

**WORKSESSION OF THE ANOKA CITY COUNCIL
ANOKA CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION ROOM
JULY 25, 2016**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rice called the worksession meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present at roll call: Mayor Rice, Councilmembers Anderson, Freeburg (arrived at 5:15 p.m.), Schmidt, Weaver.

Absent: None.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Lee; Associate Planner Chuck Darnell; Deputy Community Development Director Doug Borglund; Planning Director Carolyn Braun; Finance Director Lori Yager, Golf Course Manager Larry Norland; Police Chief Phil Johanson; City Attorney Scott Baumgartner.

3. COUNCIL BUSINESS and/or DISCUSSION ITEMS

Item 3.3 was moved up and discussed at this point in the agenda.

3.1 Discussion; Food/Beverage Contract at Green Haven Golf Course and Event Center.

Golf Course Manager Larry Norland shared the staff report stating the City of Anoka and Lancer Catering entered into a contract with a 3-year term with two 2 year renewable terms which ends March 31, 2017. He said City staff has come up with some changes in the language of the contract going forward and would like to see if Council has any specific direction or changes that should be included in any new contract.

Councilmember Freeburg said someone has to be a regular customer to appreciate the service and asked HRA Chair Carl Youngquist to share some of his experiences. He noted at this point he is not open to extending the Lancer contract.

Chair Youngquist said the lack of service by Lancer has driven the men's club from Green Haven because they do not offer food, adding while this may have been the right decision seven years ago the activity has increased and is not the right decision today. He shared how Anoka High School's Hall of Fame event will be held at 201 Jackson Street instead of Green Haven, noting this says a lot about the current service levels at Green Haven.

Councilmember Weaver said there is a connection between the River City venue and the high school though and may not be all because of the service.

Chair Youngquist said golf course is excellent and the pro shop has improved but we have a facility that is not being used to its full potential. He said Coon Rapids went through this with the wrong vendor and suggested reviewing their steps with them, adding Lancer does a nice job with catering and brunches but they are not open for lunch and with HealthPartners nearby this is necessary to do for a potential market.

Mr. Norland thanked Chair Youngquist for his input noting he has received many compliments about weddings and banquets but never for golfers which is very telling.

Councilmember Anderson asked if we can have two vendors. Mr. Norland said if they wanted to service the bar and grill for golfers that would be fine but it never improved.

Mayor Rice noted the problem is no one is behind the grill. Mr. Norland said Lancer has very strict percentages for revenue and that he would like to see minimum requirements for being open an hour before every shotgun to provide a minimum level of service for golfing.

Councilmember Weaver said the beverage cart has issues too and acknowledged while most courses do he agrees this is minimum service level too and noted most will go elsewhere after golfing.

Mayor Rice said he wants to see people stay after golf which leads to holding events there too and the current activity alienates people.

Councilmember Schmidt inquired about the proposed improvements. Finance Director Lori Yager said carpet replacement is soon but deck expansion on the north side is scheduled for 2019.

Councilmember Weaver asked if they offer coffee or breakfast. Mr. Norland said no but added this has not really affected golfing numbers because they are still solid. He said for the most part people may complain about the beverage cart but will still return so maybe we keep them and work on golfing.

Mayor Rice said Green Haven brings them back and the management is a plus as well as being Anoka's golf course so numbers likely will not decrease even if they leave after a round but said it is a natural thing to have the "19th Hole" area for food and beverages.

Councilmember Freeburg asked if Lancer is open for fine dining. Mr. Norland said they are not but will increase to two people behind the bar and are open by 9am and for shotgun starts and will stay until all golfers come off the course.

Councilmember Anderson asked if we can have more than one proprietor and if there is enough space and logistics. Mr. Norland said Lancer will offer a portable bar for banquet space and said he just wants to see golfers get the service we need them to have.

Councilmember Weaver said two vendors could cause concerns about priority, etc.

Councilmember Schmidt said he is not aware of a business model feasible for the number of golfers we have so we need to work on a formula to Lancer such as a longer term contract with those requirements.

