

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 26, 2020**

The following are the minutes for the regular meeting of the City Council held at 7:00 pm on Monday, October 26, 2020, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 590 40th Avenue N.E., Columbia Heights, Minnesota.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Schmitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mayor Schmitt; Councilmember Buesgens; Councilmember Novitsky; Councilmember Williams

Absent: Councilmember Murzyn, Jr.

Also Present: Kelli Bourgeois, City Manager; Luke Fischer; Mitch Forney, Community Development Coordinator; Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; James Hoeft, City Attorney; Dan O'Brien, Assistant Fire Chief; Will Rottler, Communications and Events Specialist; Ben Sandell, Communications Coordinator; Nicole Tingley, City Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MISSION STATEMENT, Read by Mayor Schmitt

Our mission is to provide the highest quality public services. Services will be provided in a fair, respectful and professional manner that effectively address changing citizen and community needs in a fiscally-responsible and customer-friendly manner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to approve the agenda as presented. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITION, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GUESTS

A. League of Minnesota Cities Presents its 2020 Sustainable City Award to the City of Columbia Heights

Luke Fischer, Deputy Director of the League of Minnesota Cities, acknowledged and thanked Mayor Schmitt for her service at the organization. He described the League as an association that represents 835 Minnesota cities, ranging in population from 13 to 425,000, and described the services that it provides to them. Then, on behalf of the League of Minnesota Cities Board of Directors, he presented to the City of Columbia Heights the "2020 Sustainable City Award" and a check for \$1,000.00 for its successful yard waste organics pickup expansion program.

Mayor Schmitt acknowledged the groups who worked so hard on the program, thanked Mr. Fischer for the honor of receiving the award, and then presented to him, as a visiting guest, the Columbia Heights 100-Year pin.

B. 100th Anniversary Celebration Update

Coordinator Sandell reported that he had met with city and staff committees to help plan the Columbia Heights' 100th Anniversary Celebration and has been working on the 2021 commemorative calendar, with a goal for it to be ready for sale on November 9. He then introduced Specialist Rottler, who reported it has been a six-month process. The most recent event was "Movie in the Park," with 40 families (150 residents) attending, and he thanked the Boosters for donating popcorn, Northeast Bank for donating bags, and Pizza Man donating coupons. Current and upcoming activities include those of the Centennial Quilt Committee, Bakken Museum virtual programming at the Library, Bootstrap book discussion, banner sponsorship program, snow sculpture contest, winter festival event, Minnesota Streetcar Museum presentation, splashpad poster, and upcoming sale of lapel pins, tee-shirts, and cups.

Mayor Schmitt requested a monthly Celebration update from the Communications Department.

CONSENT AGENDA

(These items are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted as part of the Consent Agenda by one motion. Items removed from consent agenda approval will be taken up as the next order of business.)

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

1. Approve September 28, 2020, City Council Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the City Council Meeting of September 28, 2020.

2. Accept November 4, 2019, Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to accept the minutes of the Traffic Commission Meeting of November 4, 2019.

3. Accept September 2, 2020, Library Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to accept the minutes of the Library Board Meeting of September 2, 2020.

4. Final Compensating Change Order and Payment for 2020 Miscellaneous Concrete, City Project No. 2000

MOTION: Move to approve the final compensating change order and accept the work for 2020 Miscellaneous Concrete Repairs and Installations, City Project No. 2000, and authorize final payment of \$6,793.25 TO Create Construction LLC of Maple Grove, Minnesota.

5. Consideration of Approval of Attached List of Rental Housing Applications

MOTION: Move to approve the items listed for rental housing license applications for October 26, 2020, in that they have met the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code.

6. Approve Business License Applications

MOTION: Move to approve the items as listed on the Business License Agenda for October 26, 2020, as presented.

7. Review of Bills

MOTION: Move that in accordance with Minnesota Statute 412.271, subd. 8, the City Council has reviewed the enclosed list of claims paid by check and by electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$1,261,989.47.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

8. Adopt Resolution No. 2020-73 for Abatement

Director Hansen provided background information and an update regarding the property at 3821 Reservoir Boulevard. Staff has had several discussions with the property owner; and retaining wall drawings have been prepared and submitted to the Building Official, with a permit issued. The owner has started excavation for the wall base and blocks have been ordered and delivered. Staff is pleased with the owner's compliance and intends to stay in contact with him, continuing site inspections to verify the status of the wall installation. Staff recommends tabling the declaration of a nuisance and abatement of violations to a Council Meeting until May of 2021.

