



Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
City Hall Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Monday, March 4, 2024

1. Roll Call

Mayor Roe called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. Voting and Seating Order: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe. City Manager Patrick Trudgeon and City Attorney Rachel Tierney were also present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approve Agenda

Strahan moved, Schroeder seconded, approval of the agenda as presented.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None.

4. Public Comment

Mayor Roe called for public comment by members of the audience on any non-agenda items. No one came forward to speak.

5. Recognitions, Donations, and Communications

6. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

7. Business Items

a. Public Hearing to Certify Unpaid Utility Charges to the Property Tax Roll

Assistant Finance Director Josh Kent briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 4, 2024.

Councilmember Schroeder asked if anyone has protested these amounts or responded to the letter sent by the City.

Mr. Kent explained typically forty to fifty percent of the people respond back and pay their accounts.

Councilmember Strahan asked how this compares with previous quarters.

Mr. Kent indicated this is probably right in line with previous quarters.

Councilmember Groff asked if the same people are on the list year after year. Mr. Kent explained it tends to be recurring.

Mayor Roe reviewed public hearing protocol and opened and closed the public hearing at approximately 6:07 p.m. for the purpose of receiving public input on the above-referenced Unpaid Utility Charges to the Property Tax Roll; with no one coming forward for or against.

Groff moved, Schroeder seconded, adoption of Resolution No. 12054 entitled, "Resolution Directing the County Auditor to Levy Unpaid Water, Sewer and Other City Charges for Payable 2010 or Beyond."

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None.

b. Approve Streetlight Policy

Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 4, 2024.

Mayor Roe indicated the commercial area standard is still closer spaced lighting than residential areas. Even though the City is reducing lighting, for example, the CenterPoint area, is still going to end up having more lighting than if that was an equivalent residential area.

Mr. Freihammer indicated that is correct. The residential standard is approximately 600 feet of spacing between lights and commercial as proposed is roughly 200-250 feet, almost three times as much lighting.

Public Comment

Mayor Roe offered an opportunity for public comment with no one coming forward.

Schroeder moved, Strahan seconded, adoption of the revised Streetlight Policy.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None

c. Review Draft Lodging Establishment Licensing Ordinance

City Manager Patrick Trudgeon briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 4, 2024.

Councilmember Strahan indicated she did not see anything in the ordinance regarding minimum rental age and asked if this is something that can be placed in the requirements.

Mr. Trudgeon did not see why this could not be included in the requirements but was not sure what State Law says. He was not sure if persons under the age of 18 can rent a room in the first place under State Law.

City Attorney Tierney explained she made a note to check on this.

Councilmember Strahan thought if the City is concerned about underage drinking, she knew prom and other events can be a big night for high school individuals and if the person cannot rent a room by themselves, it might deter things a little bit, even though some parents do rent rooms for their kids. She also wondered if there is anything that can be done to make sure the establishment is current on its utilities in order to have a license.

Mr. Trudgeon indicated that is a requirement. When the establishment is not current on utilities the City does not have to issue a license in the first place or can suspend, fine, or revoke the license. Staff made sure the wording was in the ordinance regarding this because that is seen on a regular basis.

Councilmember Strahan asked if there was the possibility that another type of building could fall into the lodging establishment category, like apartments that may be rented on a short basis, maybe some of the short-term rentals, a condo, bed and breakfast, rooming house, or resort, and what kind of provisions have been made for those possibilities.

Mr. Trudgeon explained there is the definition of Hotel/Motel and Lodging Establishments in City Statutes. He asked City Attorney Tierney if there is any difference between what is being discussed and what could potentially be covered by this as well.

Councilmember Strahan stated the biggest difference she saw was that in the State information it was five or more rooms. She did not see that added to the City Ordinance that the definition was five or more rooms under the Minnesota Statute.

City Attorney Tierney indicated she will check on that but remembers the lodging establishment definition in the Hotel/Motel was referred directly to State Law. She will make sure that is accurate and it might be smart to make it clear.

Mayor Roe did not think it was the City's intent to license people who are doing short-term rentals in homes or condos or that sort of thing. Unless he is wrong about that, so if the language in the ordinance could be more clearly defined that would be helpful.

Councilmember Schroeder explained the City is going to need extra resources to do this, including an additional staff person to oversee this, and do the inspections. She thought it would fall under the Fire Department's realm.