Ms. Yager noted the restrooms are scheduled to be improved in 2017.

City Attorney Scott Baumgartner suggested changing the amounts from 5% back to the City off retail sales to 6% for banquet sales and 2% for grill sales. He said this will not give up much but will help Lancer with their numbers and get more service.

Councilmember Weaver noted service organizations have left so there must be an issue and said the City wants organizations to use City-owned facilities, adding Green Haven is not a country club.

Councilmember Freeburg said he would like to see the golfers more satisfied.

Councilmember Weaver referred to incentives given to the current vendor at Bunker Hills.

Mayor Rice noted people go to Bunker Hills for dinner even if they do not golf which is indicative of their food and service.

Councilmember Freeburg agreed that we have to cater to Anoka but said at the end of the day we need to keep the golfers happy.

Councilmember reiterated this may have been the right decision 7 years ago but is not necessarily the right decision today.

Ms. Yager offered to obtain information from Coon Rapids on their contract at their golf course.

Mayor Rice said we have a 180-day notice period and already we know the contract is ending but expect renegotiation.

Mr. Norland shared while the food business is difficult Lancer can certainly do better. He then shared discussion on the importance of sale of alcoholic beverages.

3.2 Discussion; Proposed Changes to City Code Related to Signs.

Deputy Community Development Director Doug Borglund shared the staff report stating one of the 2016 goals for the City of Anoka Planning Commission is to review and update the sign ordinance and review all other sections of the zoning ordinance that relate to signs. The Planning Commission discussed this topic a few years ago and identified some areas of the sign ordinance that may need to be investigated or updated and reviewed this again in February. The purpose of updating the sign regulations is to examine existing sign regulations and to identify changes needed to better support current City goals for business development, maintain a visually vibrant commercial districts, and attractive streetscapes.

Councilmember Schmidt asked if signs are limited to how big they can be compared to other signs. Mr. Borglund said that will be determined in the when/where/how of the ordinance which identifies how large and how many signs will be allowed, adding these are the things we can regulate. He noted that case law plays an important role in sign ordinances as well.

Councilmember Weaver said it is important to find out what the store owners want to see as well versus what may be needed.

Councilmember Schmidt agreed, stating he hopes any amendments come from the economic development side instead of more rules and regulations.

Ms. Braun noted the sign ordinance has not been reviewed for the last 25 years and agreed we need to find out what business owners and Council want and then compose an ordinance supporting those goals.

Mr. Borglund shared examples of potential updates including digital and temporary signage as well as sandwich boards, which in particular are not allowed in the sign ordinance.

Councilmember Freeburg recommended further review, adding any changes will be controversial and important.

Councilmember Weaver shared about the signs he saw in Missouri and how they add to the charm and character of a city.

Mayor Rice said he is against sandwich boards because most are distasteful.

Councilmember Freeburg said we need to involve the community and ask for their input on any proposed ordinance.

Councilmember Schmidt referred to the Central Avenue/Highway 10 digital sign and asked if this is something we could allow instead of just being specifically for commercial Anoka. He suggested the former Vineyards or Pink Hotel site as possibilities but that the Planning Commission is concerned about setting a precedent but would like to see if that could be done.

Ms. Braun noted these are usually done as income-producers.

Councilmember Weaver said he does not want to remove the creative part of the community.

Mayor Rice said the committee is the answer and that they need more time.

Councilmember Weaver shared how other cities sell food and alcohol during their weekly summer concerts adding this attracts many people.

3.3 Discussion; Cottage Food Law.

Associate Planner Chuck Darnell shared the staff report stating that at a recent City Council meeting, a resident brought to the Council's attention a new law that was enacted by the state that would allow individuals to prepare and sell food from their home. The law is referred to as the Cottage Food Law or Cottage Food Exemption, and is included in Minnesota Statutes 28A.152 and law allows for individuals to be exempt from normal food handling and food production licensure processes. The Cottage Food Law only allows for production and sale of food that is not defined as "potentially hazardous", such as baked goods, jams, jellies, pickled items, and canned items with pH values of 4.6 or less.

