

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW
October 6, 2025
6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Mark Vogel.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Mark Vogel, Councilmembers Kevin Robinson, Sarah Udvig, Amy Faanes, and Joe Muehlbauer.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.), and City Planner Beth Richmond (HKGi).

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Faanes	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried: 5-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. City Council Minutes - September 15, 2025
- B. Canine Handler Memorandum of Agreement
- C. Cannabis Application
- D. Rental License Approvals
- E. Bluffs of Rum River – Grading Agreement
- F. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: FAANES APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Faanes	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried: 5-0

Robinson asked for more information on the cannabis application approved on the Consent Agenda. City Clerk Wida explained that they had received a cannabis license from Duggout LLC, DBA St. Francis Dispensary. She noted that they have already been pre-approved for the State. She added that they do not yet have a parcel for their business; however, they are looking to purchase property that meets all of the zoning requirements.

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Jeremiah Willard, 22792 Poppy Street, came forward and shared his concerns from the recent discussion around water rates and the levy. He said that there is currently a petition signed by 176 residents in the City who are upset with what is happening in the City. He noted that there is a growing concern that residents will be leaving the City. He urged the Council to really think about what decisions they want to make. He said he is very passionate about St. Francis, and he hates to see people struggling enough as it is, then also see them struggle with the potential increases to water rates and taxes. He added that he has another growing concern with development in the City. He said he has heard that they are selling City land to developers for very small amounts. He noted that these land sales should be voted on by the Council, not the EDA. He urged the Council to think and pray about every decision they make and how it will impact the residents. He thanked the Council for serving.

Derek Lind with the Anoka County Elections Integrity Team (ACEIT) came forward and discussed City autonomy. He noted that the County is trying to take some of the power and decision-making away from cities in terms of elections. He stated that the County is trying to make a decision whether or not any cities can use paper poll pads. He noted that poll pads are not currently mandated by the State, but the County is still trying to control this for the cities.

Patty Cardy-Heffner, 3657 234th Avenue NW, HOA President for the Twin Homes of Rum River Terrace Townhomes Association, came forward and shared that their townhomes back up to where the CUP is proposed. She noted that this would drastically affect the owners in this area. She added that they are also worried about the integrity of the trees being removed without a buffer between the homes. She said they also have irrigation lines that run across Woodbine and their properties. She explained that in a previous project, the developer destroyed these irrigation lines, and it was a very long time before they were repaired. She said they support the growth of the City; however, they also look at the integrity of the

homes that will border this project. She added that they also want confirmation that the sidewalk on Woodbine will stay on the west side of Woodbine. City Planner Richmond shared that there will be a public hearing for this road this evening.

Cynthia and Brian Opp, owners of Opp Family Chiropractor, came forward and shared that they own the commercial building at the southwest corner of Highway 47 and Ambassador Boulevard. She said they have operated their chiropractic business for over 20 years and purchased this building in 2013 to expand their clinic and lease the remaining space. She shared that they are requesting to rezone this property to a B-2 general business zoning so they can be a commercial, multi-tenant site consistent with the original zoning. She explained that this was originally zoned B-3 when they bought the building, and they crafted their plans for the future around this zoning. She shared that during their plans, they were informed that the property had been rezoned to I-1 industrial in 2020. She noted that they could get a medical use only ordinance amendment; however, this would limit them from being able to lease their additional office space to any other retail tenants. She said they have already lost qualified tenants because of this uncertainty. She explained that by allowing a mixed use of tenants, this would strengthen the tax base and stabilize this corner of Highway 47 and Ambassador, while also keeping jobs and services in town. She shared that the Planning Commission already unanimously recommended approval of this rezoning and requested that the Council do the same later this evening.

Mike Powell, 23045 Ambassador Boulevard NW, came forward and asked what power the EDA has without Council approval. He asked if the TIF request for the new apartment building had been officially denied. City Administrator Thunstrom explained that the EDA is a legal authority, and they have certain statutes that identify what they can and cannot do. She noted that the EDA owns property, and they can sell this property or acquire other property. She stated that when it comes to what can be built on the property, this has to go through a site plan process, which is approved by the Council. She added that if a developer were also to request a City-based subsidy like TIF or a tax abatement, then this would also have to go through the Council. She noted that the apartment building land was acquired from the EDA, which did not need Council approval; however, they requested TIF, which did require Council approval. She explained that at the last EDA meeting, they voted to extend the purchase agreement for the apartment building property. She noted that if this purchase agreement falls through, then the EDA would put the property back on the market.