Mr. Trudgeon indicated he misspoke and did not mean the City would need any extra person to do this. He meant to say that since the City did not have a person to do this, it will be a collective action from staff. While this will take a lot of work to initiate, especially educate the first time around, staff is already spending that time right now because of the problems. The sense is that the actual license and application will be managed by the administration department, the fire department will do the inspections, the community development department will do the community development inspections, and the police department will manage calls and conditions. This will be a team effort and staff will meet on a regular basis, especially in the beginning to sort out the particular issues at each hotel and talk through them as well as involving the City Attorney as the conditions are reviewed.

Councilmember Schroeder asked if Mr. Trudgeon felt the City had enough resources, at least to start with.

Mr. Trudgeon believed the City had enough resources and the ongoing maintenance of this whole process will need to be seen to determine how much time it will take. He did think right out of the gate the City should make sure the standard is set and if the City can get the expectations out there, like any other program, there will be some busy times of the year. Hopefully it will not be too burdensome, but time will tell.

Councilmember Schroeder indicated there was talk about the motel/hotel holding the license but there was also the interested party piece. She wondered if the interested party would apply for the license or would the owner apply for the license and if the interested party did something wrong, could that cause the license to be suspended even though the interested party is not the one that applied for the license. She noted she was a little confused about that.

Mr. Trudgeon explained the City is asking for the entity, the business, to apply for the license. The interested person could be the manager, someone who owns a part of the business, it could be the operator of the hotel, or could be the actual owner. If any one of those persons has a particular violation, the City can hold that license holder, being the business, accountable for actions. The license is really with the business and the owner.

City Attorney Tierney explained it is more about who is going to run the place. A corporation is a faceless name. What the City needs to know, as a licensing authority, is who is going to operate the business and are they a good operator. The City wants to know who the important people are in the corporation, business, so the City can make sure that whoever operates the business is suitable to operate the business.

Councilmember Schroeder asked on the background check, what is it the City is actually looking at.

City Attorney Tierney explained it is a criminal background check, not any other type of credit check is done.

Councilmember Groff indicated he is concerned about the extended stay portion of this, and he wondered why this would be made a requirement.

Mr. Trudgeon explained the City did put this in the ordinance to make sure that if someone was going to be an extended stay, which is more than 29 days, that there are certain facilities as a part of that room, which would be more expected for someone staying for a longer period of time. Some business models and hotels have the extended stay where there are multiple rooms with a full kitchen but that is not always the case. If there is a restaurant or a dining area in the place, the City may indicate that a kitchen is not needed but what the City wants to get away from is people renting hotel rooms out and having people stay there for months, not really understanding what is happening in those places, whether it is having contents in the room or cooking, that should not be done. That is the intent and he understood where Councilmember Groff was coming from. He thought there were two sides to this. This ordinance is not saying the motel/hotel cannot have an extended stay, but the City needs to be notified that the business is proposing this in order for the City to review it.

Councilmember Groff indicated one of the things he does not want to see is the City increasing its homelessness problem by putting undue burden on a person. He noted some people do not have the first and last months rent and do stay in a hotel as housing and it can continue longer than thought because the person is not in the financial position to get into a rental. He would hate to see the City putting people out on the street. He thought the City needed to think about and address that because that is not where he would want to head with this ordinance.

Councilmember Groff indicated another concern he had is if the City revokes a license and the business has two weeks' notice, it could create a problem for people that have already booked in those hotels.

Councilmember Strahan was hopeful that most of the City's hotels do not want to be in the position of having their license revoked or even the possibility of it. She appreciates and was hopeful that the City is calling the businesses to a higher standard, noting the goal is not to shut them down but to require and tell them to bring their facilities to a higher standard, so it is not necessary to suspend their license.

Mayor Roe wondered when the City would begin to issue licenses after the passage of the ordinance. He also suggested the licensing might begin July 1st and end June 30th because there are a lot of other City licenses due between January 1st and

December 31st. He noted on the initial application if a particular interested individual fails background check, it sounds like there is the ability for the business to make a correction to their application before a full denial happens.

City Attorney Tierney indicated that was correct.

