

MINUTES

1. CONVENE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

Mayor Labadie called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

A. Roll Call

Present. Mayor Labadie; Councilmembers Johnson (via video-conference) Labadie, Siakel, Gorham, and Callies; Interim City Administrator Shukle; Planning Director Darling; Director of Public Works Brown; and, Parks and Recreation Director Crossfield

Absent: None

B. Review Agenda

Callies moved, Gorham seconded, approving the agenda as presented. Motion passed 4/0.

2. INTEGRATED PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN (IPM) PHASES 1 AND 2

Planning Director Darling reminded the Council that the City had contracted with the IPM Institute of North America to prepare a guiding document regarding alternatives to the use of chemicals or pesticides for City owned facilities and grounds. She noted that as the City moves forward it is important to have a clear approach in addressing this issue, but also recognize that it will involve additional labor, costs, and other tradeoffs by having such a policy. She reviewed the list of questions for Council to consider as they are reviewing the materials being presented. She introduced Ryan Anderson, IPM Institute of North America and Alec McClennan and Sydney Leziac of Good Nature Organic Lawn Care/Midwest Grows Green.

Mayor Labadie noted that tonight's meeting is informational and not for citizen input, but assured residents that this would not be the last time this item would be in front of the Council.

Ryan Anderson, Sustainable Communities Manager, IPM Institute of North America, gave a brief overview of IPM Institute and noted that he feels that there are various tools that can be used to control pests and weeds, with pesticides being used as a last resort. He gave a presentation that outlined the three phases of their Technical Assistance Program (TAP): Phase 1 – Sustainable Landscaping Audit; Phase II – Three Year Sustainable Landscape Management Plan; Phase III Implementation of Audit and Plan Recommendations. He reviewed the City's pollinator policy and outlined the best management practices and areas that had room for improvement for each clause. He reviewed the types of pesticide products that the City has used.

Mr. Anderson explained the idea behind prioritizing and classifying the fields based on the visibility of the park, foot traffic for the park, and the communities expectations. He outlined the different categories and explained which parks were in each category and what cultural management practices would be used in each as well as the use of data points for product purchasing. He

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stated that the Phase I recommendations are to prioritize the fields, increase cultural controls, and use data for fertility needs and weed control. He stated that there are additional recommendations within the report for non-turf grass areas with what IPM refers to as a flywheel weed management approach. He gave an overview of some ways the flywheel approach could be applied to the algae growth at Manor Pond, buckthorn control, pollinator friendly zones, and emerald ash borer.

Councilmember Gorham asked about timing for all of the recommendations that are being made because they are now basically into the winter months.

Mr. Anderson confirmed that the City had missed the overseeding and aeration window of time for the fall, so they would now recommend that the efforts begin in the spring with things related to turf grass management.

Alec McClennan, Good Nature Organic Lawn Care, gave a presentation regarding their assessment of the City parks and recommendations moving forward. He gave an overview of various turf maintenance styles including traditional, organic and pesticide free. He explained that it is possible to have a nice field without resorting to pesticide use and reviewed ways to mow properly, feed the soil, and seed regularly. He explained that they had tested all the City's fields with both a nutrient and a physical analysis. He stated that the soil tended to be high in magnesium and calcium, have low potassium and phosphorus, and reviewed ways that the soil could be fed. He reviewed the best time to seed, how overseeding can be accomplished, and what type of seed works well. He noted that they are suggesting that the City add slit seeding to their operations and reviewed some of the benefits of also seeding with micro-clover as a way to be more pollinator friendly. He explained some of the options for reclassification of parks/fields and reviewed some of the budget considerations for pesticide free or treating fully organically for the current categories compared to their suggestions. He stated that there are benefits and challenges for the Council to consider with alternative ways to take care of the fields.

Councilmember Gorham asked Mr. McClennan to review the spreadsheet information that outlined their recommendations.

Mr. McClennan reviewed the options and estimated costs for the City fields in using either full organic, pesticide free, as well as the option of micronutrient treatments. He noted that they are flexible and the plan can be gone through on a field by field basis and the City can pick and choose how each should be treated based on their budget.

Mayor Labadie thanked Mr. McClennan for his presentation and noted that it was very understandable, but noted that there was a lot of information shared with the Council that will need to be digested. She asked if Park Commissioner Levy would like to make any comments to the Council.

Commissioner Levy stated that she was here just to observe the meeting.

Mayor Labadie asked staff to weigh in with their thoughts on the information that has been presented.

