



CITY COUNCIL MEETING
City Hall—Council Chambers, 590 40th Ave NE
Monday, April 26, 2021
7:00 PM

Mayor
Amada Márquez Simula
Councilmembers
John Murzyn, Jr.
Connie Buesgens
Nick Novitsky
Kt Jacobs
City Manager
Kelli Bourgeois

MINUTES

The following are the minutes for the Special Meeting of the City Council held at 7:00 pm on Monday, April 26, 2021 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 590 40th Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, Minnesota. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this hybrid meeting was held both virtually and in-person.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

Present: Mayor Márquez Simula; Councilmember Buesgens; Councilmember Jacobs; Councilmember Murzyn, Jr.; Councilmember Novitsky

Also Present: Kelli Bourgeois, City Manager; Renee Dougherty, Library Director; Bruce Evans; Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; Jim Hoeft, City Attorney; Lorien Mueller; Will Rottler, Community and Events Specialist; Nicole Tingley, City Clerk; Catherine Vesley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MISSION STATEMENT

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Márquez Simula announced one addition to the agenda, that being “School Board Liaison Update – Lorien Mueller” under “Proclamations, Presentations, Recognition, Announcements, Guests.”

Motion by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., seconded by Councilmember Jacobs, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITION, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GUESTS

A. Recognition of Departing Board and Commission Members

Mayor Márquez Simula recognized and thanked departing Board and Commission members for their service to the City: Catherine Vesley, Library Board 2000-2021; Bruce Evans, Park and Recreation Commission 2014-2021; Marsha Stroik, Park and Recreation Commission 2003-2021; Kevin Doty, Traffic Commission 2007-2021; Brian Clerkin, Traffic Commission 2012-2021; and Adam Schill, Planning Commission 2016-2021.

Ms. Vesley said it was a pleasure to serve the Library Board among “wonderful people who

are dedicated to the cause,” felt fortunate to have the support of the City Council and recognized the Library staff for their work, “who provide accurate answers for all users and are treated very well.” She asked the City Council to continue their support of the Library, “a wonderful institution.” Councilmembers thanked Ms. Vesley for her service, and Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., presented her with a recognition plaque.

Mr. Evans said he enjoyed serving on the Park and Recreation Commission, whose wife previously served on that board for 20 years, and he had become friends with many of the Commission members. He thanked the City Council for funding the improvement of many parks over the years, which his family has enjoyed using. Councilmembers thanked Mr. Evans for his service, and Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., presented him with a recognition plaque.

B. School Board Liaison Update – Lorien Mueller

Ms. Mueller, School Board Liaison, announced that North Park School has been rebranded as North Park School for Innovation, which an existing opportunity to call the school what it has been doing for many years. Its focus will be on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) as well as creativity and sustainability.

The “2021 Teacher of the Year” for Columbia Heights Public Schools is Ariane Kokes, who has been teaching, primarily art, for many years and is a great representative of the District and advocate for children.

Spring activities (lacrosse, track and field, softball, baseball, boys tennis) are “in full swing” and spectators are permitted at many outdoor sporting events, and registration is requested. Spectators are not permitted at indoor sports such as synchronized swimming, but those home events are streamed live.

The School Board has a virtual Community engagement session at 5:45 pm on Tuesday, May 11, which is an opportunity for any members of the District. Information is on the District website and Facebook link.

Registration is open for summer camps, sports activities and summer school. The Activities Department is offering a new summer sports sampler for grades 4-6.

Prom is scheduled for Saturday, May 15, and open to seniors to purchase tickets, but attendance is limited.

C. National Library Week Proclamation

Mayor Márquez Simula read the proclamation announcing April 4-10, 2021 as “National Library Week” in Columbia Heights and, on behalf of the City, thanked all the Library staff and volunteers. Renee Dougherty, Library Director accepted the proclamation certificate.

D. Arbor Day Proclamation

Mayor Márquez Simula read the proclamation announcing Friday, April 30, 2021 as “Arbor Day” and the month of May 2021 as “Arbor Month” in Columbia Heights and thanked the

Public Works Department for their work. Director Hansen thanked the Council and reported that Arbor Day would be celebrated in the City with a tree planting and ceremony in Lomiaki Park at 2:00 pm on Friday, April 30. He also reported that 2021 is the 29th year as Columbia Heights being a “Tree City USA,” recognizing how the City maintains its urban forest, and said the City will do more tree planting and offer plants to residents at a discount, hopefully on an annual basis.

E. Centennial Celebration Update

Specialist Rottler added that urban forestry specialist Liam Genter planted a linden tree for the Sister Cities Tree dedication on Friday, as noted above, and said all are welcome to attend.