Mr. Darnell said the zoning ordinance states preparation of food for sale is prohibited in the home occupation ordinance so allowing this would require a code amendment and said staff is seeking direction if the Council wishes to amend the ordinance. He said the Planning Commission had concerns about potential health concerns and if the activity could be considered in residential districts.

Councilmember Weaver asked if it is illegal to sell baked goods at a bake sale. Planning Director Carolyn Braun said there is a "church-ladies" law that allows those sales as an exemption.

Councilmember Weaver asked about selling breads and jams at farmers' markets. Mr. Darnell said these sales are allowed if they live in Anoka but that staff is not going to regulate what is sold at a farmers' markets.

Councilmember Weaver asked about bake sales for the PTA. Ms. Braun said those would likely fall under the “church-ladies” law as a fundraiser.

Councilmember Weaver said his point is we do not have a lot of problems with this type of activity and selling. Mayor Rice agreed it is not a high-risk concern.

Mr. Darnell said the buyer has to assume some risk for purchasing homemade products too and if there was a concern it would be reported to the Department of Agriculture.

Mayor Rice said it seems to open the home occupations for this type of food for sale under this statute.

Mr. Darnell said they would only allow one customer at a time so it likely would have to be by appointment only and not open to outside employees as well as meeting other standards such as a revenue scale of \$18,000. He said staff had recommended to the Planning Commission that we amend the permitted registered occupations under the Cottage Food Law and keep those that are not under prohibited.

Councilmember Freeburg said he is in favor of the least intrusive method to residents so they can thrive.

Councilmember Schmidt suggested leaving in the language about having one customer at a time. Mr. Darnell agreed, stating staff intends to keep the rest of performance standards in place.

Councilmember Weaver inquired about fresh egg sales. Ms. Braun said dairy products are prohibited by law from sale.

The City Council thanked Mr. Darnell for his work and wished him the best in his new position out of state.

3.4 Discussion; Unmanned Aerial Device Ordinance.

Mr. Baumgartner shared the staff report stating some the neighboring cities have been discussing the development of an ordinance regulating Unmanned Aerial Devices or drones as there is a potential for privacy issues related to the use of these devices, as well as various safety concerns. The FCC governs airspace and there are no clear regulations established by the FCC as of yet. He said an ordinance could be drafted to address privacy and safety concerns and noted the State is regulating more of commercial but not personal use. Mr. Baumgartner said the FAA addresses commercial but not local use of drones and that Chief Striech of Andover has worked with law enforcement rules but not how to identify who is using the drone.

Council held discussion about implications of such an ordinance and Councilmember Weaver noted our ordinance is not going to stop anyone from doing something illegal. Mr. Baumgartner agreed but said it is more one tool in the toolbox, adding while they waiting for the FAA to decide the other concern is first amendment rights and outlining who is using drones.

Councilmember Weaver asked how many other cities have such an ordinance. Mr. Baumgartner said Brooklyn Center and Andover are considering some type of ordinance but are waiting on the FAA, adding Anoka may want to be proactive instead of reactive. He said input on the proposed ordinance would be appreciated, adding it is a difficult balance to achieve but when done statutorily we do not have anything to stand on.

Council consensus was to wait to see what other cities are doing as this is a larger item than Anoka.

3.5 Discussion; Downtown Activity.

Mr. Lee shared the staff report stating this item will be a regular agenda item for Council worksessions during the spring/summer months with the exception of August – which are designated for Budget discussions. The item is to provide an opportunity for Council to have a general discussion on items related to the Downtown, such as security, events, etc. Mr. Lee noted that no action may be taken at a Worksession and any discussion that develops into the need for formal Council action will need to be placed on a Regular or Special Meeting agenda.

Councilmember Weaver asked about any update with regard to Stepping Stone's emails that they expect some of their residents to exhibit some bad behavior, adding this is the wrong message.