Public Works Director Brown stated that he has one minor correction to the report. He noted that the report stated that the City did not have irrigation in their parks, but explained that there were considerable areas in Freeman Park that do have irrigation. He stated that he felt the

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recommended plan looks good from a methodical standpoint, but noted that he felt the 'hurdle' for this will be related to finances and manpower.

Mr. McClennan noted that there is definitely more manpower that is necessary for this kind of approach and noted that they have worked with cities in the past who have been able to get grant funding for sustainable turf care that has funded their initial expenses.

Mayor Labadie stated that one reality of the current economy is difficulty with the labor shortages and many of the recommendations do involve a lot of manpower.

Mr. Anderson recommended taking a look at www.lawnandland.org and referenced an example of a manager in Chicago who found out that they saved money by contracting the mowing rather than having staff do the work.

Mr. McClennan stated that it would not be a cost savings, but if finding manpower is a problem, the City could also look into robotic mowers.

Planning Director Darling stated that the information presented by Mr. Anderson and Mr. McClennan was a very thorough look at the City's practices.

Mayor Labadie noted that the report put together by Planning Director Darling included some potential next steps for the Council to consider such as holding another Work Session meeting, holding a listening session for public comment, or formal adoption. She stated that, in her opinion, she did not think the City was anywhere near being ready to formally adopt anything yet.

Councilmember Callies stated that she liked the idea of prioritizing the fields, the cultural controls, and using data points. She stated that a big concern she has is that this is being driven by the Bee Friendly resolution that was passed in 2014. She noted that both of the consultants talked about flexibility and ultimate goals for the City and the recommendations were not 'must' do, however, the way the resolution is written, it does not allow for any middle ground because it is a zero tolerance resolution that she feels has had unintended consequences. She stated that in hindsight, it would have been a good idea to have this study before the resolution and stated that she did not think it was fair to staff to maintain the resolution in its current form as 'must have zero tolerance' policy. She reiterated that both consultants also said that there can be an ultimate goal that the City can strive to achieve, but it does not have to be done today or tomorrow. She stated that in terms of the big picture, she feels the resolution should be changed and worded in a different way so that the City can work towards the goal of reducing the use of chemicals.

Mr. McClennan stated that their pesticide free approach would comply with the existing resolution.

Councilmember Callies stated that she did not think the language in the resolution would support the approach that was being discussed with recategorizing certain areas of the parks. She stated that she did not intend to just dwell on the resolution, but feels that it is a significant factor in how the City got to where it is today in looking at this issue. She reiterated that she feels that there needs to be a new resolution so the City can apply the policies in a more appropriate manner.

Mayor Labadie noted that at the time the resolution was passed she was on the Council along with Councilmembers Siakel, Johnson, and former Mayor Scott Zerby, who was present in the audience tonight. She stated that when it was passed, Shorewood was the first City in the State to pass any type of 'bee-safe' resolution. She noted that it is quite common that codes and

resolutions are reviewed and modified over time. She stated that this this resolution has not been modified since 2014, but agreed with the interpretation of Councilmember Callies of the existing resolution and thinks looking at the resolution would be worthy of a discussion.

Councilmember Siakel stated that she did not see an issue in amending the resolution and believes what Councilmember Callies has stated is accurate and would agree that there had been some unintended consequences that have come from the resolution. She noted that the intent and the reasons that the City had the resolution in the first place are still valid, but would agree that taking another look at the resolution may be a good thing. She asked about the emerald ash borer chemical treatments and who was applying the product.

Public Works Director Brown stated that Davey Tree is applying the product for the City under a contract.

Councilmember Siakel stated that it is done every year, but they are telling the consultants that it is good for three years. She stated that it may be a good idea to dust off and make sure there is a good understanding of where things are with regard to the tree inventory for the next five years.

Public Works Director Brown explained that what they try to do is select thirty specimen ash trees that they want to save each year and are not injecting the same tree every year.

Councilmember Siakel stated that she understands that tonight's meeting is to just review the information, but she would like to, at some point, hear from the public. She stated that there is a lot of change happening within the City with the retirement of Public Works Director Brown and the search for a new City Administrator and agreed that this may be the time to consider whether the City brings someone in to do the mowing and application.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he wants to be careful with changing the language of the resolution because it almost makes it look like the City cannot comply, so they just want to make the language looser. He stated that he feels both Mr. Anderson and Mr. McClellan have given the City recommendations on how they can reduce the danger levels. He stated that as long as the language is carefully constructed where the City is still not using systemic pesticides, he would be in support of taking a fresh look at this resolution. He stated that his biggest issue is with implementation because they have to look at costs, including the possible slit seeder and a possible mowing contract, which means that what has been presented is not quite the full picture of the cost. He noted that he would like to see more robust input from Public Works on what this proposal really is to help inform the decision making around a possible levy for these costs. He stated that he suspects that when this moves forward that there will be a lot of trial and error and asked how staff would be trained.