He thanked the quilting group, who put in over 300 hours for the quilt that is now hanging up in the Community Room and showcases the history of Columbia Heights. The group is working on a book to provide more information about the quilting process.

The first “Music in the Park” series will be held this summer, which he said would not have been possible without the support of the 49 Centennial sponsors. Of the 20 bands who applied, three area bands were selected and will perform 6:30-8:00 pm at Huset Park: “The Tkach Band” (variety dance band) on Wednesday, June 2; “Wander North” (modern folk, country and pop) on Wednesday, July 7; and “Mama No No and the Yes Men” (multi-genre songs from the 1960s to current day) on Wednesday, August 4. The City will partner with the School District for the event: Sophomore Sophie Kuether, winner of the “Minnesota State Poetry Out Loud” competition, will be opening act for the June 2 performance; and it is anticipated that members of the Columbia Heights High School Band will perform on July 7. The events will be free and social distancing will be encouraged.

Public Works staff has begun hanging Centennial banners on Central Avenue, from 47th to 51st, and the 37th to 43rd banners will be hung soon thereafter.

The Citywide Garage Sale will be held on Saturday, June 12, and sign-up is available on the City website.

The Community Picnic, now called the “Community Art and Info Fair,” will be held on Thursday, June 24, 5:00-7:30 pm. Art vendors will be lined up along the sidewalk and traffic along Mill Street will be blocked.

The Saturday, July 17, “Centennial Celebration” will be a whole Community event, partnering with 25 businesses, organizations and places of worship that will offer families a day of free prizes and fun. Two bands, “Earl Harrison” and “LoverCraft,” will play 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Two virtual Zoom presentations are planned: at 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 15, Sara Given from the Anoka Historical Society will give a presentation on the history of Columbia Heights and at 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 22, Kathy Kullberg will give a presentation on the history of Architect Avenue. He encouraged residents to go to “Heights100.com,” as well

as Facebook and Twitter, for previous and current stories and photos as well as upcoming events.

The Council thanked Specialist Rottler and all involved for their hard work in preparation for the planned events.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

- 1. Approve April 5, 2021 City Council Work Session Minutes**
MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the City Council Work Session of April 5, 2021
- 2. Approve April 13, 2021 Emergency City Council Meeting Minutes**
MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the Emergency City Council Meeting of April 13, 2021
- 3. Approve April 14, 2021 Special City Council Meeting Minutes**
MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting of April 14, 2021
- 4. Approve Change Order No. 1 For 37th Avenue Bituminous Trail And Pedestrian Ramp Improvements, Project 1907, and Madison Street Curb and Gutter Construction, Project 1902**
MOTION: Move to approve contract Change Order No. 1 for the 37th Avenue Bituminous Trail and Pedestrian Ramp Improvements, Project 1907, and Madison Street Curb and Gutter Construction, Project 1902, to Sunram Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$55,006.70 for a new contract amount of \$687,224.70.
- 5. Award of Professional Services for Construction Materials Testing for 2021 Projects**
MOTION: Move to approve the proposal for Construction Materials Testing for 2021 Water Main Improvements and 2021 Street Rehabilitation Program with Independent Testing Technologies, based on project testing requirements with an estimated cost of \$27,090.00 appropriated from Funds 651-52103 (Water Main), 415-52002 (Street Rehabilitation - Zones 4B and 5) and 415-52005 (State Aid Street Rehabilitation – 44th Avenue).
- 6. Adopt Resolution 2021-41 Being a Resolution Accepting Bids and Awarding a Contract for the 2021 Miscellaneous Concrete Repairs and Installations, City Project 2100**
MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2021-41, there being ample copies available to the public.
MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution 2021-41 being a Resolution accepting bids and awarding the 2021 Miscellaneous Concrete Repairs and Installations, City Project No. 2100, to Standard Sidewalk, Inc. of Blaine, Minnesota, based upon their low, qualified, responsible bid in the amount of \$32,795.00 from Fund 415-52100-4000; and,

furthermore, to authorize the Mayor and City Manager to enter into a contract for the same.

7. Professional Services Agreement for Sewer Modeling for Sanitary Sewer Collection District 1

MOTION: Move to approve a Professional Services Agreement with Bolton and Menk for engineering consultant services for the sanitary sewer modeling of Collection District 1 in an amount not-to-exceed \$28,635.00 appropriated from Fund 652-52108-3050.