Councilmember Freeburg said he spoke with some Stepping Stones' staff and shared the example of being residents for over one year and if this is acceptable. Councilmember Weaver said this is a County-owned building and thought the bar would be set very high with some standards. He said this operation is paid for by taxpayer money and that Mr. Lee is now attending the Board meetings and will offer input about the consequences of this behavior. Councilmember Weaver suggested a resolution or bullet points to present to Anoka County as a landlord that would help curb some of this negative behavior.

Mayor Rice agreed one expectation of Stepping Stone residents should be sobriety and suggested reviewing minutes about what was agreed to by allowing Stepping Stones in the community and then reiterate those directives.

Councilmember Weaver said to expect bad behavior is not acceptable and that we need to review background checks and warrants and other expectations in order to deal with some of these individuals.

Mayor Rice said this activity is also costing the City and its businesses its own peace of mind.

Councilmember Anderson said it sounds like there are other instances where we turned something into a real success and if we are making accusations the organizers should be here to present their program and hear our concerns. Mayor Rice agreed.

Councilmember Schmidt agreed be noted Stepping Stones may not be following policy.

Mayor Rice said their director may be more lenient than the policy allows which should be considered.

Councilmember Freeburg said the City has a vested interest in the success and consequences of the Stepping Stones program.

Councilmember Weaver said the police staff is remarkable and is doing a great job. Police Chief Phil Johanson said they are working hard and keep hitting the downtown park trails and Aiken Park for example. He said he is not sure what always attracts people and that those not under arrest will not talk but others do and say they are Stepping Stones' clients who are on a waiting list but acknowledged this may not always be true.

Councilmember Schmidt asked if they have to have cause to stop. Chief Johanson said during the day individuals on a bench is acceptable but they do engage individuals by asking questions. He said he is not sure why people are there but said it is likely because of the services from Anoka County, Stepping Stones and the Anoka County Treatment Center. He said individuals are sometimes asked to leave and while they try to make it unpleasant to be here others come from other areas like Minneapolis because it is safer to be homeless here than in Minneapolis.

Mr. Baumgartner shared about rules and that just because someone is of legal age to drink does not mean that is the house rule and being allowed to return is contrary to the effort and condoning and accepting does not help people stay on track.

Mayor Rice agreed, stating we expect a higher standard.

Councilmember Schmidt noted the behavior expectations is not just confined to alcohol use.

Mr. Lee said the next Stepping Stones Board meeting is August 23 and that he will be attending.

Councilmember Weaver said it is important to attend and share the City's concerns even though they are serving a good mission.

Mr. Lee referred to the Hope 4 Youth administrator being upset about Council comments at a recent meeting, noting they have changed the model which states residents have to be part of improvement program. He said they were frustrated about sending out such a message without a solution and about being a target.

Chief Johanson said they do not have specific documentation about a Hope 4 Youth connection but agreed with Councilmember Weaver about most of the residents being young adults.

Mayor Rice asked if we do back-checks. Councilmember Schmidt said not likely as it would affect privacy laws.

Mr. Lee said they should be able to find out if a bed is available. Mayor Rice suggested requesting a current client list.

Councilmember Weaver inquired about the Ranger. Chief Johanson said the Ranger is working very well and has over 1,200 miles already. He said they may request a similar tool in the future but thanked Council for their efforts in the parks as there have been many people using the trails which is great. He noted that Police representatives will be at the next Open Forum to share efforts in downtown activity.

Councilmember Schmidt inquired about body cams. Chief Johanson said they will likely bring body cams forward within the couple years but noted they are expensive and that he would like to see the State allow for grants to help offset and fund costs.

Councilmember Anderson thanked all police personnel for their work and sacrifice.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Staff Update.

None.

5. COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENTS

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Rice adjourned the Regular Worksession meeting at 7:45 p.m.

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Submitted by: Cathy Sorensen, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

Approval Attestation:

Amy T. Oehlers, City Clerk