

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

MAY 11, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 11th day of May, 2022 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Mayor John Keis called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Keis, Council Members Fischer, Torkelson, McGraw and Miller. Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Chris Heineman, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell and City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller.

MINUTES

McGraw introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-5-62 – APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 27, 2022 WORKSHOP AND THE APRIL 27, 2022 REGULAR MEETINGS AS SUBMITTED

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Miller.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution adopted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Keis announced the Fire Department installed a new Firefighters Memorial next to the fire station, and the ribbon cutting was Monday night.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

PRESENTATION – 2021 ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

Michelle Hoffman, Principal at CliftonLarsonAllen, stated she will be reviewing the City of Little Canada's 2021 Comprehensive Financial Report for the City Council. Ms. Hoffman reported that all city staff were prepared and fully cooperated with the audit, and auditing staff were able to obtain all needed information. She noted that the Finance Director prepares the report and it is a big job to take on. She noted the audit provides a reasonable, but not absolute assurance. She stated there were no new policies adopted by the city in 2021, but noted that a change put in effect by GASBY regarding capital leases had been postponed and will go into effect in 2023. She stated they are issuing an Unmodified, "clean" audit opinion on the financial statements which is the best they can give, and there are no issues noted.

Ms. Hoffman reviewed the unassigned fund balance in the General Fund, which is the liquid portion of the City's finances since it is not designated for a specific purpose. She noted they fall within the City's policy. She explained that the City's main revenue is from property taxes which is received two times per year. She stated that the City's financial results have been fairly consistent over the last five

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years which is something that they are looking at. She explained the charts showing the Enterprise Funds (water and sewer funds) operating income, and future debt service. She noted the City has no debt levy which means that debt payments are supported by utility income rather than the taxpayers. She reviewed the financial results and the various funds, revenues, and expenditures, and compared the last few years. She showed how Little Canada compares to other cities and the state average in property tax levels.

PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDER A PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR A LENNAR TOWNHOME DEVELOPMENT; APPLICANT U.S. HOME, LLC - – PLANNING CASE #1412

The Community Development Director reported that the city has received a major subdivision application for approval of a Preliminary Plat from U.S. Home, LLC, Lennar, to construct a 178-unit townhome community. She reported this development is proposed on 17 acres of land owned by the Heinel family that have been used for farming, along with 2.6 acres of adjacent residential parcels on Desoto Street. She explained that Lennar plans to construct a mix of row townhomes and back-to-back townhomes to achieve an overall R-2 medium density zoning in accordance with future land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan. She stated the site is 19.77 gross acres and the density will be approximately 9-units per acre. She noted the entire site includes 4.6 acres of overhead powerline easement area that will be used for stormwater ponds and green space with a trail.

The Community Development Director gave an overview of the proposed development and reviewed how Vanderbie Street is planned to be extended north to connect with County Road D, and another internal street will also connect to County Road D.

Keis stated that one of the things talked about at the neighborhood meeting was how to drive traffic north to County Road D. He noted the second road only connects a small part of the development on the north end to County Road D, and he feels this road should go farther down into the development.

Melissa Duce, Lennar, explained that they looked at extending Desoto, but it decreased the number of units too much. Keis asked if they have another option. Ms. Duce stated they do not have another option at this point. Torkelson asked if the stormwater pond could be split so one of the internal streets could go all the way through to the north. Ms. Duce stated they could evaluate this. McGraw stated that when they talked about increasing density in this area, it was with the understanding of having another outlet to County Road D. Keis stated there is a second connection to County Road D, but it needs to reach further south into the development. The City Administrator reported that the second access on to County Road D has not been approved by Ramsey County and staff has been told not to assume that it will be granted.

Robert Rudolph, 525 Allen Avenue, concerned about the density, impact of traffic and the financial impact on adjacent properties. He feels the density is not being stated correctly and is actually 12 units per acre. He would like the road in the development to be a “U” and not allow traffic to come down onto Vanderbie Street at all. He does not think there is a need for a sidewalk.

Bryan Norris, 2925 Vanderbie Street, stated that Vanderbie Street has been a very quiet street, and he is mainly concerned about the traffic that will be coming down Vanderbie, and would rather not have the traffic coming down Vanderbie at all.

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Jackie Durand, 3043 Edgerton Street, stated she has lived in this area for her whole life and there have been a lot of changes to the city. She stated that she approves of this project because it could be a whole lot worse by being apartments or even commercial. She is asking for consideration of landscaping for privacy and she would like to see a buffer of landscaping between the residential and higher density. She would like to see berming with trees or hedging on top.

Roland Stoehr, 3010 Vanderbie Street, asked how he will get out of his driveway during construction when Vanderbie is extended, and feels the new sidewalk is not necessary and asked where it goes. He asked if Lennar will pay for the new street or will he be assessed.