Mayor Roe agreed with the concern of taking people out of a situation they are using for housing. He hoped that while the City has certain standards and requirements for an extended stay minimum, there may be some flexibility to them for special circumstances. He thought it made sense to have conversations with the operators, if the license is revoked or not approved for renewal, that the wind down period of fifteen days or two weeks may need to be longer than that. He would only want to do that if the folks running the hotel are saying that is too short.

Public Comment

Mayor Roe offered an opportunity for public comment with no one coming forward.

Mayor Roe asked that staff make any corrections or updates as a result of this discussion and bring back for further discussion and possible approval.

d. Consider Re-appointments to Advisory Commission

Mayor Roe briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 4, 2024.

Groff moved, Strahan seconded, Reappointment of Commissioner Jeena Gurung Vomhof to the Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission, Commissioner Nick Boulton to the Parks and Recreation Commission, Commissioners Pamela Aspnes, Erik Bjorum, and Karen Schaffhausen, to the Planning Commission, Commissioner Robert Murphy to the Police Civil Service Commission and Commissioners Dan Fergus, Allison Luongo, and Sarah Rudolf, to the Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission.

Council Discussion

Councilmember Groff thanked all of the Commissioners and stated he thought all did great work.

Councilmember Schroeder stated the City had some really good people on the Commissions, and asked for clarification on the HRIEC appointment because she thought the Council had agreed there was not going to be any new appointments made to that Commission. She wondered if that meant reappointment as well.

Mayor Roe did not think the Council specifically talked about that. He thought what was discussed at the meeting that night was the new appointment process for the HRIEC.

Councilmember Groff concurred.

Councilmember Strahan echoed her thanks for the people who have stepped forward to be on the Commissions and stated she think it is really important to reappoint to the HRIEC because it is going to be such a regrowth and this person knows that. She thought it was very important to affirm their commitment to be a part of the team.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None

c. Consider Appointments to Advisory Commissions

Mayor Roe briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 4, 2024.

Schroeder moved, Strahan seconded, appointing Mr. Davy and Ms. Vervoort to the Finance Commission for terms beginning April 1, 2024 and ending March 31, 2027.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None

Strahan moved, Groff seconded, appointing Mr. Kooistra and Mr. Penny to the Parks and Recreation Commission for terms beginning April 1, 2024 and ending March 31, 2027.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None

8. Council Direction on Councilmember Initiated Agenda Items

9. Approve Minutes

10. Approve Consent Agenda

At the request of Mayor Roe, City Manager Trudgeon briefly reviewed those items being considered under the Consent Agenda; and as detailed in specific Requests for Council Action dated March 4, 2024 and related attachments.

Groff moved, Strahan seconded, approval of the Consent Agenda including claims and payments as presented and detailed.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None.

a. Approve Payments

ACH Payments	\$101,830.39
108901-108933	64,316.58
TOTAL	\$166,146.97

- b. Approve General Purchases or Sale of Surplus Items Exceeding \$10,000**
- c. Adopt Resolution 12055 to Accept 2023 Police Department Donations**
- d. Receive Annual Police Forfeiture Accounts Summary**
- e. Approval of Application for 2024 AARP Community Challenge Grant**
- f. Approve Memorandums of Understanding with Law Enforcement Labor Services Unions Representing Police Sergeants, Lieutenants and the Deputy Chief Regarding Retention Incentive Payment**
- g. Approve Resolution 12056 Approving the Master Agreement for Maintenance of Traffic Control Signal Systems with Ramsey County**
- h. Approve Street Name Change Policy**
- i. Approve Resolutions 12057 and 12058 Prohibiting Parking, Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for County Road B Reconstruction**

11. Future Agenda Review, Communications, Reports, and Announcements – Council and City Manager

City Manager Patrick Trudgeon reviewed the March 11, 2024 City Council meeting (Worksession), and the March 18, 2024 City Council meeting.

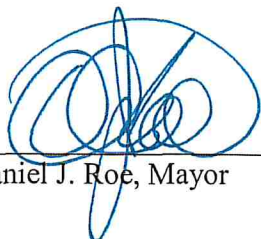
12. Adjourn

Schroeder moved, Strahan seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Ayes: Strahan, Schroeder, Groff and Roe.

Nays: None.



Daniel J. Roe, Mayor

ATTEST:



Patrick J. Trudgeon, City Manager