8. Rental of Jersey Barriers for the Public Safety Building

MOTION: Move to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Warning Lites of Minnesota to rent jersey barriers as part of a safety contingency plan for the public safety building, for a cost of up to \$27,000.00, with the funds coming from the police department operating budget.

9. Rental Occupancy Licenses for Approval

MOTION: Move to approve the items listed for rental housing license applications for April 26, 2021, in that they have met the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code.

10. License Agenda

MOTION: Move to approve the items as listed on the business license agenda for April 26, 2021 as presented.

11. 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 \$1,037,577.19.

CITY COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Report of the City Council

Mayor Márquez Simula said her “heart goes out to the family of Duante Wright and the whole Community.” A vigil was held at the School District and about 250 people attended, including Duante’s sister and aunt, and “was a healing time.” With all of the related occurrences happening, she encouraged all to “be kind to one another.”

She attended a Regional Council of Mayors meeting, an “Our Car” webinar, senior watercolor painting class at Murzyn Hall; hosted a senior consortium meeting with community leaders from SARA, Crestview, Anoka County, and City’s Library and Park & Recreation Department; co-hosted a presentation at the Columbia Heights-Fridley Rotary meeting regarding diversity, equity and inclusion; met with the Dream of Wild Health, an indigenous gardening and food group about the HeightsNEXT Blooming Sunshine food forest and ways to incorporate more indigenous foods.

Councilmember Buesgens attended the Metro Council annual meeting via Zoom, which included its election of officers and discussion of the pandemic’s impact on the airport and future of electric

planes; a MCAP (Minnesota Climate Adaptation) webinar meeting, with Lauren Jensen speaking on building equitable community engagement for “Discovery Walk” in Rochester; thanked the businesses that sponsored 49 banners for Central Avenue; and asked residents to be mindful when transferring plants because of the current problem with “jumping worms” (which cause a lot of soil erosion and can kill gardens). She then offered condolences to the family of Tim Utz on his death.

Councilmember Jacobs thanked Mayor Márquez Simula for organizing Duarte Wright’s vigil and offered condolences to his family as well as the family of Tim Utz, which Councilmember Buesgens reported earlier. Attended the Metro Cities annual meeting and MAC representative Rick King discussed the devastating losses that the pandemic created, with an anticipated decline in revenue in 2021 of \$93 million and \$250 million in losses 2020-2022 for local airports and includes 90,000 jobs that were directly affected. Attended the Charter Commission as the liaison, which included two agenda items submitted by Frost Simula (the first, an appointment process for councilmembers in the event of a vacancy and discussion of a special election though the criteria is addressed in the State statute; and second, the mayoral term limit, those it was a closed item based on the fact the 2018 voter outcome had defeated that and there was discussion that it may be a conflict of interest by the presenter; Carolyn Laine spoke on legislative changes that regulate the time allowed by the District Judge for appointment to the council vacancies and mentioned that she had proposed while still a legislator that an allowance of a percentage of tax dollars be allocated to promoting Charter issues (estimated to be about \$8,000.00 a year). Attended Zoom meetings for the 42nd Avenue project and met with three individuals as well as an additional group meeting with 12 of the residents. She said she was pleased to report, as the 2020 Census chair, that the involvement and response to the 2020 Census secured the State’s Federal representatives.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., acknowledged and thanked the City’s Fire Department, the paid on-line and full-timers for administering the COVID-19 vaccines, and announced that the VFW will be having its pork tenderloin sandwich or dinner event on Saturday, May 1 (\$7.00 for sandwich and \$9.00 for dinner).

Councilmember Novitsky said he and others have been busy planning this year’s Jamboree (tentative dates are June 24-27), which will include carnival, parade, car show, waffle breakfast and fireworks. He then said he was able to attend the girls High School softball game, which they won 16-1.

Report of the City Manager

Manager Bourgeois also acknowledged and thanked the staffs of the Fire, Police, Public Works and Administration Departments for their work at the City’s vaccine clinics, which were “a huge success” and resulted in 932 vaccinations being administered to City and Hilltop residents; and plans are underway for the second rounds of vaccinations in three weeks. She added that the City’s partnership with the Anoka County Department of Health was a great experience. The City’s “Drug Take Back” was held on Saturday, April 24, which resulted in 150 pounds being collected by the Police Department. Notices have been distributed for the Zone 4 and 5 construction, which will start on Monday. She encouraged residents to submit award nominations for the upcoming “Outstanding Citizen” award; submissions are due Sunday, May 2; the form can be accessed at “columbiaheights.gov/outstanding.”

Report of the City Attorney

Attorney Hoeft had no update to report.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Tingley, City Clerk/Council Secretary