Councilmember Callies asked if there was anybody available locally so the City did not have to pay for a consultant to come in from out of State. She stated that she did not mean to imply that Mr. McClellan had not done a great job thus far, but feels that they should take a look and see if there is someone that does not have to be flown in for this work.

Mr. McClellan stated that he believes that there are folks near the City that could be contracted out to do much of the work. He noted that the benefit that he can provide is to be an impartial sounding board for the City on the turf side of the equation.

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Mayor Labadie noted that she believes every Councilmember who has spoken on this has shared that they are interested in getting input from the public.

The Council discussed getting public input via an Open House type format with the consultants present and the possibility of holding another Council Work Session.

Mr. McClellan suggested that they work with the appropriate staff member to take the framework that they have put together and put it into a concrete picture for pricing and what they would like to do and then the public can comment on that. He stated that in its current form, there are a lot of options presented that don't allow for there to be a firm budget number which would be hard for the public to comment on.

The Council discussed the possibility of holding another Council Work Session to review the resolution language and set the parameters for what the public would be commenting on.

Mayor Labadie asked if there was anyone from the public that would like to comment and give the Council input on what direction they would like to see the City focus on based on what had been presented this evening.

Jeff Dinsmore, 5805 Minnetonka Drive, stated that he thinks, before the Council has another work session, that they should have some public input. He stated that one of his thoughts is to make sure that they are coming at this from a bit higher level and consider the philosophy behind this way of looking at things more holistically. He stated that with regard to ash trees, his big question is why the City was treating them for cosmetic reasons and with systemic pesticides, because then they stop being part of the natural ecosystem and can do harm to parts of what is around them, in terms of wildlife.

Patricia Houser, 5805 Minnetonka Drive, stated that when they originally presented the resolution, they never called it 'Bee-friendly', they called it 'Bee-safe' and their hope was that it would help the community. She stated that she would like the City to go back and revisit why they talked about systemic pesticides. She stated that the information presented by Mr. Anderson and Mr. McClellan has been really good but she would like there to have been a focus on the meaning of 'systemic'. She stated that regarding the treatment for emerald ash borer she feels it is very harmful and does not do a service to the City in the long run. She stated that she thought the information presented by Mr. McClelland was excellent and was a way to look at how the City can do this over the long term. She stated that she felt that it would really have a positive impact on the health and safety of children as well as insects and pollinators. She stated that she strongly recommends that the City spend time really figuring out how to do this and, if not, they should not say that this is a 'Bee-safe' City.

Mr. Anderson stated that regarding the resolution, he feels that there is still value in having those end goals and noted that he really wanted to stress Clause #6 that is an annual 'progress' report. He stated that he believes that was included because in most cases you are not able to simply go 'cold turkey' on the use of pesticides. He stated that with regard to the question of bringing in outside consultants, he wanted to clarify that the City had a signed contract with them for all three phases.

Mayor Labadie stated that she feels the Council should take a look at the language of the existing resolution but noted that it may be a good idea to wait until the new Councilmembers are involved.

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Councilmember Callies agreed that this will take time and explained her concern with the resolution in its current form. She explained that she did not think that needed to await the new Councilmembers and felt it could be on an upcoming agenda.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he feels it makes sense to wait because there are about to be two new Councilmembers, a new City Administrator and a new Public Works Director.

Councilmember Siakel disagreed and noted that it is really just a handful of words and the amendments would not change the intent.

Mayor Labadie asked staff to put discussion of the resolution language on an upcoming agenda.

Councilmember Callies offered to work with staff on some proposed language amendments for the resolution.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he feels this is something that should also have resident input.

Councilmember Callies noted that she was talking about making fairly small changes to the language and shared examples of where she would like to see some language changed.

Mayor Labadie stated that she agreed that the Council should look at the resolution and noted that she had also flagged some things within the resolution, but upon further thought, she agreed with Councilmember Gorham that it needs more discussion before it is put on an agenda for action to be taken. She stated that she would like to see it put on a Work Session and allow for resident comment on it before it is on a regular agenda for action.

Councilmember Callies noted that a work session is not a public hearing and feels that perhaps the Council is beating this issue a bit too much.