Mr. Powell asked how many times the EDA can extend the purchase agreement. Thunstrom said they can extend until they no longer wish to.

Mayor Vogel explained that once the TIF request was denied by the Council, the developer went back to the drawing board and is currently coming up with a plan that will not require TIF if they want to move forward.

Tina Carroll, 23045 Ambassador Boulevard, came forward and asked how the EDA got started to begin with and how these community members were given the authority to spend the City's money on properties. She said the EDA needs to be stopped. She asked why EDA members get a six-year term when Councilmembers only get four-year terms. She explained that they have been told that if they want the water prices to decrease, then they need more homes throughout the City; however, 26 new homes were built in 2024, and asked if the addition of these homes was taken into account when looking at the water prices. She asked why the pricing for the water filters went from \$60,000 to \$800,000. She asked why the City has to pay for the developer's engineering costs as part of the payment of claims approved earlier this evening. Thunstrom explained that they pay several engineers for different work and projects throughout the City. She noted that they do not pay any project development engineers, as these are all paid by the applicants themselves.

Sandra Schear, 22957 Rum River Boulevard NW, came forward and asked what the new parking lot that was just built is for. Mayor Vogel said this is for park and City Hall overflow parking.

Ms. Schear asked who approved this. Mayor Vogel said the Council did.

Ms. Schear noted that if they want to save money on taxes, then they need to look at cutting back on Staff, with too many employees making over \$100,000 who are not even St. Francis residents.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Dalton River Villas

Resolution 2025-46 approving variances for the Dalton River Villas Development

Resolution 2025-47 approving a conditional use permit for the Dalton River Villas Development for the construction of a public road within the Rum River Management District

Resolution 2025-48, a preliminary plat for the Dalton River Villas Development

Richmond reviewed the Staff report in regard to the Dalton River Villas requests for variances, a CUP, and a preliminary plat. She reviewed the changes and provisions made after the comments received at the Planning Commission meeting about the removal of vegetation in the wetland area. She shared the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval of all requests.

Faanes asked if the applicant for the project is asking for TIF. Richmond said no.

Faanes asked if this land is currently privately owned. Richmond said yes.

Faanes asked if the cost of putting in the road would fall on the City. Richmond

said no and noted that the road would be funded and constructed by the applicant.

Faanes asked who would be responsible for clearing the trees on the property. Richmond said the applicant would be responsible.

Robinson asked who would follow up with the tree removal after it is done. Richmond shared that the City is responsible for enforcing its code, and they are working internally to establish a process for this.

Robinson asked if the City would need to periodically check up on these properties to ensure they are still in compliance. City Attorney Schaps explained that if they received reports that vegetation in the area had been removed, then an investigation would take place, and if they were found to have removed any vegetation unlawfully, then they would prosecute the property owner under City Code.

Thunstrom shared that they have been working with Richmond, the DNR, the Police Department, and Public Works, and there are a lot of boundaries that they have set when it comes to code enforcement. She explained that if someone removed a bunch of trees over a weekend, then they would open an investigation and follow a set process to ensure that what was removed was done unlawfully. She added that anyone who was cited for this would have to work with the DNR for restoration efforts.

Robinson asked if SAC and WAC would be charged for these units. Richmond said yes.

Muehlbauer asked about the setback amount that Ms. Cardy-Heffner mentioned earlier in the meeting. Richmond explained that this development is proposed to take place within the existing boundaries of this private property. She said they will be working within the public right-of-way and the private site. She noted that the lots on the southside would have a five-yard setback, which is the requirement for lots with garages in the City Code.

Robinson asked if tracer lines are put in when irrigation systems are installed. Public Works Director Carpenter said no.

Mayor Vogel shared that he is not excited about the idea of having trees removed in this area; however, it is private property, and this is a part of the development process.

Mayor Vogel opened the Public Hearing at 6:58 p.m.

