

City Council Minutes January 9, 2012

The Fort Snelling City Council held its regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Present were: Mayor Brian Nephew, and Council members Trish Thorson, Dennis Hasler and Todd Wise. Also present were County Commissioner Craig Bunes and County Assessor Robert Wagner.

The meeting began with a discussion started at the last meeting on the issue of property tax changes and resulting increases for some local property owners. Commissioner Bunes began with a point on County activities and pointed out that the whole legislative change was very confusing for those on the local level.

City Administrator Frohrip pointed out that the City had not increased the levy from last year. Council member Wise stated that the resulting tax increases for some were due to changes and shifts in the amount and ways some are taxed that had nothing to do with City activity.

Commissioner Bunes explained the County had to increase its levy by 1.5%, due in large part to unfunded mandates, the way the State Legislature changed the levy formula helps the State but puts burdens on other forms of government in Minnesota.

Becky Hall, a property owner who had been at the December meeting stated that the family business had seen their property value go down but the property taxes go up by more than \$300. Robert Wagner, County Assessor, stated that the increase was due in large part to the new way they had to compute homestead credit, which was not called a credit and usually comes in with a lower level support for the property owner. Wagner pointed out that the County must follow the State's rules as developed and enforced by the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

There were other questions. Council member Thorson asked if all commercial property had seen an increase. Assessor Wagner replied there was good chance that it had. Council member Hasler asked who did the property valuations. Wagner responded that it was the responsibility of the County Assessor to do that, with a physical review of the property every four years.

There was then discussion of how long this increase might stay in place. It was pointed out that this may change if the economic conditions continue to improve.

Barry Robertson, Fair Meadow Nursing Home Administrator, then made his report to the City Council. Fair Meadow began the month of December with 48 residents and ended with 49. There were 336 home delivered meals and 15 days of adult day care.

Robertson then reported that there would be a meeting with Andy Gag of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to discuss a potential 2.9 million dollar loan for the Assisted Living project. Frohrip mentioned that there would also be a meeting and discussions with Todd Hagen from Ehlers to see if conventional bonding might be more applicable, either long or short term.

Kevin Nephew, Public Works Superintendent, then reported to the City Council. He stated that the lack of snow had allowed for some additional work on equipment and shop maintenance.

Council on his proposed housing development on his property in the north portion of the community. Mayor Nephew pointed out that there was a need for a detailed plot plan and a subdivision. Kevin Nephew then stated that plans for installation of utilities must be made as well as final plans for a roadway through the development. Frohrip pointed out that the lift station and improvements for this particular development had been discussed at the November Council meeting. Estimates at that time had been approximately \$249,000 for the lift station and \$125,000 to \$150,000 for costs related to the project. Peterson was asked to work with City staff and his engineer to get a plat prepared for review. Peterson stated he would like to begin his project this summer.

The Council then reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. Council member Thorson, seconded by Council member Hasler, moved that they be approved. The motion was carried.

Upon review of the Treasurers Report and the Bills, Council member Thorson, seconded by Council member Wise moved that they be approved. The motion was carried.

Upon the request for renewal of insurance, Council member Hasler, seconded by Council member Thorson, moved that the renewal be approved without waiving statutory limits. The motion was carried.

The Council then considered the request for cigarette licenses from Olivers and The Other place. They had been seen selling cigarettes without the proper license. Council member Hasler stated that these people should have followed proper procedure. Council member Thorson, seconded by Council member Wise, moved to issue the two establishments cigarette licenses. Council members Wise and Thorson voted in favor of the motion and Council member Hasler voted no. The motion carried.

The upgrade of the roadway identified as Summit Avenue as it goes into the Nature/Learning Center was then discussed. Council member Hasler, seconded by Council member Wise, moved to approve Resolution #1-2-12 which lends City authorization and support for the project. The motion was approved.

The Council reviewed a request from the Fertile Fire Relief Association to approve a lawful gaming permit for Erickson's Smokehouse, formerly known as the Sandhill Supper Club. Mark Erickson had purchased this facility from Mark Berhow and, therefore, a new permit was needed. Council member Thorson, seconded by Council member Wise, moved to approve the new permit. The motion was carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Brian Nephew, Mayor

John J. Frohrip, City Administrator



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