Councilmember Siakel stated that if the proposed language amendments are discussed by the Council in an open forum, she asked what the difference would be discussing it at a Work Session versus a regular Council meeting.

Councilmember Gorham expressed concern that if this comes back before the Council with 'cooked' language amendments, it makes it seem like it is already a done deal and without community input, he feels it will not go anywhere.

Councilmember Callies stated that she would disagree with the characterization of 'cooked' language. She stated that her point that she is bringing up is that she does not believe the resolution accurately reflects what the circumstances are today and reiterated that she believed that there had been some unintended consequences from it and she felt the language of the resolution should match what the City is actually doing.

Scott Zerby, 5680 Christopher Road, stated that he co-founded this resolution along with Ms. Houser when he was the mayor. He explained that the importance was on looking at the health of residents and that had started with the idea of the bees being at the bottom of the food chain. He stated that he believes that what Councilmember Callies may be reaching for is to try to put 'best practices' into the resolution. He noted that he thought the resolution was a stepping stone towards broader things and he appreciates the Council's interest in continuing that approach. He

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stated that the money this Council has invested in the IPM program is astounding and impressive, however, he felt that putting best practices into the resolution does not put any onus on anyone because nothing would actually be done.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he does not feel as though the City has really tried to meet the spirit of the language in the resolution. He stated that he questions changing the language without having at least tried to meet it. He explained that he did not like the idea of lowering the bar nor did he feel creating more gray areas was necessary. He stated that he would like to give it a try and if, by year three, the City finds that it is unsustainable, then they can take another look at the language.

Mayor Labadie stated that in her opinion, as an attorney, the existing language is too strict for the City to be able to implement most of the things that the consultants were talking about in their presentations.

Councilmember Siakel stated that as former Mayor Zerby stated, the original resolution was a start and intended to be a stepping stone. She stated that she is in favor of proposing some new language and having the Council discuss it and does not think there needs to be a lot of meetings added to the calendar.

Councilmember Callies noted that if the proposed changes are on the agenda and it does not receive a second, then it would not go anywhere. She stated that she did not feel it is right to have a resolution in place that does not at all allow for any use of pesticides anywhere in the City.

Ms. Houser noted that it did not say that and stressed the importance of the word 'systemic'.

Mayor Labadie stated that this needs more discussion, and asked staff to include it on an upcoming agenda.

Councilmember Gorham asked if there would be public comment on the topic.

Planning Director Darling stated that typically the Council does not take comment for non-public hearings, but they could gather public input prior to the meeting for example a survey or invite them to e-mail.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he does not want to see this go to something like Survey Monkey because he feels it seems bigger than that. He suggested that the Council spend time at a work session working on the language and then have it available for public comment.

Councilmember Siakel stated that she felt the Council was over complicating this issue.

Councilmember Callies stated that she did not feel that this was proposing a major policy change.

Councilmember Gorham disagreed and stated that he felt making that kind of change could be considered a major policy change because the City was a landmark City when this resolution was adopted. He stated that it is on the website and is very important to people.

Mayor Labadie suggested that this item be put on a short work session with the hope that when it is put on the agenda that all five Councilmembers can be present.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he would like to suggest a thirty minute work session, an opportunity for public comment, and then an agenda item for a vote.

Councilmember Callies asked if he meant that he wanted to hold three separate meetings on this topic.

Councilmember Gorham stated that was his suggestion and noted that he felt the work session would be very short.

Mayor Labadie noted that the Council had also discussed the possibility of holding an Open House for implementation of the larger plan from IPM and involvement of consultants. She asked if Public Works Director Brown and Planning Director Darling could work with them on honing in on some of the details prior to getting public comment.

Public Works Director Brown stated that from his back of the napkin calculations, to step into this program and look at equipment and material costs the \$45,000 that is budgeted for next year is clearly not going to be enough. He stated that he thinks they can work to get their arms around the cost and ask Finance Director Rigdon about what impact that will have on the levy. He stated that they may need to take a look at how they can step into this with their financial limitations right now and implement this over time.

Councilmember Callies noted that his use of the term 'implement over time' suggests that it is a progression which is not what is in the current resolution language.

Mayor Labadie stated that her understanding of the direction being given was that staff would work with the consultants and narrow down various aspects of the program that can be discussed more thoroughly and be presented to the public.

3. ADJOURN

Gorham moved, Callies seconded, Adjourning the City Council Work Session Meeting of November 7, 2022, at 8:56 P.M. Motion passed 4/0.

ATTEST:



Sandie Thone, City Clerk


Jennifer Labadie, Mayor