "Resolution Approving Purchase Agreement For Sale Of City Owned Property To Minnesota Department Of Transportation For Truck Station Development" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-141 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Street Vacation Petition: Hubbard and Sibley Streets – Councilmember Johnson noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission had recommended approval of the street vacations as part of their September 7th meeting. In motion by Sharstrom, seconded by Ranft, Resolution No. 2023-142 entitled "Resolution Vacating Hubbard Street And Sibley Street" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-142 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

North Industrial Park Subdivision No. 2 Preliminary and Final Plats – In motion by Sharstrom, seconded by Bruflat, Resolution No. 2023-143 entitled "Resolution Adopting Preliminary Plat For North Industrial Park Subdivision No. 2" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-143 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

In motion by Ranft, seconded by Johnson, Resolution No. 2023-144 entitled "Resolution Adopting Final Plat Of North Industrial Park Subdivision No. 2" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-144 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Annexation Petition – In motion by Pettis, seconded by Ranft, Ordinance No. 60, Third Series entitled "An Ordinance Of The City Of Saint Peter, Minnesota Annexing Land Located In Traverse Township, Nicollet County, Minnesota Pursuant To Minnesota Statutes § 414.033 Subdivision 2(3), Permitting Annexation By Ordinance" was introduced. Councilmember DeVos questioned whether a payment would be made to Traverse Township for compensation for the annexation. Councilmember Ranft noted the staff memo indicated a payment of \$16.24. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Ordinance was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Ordinance No. 60, Third Series is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Ordinances 2.

City Assistance Request: Homecoming Parade – City Administrator Prafke recommended approval of a request by School District #508 to conduct a homecoming parade that would begin on Lincoln Drive before traveling east on Broadway Avenue, then south on South Third Street and west on West Grace Street before returning to Lincoln Drive. Prafke noted that staff concerns regarding the parade being on a roadway (Broadway) that is part of the Highway 169/22/99 project detour were mitigated by the short duration of the parade. In motion by Sharstrom, seconded by Bruflat, Resolution No. 2023-145 entitled "Resolution Approving Request By School District #508 To Conduct A Homecoming Parade On City Streets" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-145 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Business License Applications – City Administrator Prafke indicated nothing had been found in the background investigations that would prohibit issuance of a new Tobacco license and Show license to two applicants. In motion by Johnson, seconded by Ranft, Resolution No. 2023-146 entitled "Resolution Approving New License Applications" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-146 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Executive Assistant To City Administrator Position Description – City Administrator Prafke recommended approval of an updated position description for the Executive Secretary to the City Administrator which included a title change to Executive "Assistant" to the City Administrator. Prafke noted the last change to the description was in the 1980's and the updated version also included, among other things, adding responsibilities for elections. In motion by DeVos, seconded by Pettis, Resolution No. 2023-147 entitled "Resolution Adopting Updated Position Description For Executive Assistant To The City Administrator" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-147 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Community Service Officer Position Description – City Administrator Prafke recommended adoption of an updated position description for Community Service Officer to reflect the position serving as backup Communications Technician which also led to a recommendation for a change in pay equity points. In motion by Bruflat, seconded by Ranft, Resolution No. 2023-148 entitled “Resolution Adopting Updated Position Description For Community Service Officer” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-148 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Electric Foreman Position Description – City Administrator Prafke recommended adoption of an updated position description for Electric Foreman which was prompted by restructuring of the Electric Utility and providing vertical opportunities for the City’s Linemen. Prafke noted that changes had been made to the description to reflect current responsibilities and there being no overhead linework. In motion by Ranft, seconded by Bruflat, Resolution No. 2023-149 entitled “Resolution Adopting Updated Position Description For Electric Foreman” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-149 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Snow Removal/Ice Control Policy Update – Public Works Director Moulton noted that staff procedure was to provide for regular review of policies including the Snow Removal/Ice Control policy. Moulton recommended adoption of an updated policy that would further clarify operations.

Mayor Nowell questioned the issues raised by the visitor earlier in the meeting about a snowplow hitting a mailbox and refuse curbies and whether damages were resolved with the City’s refuse hauler. City Administrator Prafke responded that employees who strike something with a plow truck were required to file an incident report, and while City would certainly have liability for striking a refuse hauler owned curbie, staff had never met with the hauler to discuss damages. Prafke did caution residents to not place curbies in the roadway, especially in winter, and noted that even those placed on the boulevard may be tipped over by snow being plowed into it.

In motion by Ranft, seconded by Sharstrom, Resolution No. 2023-150 entitled “Resolution Adopting Updated Snow Removal And Ice Control Policy” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-150 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Highway 22 Corridor Study Acceptance – Public Works Director Moulton recommended acceptance of the Highway 22 Corridor Study as completed by Bolton and Menk, Inc. and jointly commissioned by the City, MnDOT, and Nicollet County. Moulton reviewed the study which included three phases (data collection, alternatives and public feedback, and preferred concepts) and indicated that acceptance of the study would allow MnDOT to begin the scoping process and seeking grants for funding with a 2028 or later construction timeline.

Councilmember Bruflat asked whether acceptance of the study meant the Council was accepting the three recommendations. Moulton stated that MnDOT has the final decision, but the City does have input. Bruflat expressed concerns related to bike lanes and speed limits.

Other Councilmembers expressed similar concerns related to speed limits and bike lanes and discussed the concept of narrowing a roadway to reduce speeds. City Administrator Prafke noted that the Council and public will have additional opportunities to engage with MnDOT before final decisions are made, including one or more public open houses.

In motion by Sharstrom, seconded by Pettis, Resolution No. 2023-151 entitled “Resolution Accepting Highway 22/Dodd Road Corridor Study Final Report” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-151 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Land (School District #508) Purchase – City Administrator Prafke recommended adoption of a resolution that would authorize purchase of 22.22 acres of School District #508 owned property for \$184,260 to be developed as mid-market residential lots in excess of 10,000 square feet. Prafke noted there is a demand for this size lot. Prafke also reported that School District #508, noting that increased housing leads to increased school enrollment, had already executed the agreement. In motion by Bruflat, seconded by Sharstrom, Resolution No. 2023-152 entitled “Resolution Directing The Purchase Of 22.20 Acres Of Bare Land From Independent School District #508” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2023-152 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 24.

Reports

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Nowell, noting the meeting date of September 11th, remembered those who lost their lives and the heroics of the first responders on 9-11.

Mayor Nowell also responded to the speaker earlier in the meeting who provided strong comments on those of the Muslim faith and indicated her support for her Muslim friends and neighbors who she “unequivocally” valued and accepted and welcomed in St. Peter.

Council Reports - Councilmember DeVos reported on his presentation at Climate Smart Municipalities on changing mind sets of Council’s related to alternative energy sources.

MMUA Board Appointment – City Administrator Prafke reported that Public Works Director Moulton had been appointed to the Executive Board of the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) Board of Directors.

MVRT Meeting – City Administrator Prafke reminded Councilmembers of the Minnesota River Valley Transit board meeting scheduled for September 12th.

SMMPA Annual Meeting – City Administrator Prafke directed Councilmember attention to the invitations they received for the SMMPA annual meeting.

Councilmember Johnson also encouraged Councilmembers to consider attending the REDA annual meeting to be held at Gustavus Adolphus College on October 12th.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ranft, seconded by Johnson, to adjourn. With all in favor, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Shanon A. Nowell
Mayor

ATTEST:

Todd Prafke
City Administrator