Chelsea Keplinger, 2932 Vanderbie Street, stated that she appreciates the concerns from the Council about traffic, which is her main concern, and she thinks the second access on the north is important.

Michael Paver, 2870 Vanderbie Street, stated that feels if more people were notified, there would be more here tonight not happy about the increase in traffic on Vanderbie. He is not against the development or more density, and he understands the appeal for more taxes and more housing options, but does not understand why it has to connect to Vanderbie Street. He appreciates that the Council is concerned about the traffic and he appreciates that the developer wants to get the most units as possible out of the development. He stated that if people are going to Highway 36, they are probably going to go all the way down Vanderbie until they have to turn.

Emily Sullivan, 469 Allen Avenue, stated that the realtor selling the residential properties next to her to Lennar also tried to buy their property many times, but she loves the large lot and privacy they have. She stated that she loves the amount of land they have and privacy, and is scared of the amount of traffic that will be there and loss of the privacy they have, and the changes that will occur in her neighborhood. She is concerned about a new sidewalk because people gawk when they walk by and she will lose privacy.

Mary Claire Reischl, 2994 Sherry Court, representing the Pitrina Park townhome neighborhood. She suggested designating certain roads for construction vehicle use as to not have the construction traffic using the brand new Allen Avenue street and wrecking it. She noted that everyone in the room tonight would probably like to have a U-shaped road instead of connecting to Vanderbie Street.

Karin Plessel, 3001 Vanderbie Street, asked when the city would know who is going to pay for the Vanderbie street construction. She said that people race quite fast up and down Allen Avenue now and she is concerned about the little kids.

Robert Rudolph asked what the estimated population of this development would be. He estimates about 400-500 people in that area which is a lot of people. He stated it does not seem like anyone is against the project, but would like to see some tweaks.

There were no further comments from the public. Upon motion by McGraw, seconded by Fischer, the public hearing was closed.

McGraw stated he would like to make every effort to cut the impact of this project as much as possible.

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Keis agreed. Fischer stated that it needs to be resolved who would pay for the Vanderbie street extension.

Keis asked if traffic studies have been done on the roads that are there now. The City Administrator stated that Ramsey County requested a traffic analysis be done, and the City Engineer has been looking specifically at intersection controls and would it meet the criteria for 2-way or 4-way stops. He noted that so far it is unlikely to meet the criteria for 4-way stops. Torkelson pointed out the traffic study does not focus on the specific Vanderbie and Allen intersections, and asked if more information could be gotten from the intersections that would directly be impacted. The City Administrator stated they can get information from similar sized developments. Fischer stated that we need to find out if the developer is willing to help direct the traffic north. Torkelson stated that traffic calming measures could also help decrease traffic going south and slow down the traffic.

The City Administrator explained that the Parks Master Plan that was adopted in 2018 includes sidewalk connections going north and south on Vanderbie, on the Desoto corridor, and east and west along the powerline corridor and Allen Avenue. Torkelson clarified that the planned sidewalk seems unnecessary now because it would not connect to anything, but the future plans are to have it connect to other trails or sidewalks.

Keis stated he would like to table the decision to give Lennar some time to see if they will address some of the concerns heard tonight. Fischer agreed and thanked Lennar for being willing to make changes so far, and he hopes they will continue to work with the city and it can get across the finish line. Keis noted that Lennar has other townhome projects in the metro area that are similar so residents could see how they are laid out and how people move through them.

McGraw introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-5-63 – APPROVE TABLING THE 178 TOWNHOME UNIT PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR U.S. HOME, LLC AND LENNAR UNTIL THE MAY 25, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Fischer.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

CONSENT AGENDA

Fischer introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-5-64 – APPROVING THE CONSENT AGENDA WHICH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING:

- Approval of the Vouchers
- Approve Renewal of Liquor, Tobacco and Amusement Device Licenses for the Period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 as Recommended in the Staff Report

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by McGraw.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution adopted.

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FINANCE DIRECTOR HIRE

The City Clerk reported that former Finance Director, Brenda Malinowski, resigned in April. She explained that the job was posted in multiple locations and 11 applications were received. She stated that four candidates were initially interviewed, and the top two candidates were invited back to interview with the Personnel Committee, which includes the City Administrator and Council members McGraw and Fischer. She reported that a top candidate was then chosen, and an offer was made and accepted by the candidate. She stated that staff is excited to welcome Sam Magureanu in June as the new Finance Director. She noted that Sam has worked for two other cities in the Twin Cities, as an Assistant Finance Director and a Finance Director, along with also five years of experience as a government auditor.

Fischer introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-5-65 – APPROVE THE HIRE OF SAMUEL MAGUREANU AS THE FINANCE DIRECTOR, BEGINNING JUNE 9, 2022

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by McGraw.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Resolution declared adopted.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

John T. Keis, Mayor

Attest:

Christopher Heineman, City Administrator