



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 21 at 6:30 PM

7701 County Road 110 West Minnetrista, MN 55364

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.02, one or more council members may participate remotely.

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lisa Whalen called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

a) Pledge of Allegiance

b) Introductions:

City Council: Mayor Lisa Whalen; Councilmembers Cathleen Reffkin, Claudia Lacy, Peter Vickery, Brian Govern.

Staff: City Administrator, Jasper Kruggel; Finance Director, Brian Grimm; Community Development Director, David Abel; Director of Public Safety, Craig Squires; Assistant City Administrator, Paula Bauman; Director of Public Works, Gary Peters.

Consultants: Alyson Fauske, WSB; Sarah Sonsalla, Kennedy & Graven (Attending remotely)

c) Approval of Agenda

Mayor Whalen recommended the addition of items 6D: Cell Tower Lease Update and 6E: Ash Tree Replacement Policy.

Motion by Councilmember Reffkin, seconded by Councilmember Govern, to approve the agenda with the recommended changes. Motion carried. Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen and Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Govern, Lacy.

2) SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

a) Whale Tail Lake Alum Treatment Update from Brian Vlach, Three Rivers Park District

Brian Vlach with Three Rivers Park District gave an update to Council on the Whale Tail Lake Alum Ongoing treatment.

3) PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Nathan Horne, 4561 Merganser Drive, addressed the Council regarding concerns about his water bill. Mr. Horne stated this new monthly water bill was the same amount as his previous quarterly bill and requested clarification regarding the increased amount. Mayor Whalen noted that the Council had not reviewed Mr. Horne's bill and recommended that he speak with City staff to determine the reason for the amount. Mr. Horne stated that other residents in his neighborhood were also experiencing increased water bills.

Brian Grimm discussed Mr. Horne's water usage and stated that his usage was higher than average. The Council recommended that Mr. Horne work with City staff to review his water usage and billing

information.

James Bradley, 5545 Ridgewood Cove, addressed the Council regarding the potential installation of water service in his neighborhood. Mr. Bradley stated that water service was not offered to the neighborhood when he built his home in 1974 and asked the Council to consider the cost of extending water service to the area. He reiterated his belief that providing residents with access to municipal water would be beneficial, but expressed concerns that the associated costs may be prohibitive.

Mayor Whalen stated that the matter would be discussed at the October 5 worksession and encouraged Mr. Bradley to attend the meeting to learn more about the project.

4) CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Lacy, seconded by Councilmember Govern, to approve the consent agenda items as submitted. Motion carried. Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen and Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Govern, Lacy.

- a) Approve City Council regular meeting minutes from September 9, 2026
- b) Res. No. 100-26: Approve Claims
- c) ADA Assessment Project Approval
- d) Approve Temporary Liquor License – Tonka Brew Fest
- e) Approve Application for Exempt Permit – Tonka Brew Fest

5) PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

6) BUSINESS ITEMS

- a) Concept/Sketch Plan Woodland Meadows 7635 State Highway No. 7

Representatives from M/I Homes and Rachel Development attended the meeting to update Council on the Concept/Sketch Plan for Woodland Meadows, 7635 State Highway No. 7. The project area consists of approximately 160 acres with a total of 357 proposed homes.

In response to site constraints, market demand, and feedback received during the neighborhood meeting, several refinements have been made to the sketch plan since it was presented to the City Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan discussion in January 2026. These modifications are intended to improve site design, enhance compatibility with surrounding properties, and better align the development with current market preferences while maintaining the overall unit count.

Key revisions include:

- Access Location. The primary access point from Highway 7 has been shifted slightly to the east. This adjustment responds to residents' concerns while also taking advantage of improved site topography and better roadway sight distances.
- Internal Street Network. As a result of access relocation, the internal street layout has been refined to maintain an efficient and well-connected neighborhood design.

- Expanded Lot Offerings. The plan increases the number of 65-foot-wide lots and reduces the number of 40- and 50-foot-wide lots to better reflect current market demand and buyer preferences. The overall number of homes remains unchanged.
- Highway 7 Buffering. Berming and landscape screening are being incorporated along Highway 7 to the greatest extent practical, enhancing the community's visual character and helping buffer future residents from the adjacent roadway.

Within the proposed development, there will be a total of 357 units. This breaks down to 61 townhomes and 211 single-family homes built by M/I Homes and an additional 68 single-family homes constructed by Charles Cudd Co.

The proposed development and approval timeline estimate:

- Fall 2026: Preliminary Plat Review (PUD/Zoning Change) – Public Hearing
- Winter 2027: Final Plat
- Spring 2027: Construction Start
- Fall 2027: Home construction start

The group highlighted critical infrastructure and further Council discussion:

- Confirm City commitment to provide watermain extension
- MnDOT intersection approval
- Working on concepts with WSB, confirming design and location with MnDOT and seller
- Lift station/force main location – working with WSB on a design in the general location shown

Mayor Whalen further discussed access points and trail access along Highway 7 and potential connections to Three Rivers. The developer stated this is being reviewed and will provide further updates.

Councilmember Govern questioned the inclusion of park or recreational land. The developer stated that the plan includes woodland views and additional trails, but no park areas or play structures are currently proposed. The developer noted that park areas could be considered if desired.

