

# **Maple Grove City Council Work Session**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**June 7, 2021**

### **Call to Order**

Pursuant to call and notice thereof, a City Council Work Session was held at 6:15 p.m. on Monday, June 7, 2021 at the Maple Grove Government Center/Public Safety Facility, Hennepin County, Minnesota. Present was Mayor Steffenson and Councilmembers Karen Jaeger, Phil Leith, Judy Hanson, and Kristy Barnett. Present also was City Administrator Heidi Nelson, Finance Director Greg Sticha, Community and Economic Development Director Joe Hogeboom, Superintendent of Recreation Aimee Peterson, Special Events Coordinator Tanya Huntley, Brandon Vreeman, President of Maple Grove Community Organization (MGCO), and City Attorney Scott Landsman.

Mayor Steffenson called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

### **Forest Preservation Area Conservation Discussion**

Joe Hogeboom and Arbor Committee Chair Mary Parenteau discussed that the Arbor Committee has made a recommendation that the city consider establishing conservation easements over the several hundred acres of land that comprises the Forest Preservation Area (FPA). Six of the nineteen parcels that comprise the FPA have various restrictive covenants that preclude various development activities. Two of those restrictions are enforceable by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In addition to various title restrictions, much of the land that comprises the FPA is likely undevelopable, due to the existence of creek bed, wetlands, and steep topography. Much of the FPA was purchased by an authorized bond referendum in 1995, established to allow the city to acquire properties for environmental preservation.

Kristine Mauer, Hennepin County staff, and Kristina Geiger, Minnesota Land Trust staff co-presented information pertaining to a joint program that facilitates in the establishment of conservation easements.

The City Council stated that the city has maintained the FPA for its intended conservation purposes, maintaining open and natural spaces and conducting periodic invasive species removal. It is the intention of the City Council to continue conservation practices in the FPA going forward. However, the City Council concluded that it is not within the best interest of the city to relinquish control of the city-owned asset to an outside entity. The City Council seeks feedback from the Arbor Committee regarding potential ways to enhance the existing Forest Management Plan to ensure that the FPA is well-managed and that preservation activities continue. The City Council also directed staff to have discussions with Hennepin County and the Minnesota Land Trust regarding potential ways agencies could partner to provide and enhance best management practices in the heavily forested areas in the southern end of the FPA.

## **Maple Grove Days Update**

At their May 17th meeting, Council authorized financial support of \$10,000 for the 2021 Maple Grove Days events and offered that MGCO representatives could come to a future worksession to provide an update on Maple Grove Days planning as well as sponsorship progress. Brandon Vreeman, President of Maple Grove Community Organization, provided an update on the planning for the event as well as the status of sponsorships. Sponsorship is down by \$20,000 over previous years due to business impacts of the pandemic as well as corporate restrictions on sponsoring events. MGCO requested an additional \$10,000 in sponsorship from the city to help cover the cost of the 2021 event and allow MGCO to maintain a fund balance to prepare for Maple Grove Days 2022. Council consensus was to contribute the additional \$10,000 in city sponsorship for the 2021 Maple Grove Days event.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Steffenson at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "N".

Heidi Nelson, City Administrator