Mayor Schmitt opened the public hearing.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Buesgens, to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Resolution No. 2020-73, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Buesgens, to table Resolution No. 2020-73, being a resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Heights declaring the property listed as a nuisance and approving the abatement of violations from the properties pursuant to City Code Section 8.206 until May 2021. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

9. Adopt Resolution No. 2020-88, Levying and Adopting the Assessment for Alley Light Area No. 677-47

Director Hansen provided background information regarding the assessment of adding one alley light to benefit nearby properties on an existing pole behind 2105 Fairway Drive. The subject had been tabled to October 26 to better inform impacted residents of the preferred Night Watch lighting option, which would reduce the number of properties assessed from nine to six at a cost of \$1.00 per month, though the cost may increase with electric rate increases. He stated that the three properties that would not receive benefit of the lighting were informed by mail and the remaining six had all signed off on the Night Watch selection.

Mayor Schmitt opened the public hearing.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Resolution No. 2020-88, there being ample copies available to the public. Motion Carried 4-0.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to adopt Resolution No. 2020-88, being a resolution levying and adopting the assessment for alley light, Area No. 677-47. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

10. Consideration of Revocation of the License to Operate a Rental Unit within the City of Columbia Heights is Requested Against the Rental Property at 4710 Heights Drive NE for Failure to Meet the Requirements of the Residential Maintenance Codes

Assistant Chief O'Brien confirmed that the owner of the rental property at 4710 Heights Drive NE had not responded to the Fire Department concerning the potential license revocation.

Mayor Schmitt opened the public hearing.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Buesgens, to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Resolution No. 2020-89, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Buesgens, to adopt Resolution No. 2020-89, being a resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Heights approving revocation pursuant to City Code, Chapter 5A, Article IV, Section 5A.408(A) of the rental license listed. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Ordinances and Resolutions

11. Business Relief Grant Agreement

Coordinator Forney provided background information regarding the grant process and reported that applications for the 2020 Columbia Heights Business Relief Grant Program were reviewed by the City's underwriting contractors at CMDC and recommendations were based off of their findings. Grantees approved will be required to provide proof of expenditures and losses to the Community Development Department pursuant to the grant guidelines, with the maximum grant award allowed being \$20,000.00.

The recommended businesses include Advanced Collision Repair (\$20,000.00), Big Cutz Barber Shop LLC (\$20,000.00), Cashman Dental Clinic PLLC (\$20,000.00), Central Cuts and Styles (\$12,000.00), Columbia Heights Dairy Queen (\$2,073.00), El Tequila (\$20,000.00), Embroidery and More (\$20,000.00), Hairatage (\$15,000.00), Heights Theater (\$20,000.00), Jimmy's Pro Billiards (\$20,000.00), K-Mama Sauce (\$20,000.00), NE Chiropractic (\$16,000.00), Quick Fix (\$10,000.00), Roman's Café (\$20,000.00), Sarna's Class Grill (\$20,000.00), and Sportsmen's Barbers (\$20,000.00, totaling \$275,073.00.

Mr. Forney conveyed to the Council that all applicants had expressed profound appreciation for their grants. Councilmembers thanked Mr. Forney for his effort to speak with the applicants in person.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2020-90, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to adopt Resolution No. 2020-90, a resolution approving the form and substance of the Columbia Heights Business Relief Grant Agreement and approving City staff and officials to take all actions necessary to enter the City into Business Relief Grant agreements with various grant recipients. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

CITY COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Report of the City Council

Councilmember Buesgens attended several Zoom meetings: the League of Minnesota Cities concerning a legislative update and police accountability; Economic Outlook for the Cities and briefing from Governor Tim Walz; attended in person the School Board meeting and learned that Valley View Elementary will be getting a new boiler, which will better regulate the Library temperature. She also planted garlic in the food forest at Lomiaki Park; attended new police officer Shelby Tomber's swearing-in ceremony; watched the MWMO's North Columbia Golf Course stormwater project presentation; and listened to the book conversation regarding the Bootstrap's book.

Councilmember Williams said he had the privilege of attending the get-together honoring Councilmember Novitsky's mother, who recently passed away, and expressed his sympathy to the family. Councilmember Novitsky said it was a good celebration of life and expressed appreciation to those who supported the family during the difficult time.

Mayor Schmitt took part in Shelby Tomber's swearing-in ceremony and said it was nice to see the accomplishments of a young person who works hard and is now a new police officer on the force, and also expressed appreciation to all of the City officers who sacrifice so much and support the community. She attended the MAC meeting via Zoom, which included a presentation by Alexander House, and reminded residents to be mindful of domestic abuse.

Report of the City Manager

Manager Bourgeois provided reminders about the "Boo Drive-Thru " on Thursday, October 29, 5:00-8:00 pm on Mill Street and the General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. She also announced that Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. would be unable to attend the Park and Recreation meeting on Wednesday, October 28, at 5:30 pm and asked that a Councilmember stand in for him.

Report of the City Attorney

Attorney Hoeft had no updates for the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Williams, to adjourn. All Ayes, Motion Carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Tingley, City Clerk/Council Secretary