Councilmember Reffkin referenced Block 2 of the concept plan and noted the length of the street and the number of smaller lots. The developer stated that the block had been modified due to a shift in access to the development, which resulted in a larger block. Reffkin then questioned city streets vs private streets. The contractor stated the townhome access will be private streets.

Councilmember Lacy reiterated the need for trees and screening along the proposed Highway 7 berm.

The City Council discussed the lift station and force main location, pump sizing, and future development needs.

Council thanked M/I Homes and Rachel Development for the concept plan update. No motion taken.

- b) Res. No. 101-26: Approve Plans and Specifications for CR 110-151 Ditch Maintenance, Authorize Quotes, City Project 04-26

Alyson Fauske discussed the CR 110 and CR 151 ditch maintenance project initiated by the City Council to address erosion issues between the storm outlet at the southeast corner of the county roads and

Halstead Bay. The project includes removing vegetation and sediment at the storm outlet and regrading and revegetating the channel. Staff met with affected residents, who support the proposed improvements.

Gary Peters discussed using Flexamat, or an equivalent product, at the storm outlet in lieu of rip rap to reduce future maintenance. Peters and Fauske further discussed the product and installation. Fauske stated Hennepin County agreed to a 50% cost share, up to \$40,950, due to drainage from the county right-of-way. The remaining costs will be paid from the Storm Fund.

Motion by Councilmember Vickery, seconded by Councilmember Govern, to adopt Res. No. 101-26: Approve Plans and Specifications for CR 110-151 Ditch Maintenance, Authorize Quotes, City Project 04-26. Motion carried 5-0. Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen and Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Govern, and Lacy.

c) Res. No. 102-26: Approve Water Treatment Plant Change Order Number 3

Gary Peters stated that Staff is presenting Change Order No. 3 for the Water Treatment Plant for Council consideration. The change includes modifications to the aerator ductwork, a pipe sleeve for future HSP No. 5, and the clearwell access hatch.

Peters explained that field modifications are necessary as construction progresses to accommodate existing conditions and coordinate piping, ductwork, electrical, and chemical lines. The total change order amount will be paid from the project's contingency fund.

Motion by Councilmember Reffkin, seconded by Councilmember Govern, to adopt Res. No. 102-26: Approve Water Treatment Plant Change Order No. 3. Motion carried 5-0. Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen and Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Govern, and Lacy.

d) Cell Tower Lease Update

Jasper Kruggel provided an update on a vendor's proposal to lease City-owned land for a 155-foot cell tower. The tower would initially serve Verizon Wireless and be available to additional providers. The proposed 35-year lease includes a \$2,000 upfront option payment, \$2,000 monthly rent with a 3% annual increase, and \$250 per month for each additional tenant.

Kruggel noted that previous Council discussions indicated a preference not to locate the tower on City property and that the proposed terms have not changed. Council discussed the tower's appearance, potential impacts on the property, the possibility of locating the tower on private property, and potential property tax implications. Councilmember Govern noted that some towers can be designed to resemble trees.

Council discussed holding a public hearing to receive resident input.

The consensus of Council was to direct staff to return to the vendor to propose additional compensation for increased property taxes and explore construction of the tower to resemble a tree. No motion taken.

e) Ash Tree Replacement Policy

Gary Peters reported that Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has been identified in Minnetrista and that Public Works has removed more than 800 infested or high-risk ash trees from City parks and boulevard rights-of-way over the past four years.

Peters requested Council's direction on options for homeowners whose boulevard ash trees were removed, including no action, discounted replacement trees through a city supplier, or a city cost-share program. Replacement trees would be planted outside the city right-of-way.

Peters also discussed options for assisting residents with diseased or dying ash trees on private property, including no action, a city drop-off site, cost-sharing disposal costs, or curbside pickup.

Mayor Whalen stated the costs are too prohibitive to remove private trees and pay for replacements. Council stated they are agreeable to work with nurseries to sell trees at reduced costs, if they are agreeable. Then the agreement would be between the nursery and the city.

Council discussed the costs associated with tree removal and replacement. The consensus of Council was to work with nurseries to provide discounted replacement trees to Minnetrista residents, if available. Residents will be responsible for coordinating and paying for the removal of trees on their private property. No motion was taken.

7) ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a) Future agenda items

- i) iTron Update Project (10/5 RM)
- ii) Proposal for 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update (10/5 RM)
- iii) Nuisance Property Updates (10/5 WS)
- iv) 2027 Water and Sewer Fund Budgets (10/5 WS)

b) Staff Reports

No staff reports.

Mayor Whalen requested copies of water bills showing costs for low, medium, and high water usage and if possible, to compare Minnetrista rates with Mounds, to discuss at a future Council meeting.

c) Council Reports

- i) Mayor Lisa Whalen
- ii) Cathleen Reffkin

Councilmember Reffkin stated Providence Academy did a 911 tribute and had surrounding police and fire departments participate and requested Minnetrista participate in future years. Chief Squires stated Minnetrista did not participate this year due to staffing issues.

- iii) Claudia Lacy
- iv) Peter Vickery
- v) Brian Govern

8) ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Govern, seconded by Councilmember Vickery, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40pm. Motion carried. Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Lacy, and Govern.

Lisa Whalen, Mayor

Paula Bauman, Assistant City Administrator/Recorder

Attest: Ann Meyerhoff, City Clerk