Juli Murillo, 23539 Ambassador Boulevard, came forward and shared that she is supportive of the development; however, she wants to make sure that the riverbank is safe. She noted that some of the homes proposed do not meet the

requirements of the City. She asked why they need a variance for so many homes, and why they cannot just change their design to require fewer variances. She said she lives in this area and her property is very restricted when it comes to what she can and cannot build, while they are allowing so many variances on these new homes. She asked if they have worked with the applicant on a plan for smaller or fewer homes so that so many variances are not needed.

Mayor Vogel asked if this is a large number of requested variances compared to other similar projects. Richmond noted that every site and project is very different. She said the main variance request for this proposal is for the lot size. She added that they have worked with the developer to reduce the number of lots that are undersized. She said the setbacks are unique due to the river. She stated that she does not see these variance requests as excessive.

Robinson asked if they would be able to meet the requirements with eight lots instead of 16. Richmond explained that these lots are held to the urban standards in the Comprehensive Plan, so they are required to be able to put two to three units per net acre on this site. She said they would not be able to propose only a few lots on this property, as the City would not support it.

Ms. Cardy-Heffner asked about the plat map for lots #2, #3, and #19, as it shows that these have five-foot setbacks. Richmond shared that all of the garages of these properties are located on the north side of the lot, which would have the setback be five feet on the north side and 10 feet on the south side.

Ms. Cardy-Heffner noted that their main irrigation line is through Woodbine abutting lots #2, #3, and #19, as well as outlot B. She noted the irrigation lines are currently marked with blue flags.

Tim Pomerleau, the developer, came forward and shared that they will still be leaving six acres of trees in the northeast area. He added that they will not be touching anything in the bluff area. He said that he is not interested in making the homes any smaller.

Robinson noted that another neighborhood in the area mimics this development.

Mayor Vogel closed the Public Hearing at 7:17 p.m.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: FAANES TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-46 APPROVING VARIANCES FOR THE DALTON RIVER VILLAS DEVELOPMENT.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye

Councilmember Faanes aye
Councilmember Udvig aye

Motion carried: 5-0

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-47 APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE DALTON RIVER VILLAS DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PUBLIC ROAD WITHIN THE RUM RIVER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer aye
Councilmember Robinson aye
Councilmember Faanes aye
Councilmember Udvig aye

Motion carried: 5-0

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-48 APPROVING A PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR THE DALTON RIVER VILLAS DEVELOPMENT.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer aye
Councilmember Robinson aye
Councilmember Faanes aye
Councilmember Udvig aye

Motion carried: 5-0

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Resolution Calling for a Public Hearing on the 2025 Street Reconstruction Project
Resolution 2025-50 calling for a public hearing on improvements for the 2025 Street Reconstruction Project

City Engineer Jochum reviewed the Staff report concerning the request for a Public Hearing on the assessments for the 2025 Street Reconstruction Project.

Finance Director Mulvihill also requested that they set the interest rate for the assessments. She recommended setting the interest rate at 4.6% over 15 years.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-50 CALLING FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON IMPROVEMENT FOR THE 2025 STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT AND SET THE INTEREST RATE AT

4.6%.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Faanes	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried: 5-0

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. No Limits, LLC – Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezoning

Resolution 2025-49 approving a comprehensive plan amendment for 23671 St. Francis Blvd NW and authorizing submission of the amendment to the metropolitan council for review

Ordinance 349 approving rezoning of 23671 St. Francis Blvd NW from I-1 General Industrial to B-2 General Commercial

Richmond reviewed the Staff report in regard to the Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezoning request at 23671 St. Francis Boulevard NW. She shared the Planning Commission's recommendation of approval.

Muehlbauer noted that spot zoning like this is typically frowned upon. He asked if they would be setting a precedent by rezoning this property. Schaps noted that this is a legislative decision by the Council, and he does not have any legal concerns with this request, as it is a corner lot and not one parcel in the middle of others of the same zoning district.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: FAANES TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-49 APPROVING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT FOR 23671 ST. FRANCIS BLVD NW AND AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF THE AMENDMENT TO THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL FOR REVIEW.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Faanes	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried: 5-0

MOTION BY: FAANES SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 349 APPROVING REZONING OF 23671 ST. FRANCIS BOULEVARD NW FROM I-1 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL TO B-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Faanes	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried: 5-0

B. Work Session Request

Thunstrom shared the request to schedule a Work Session meeting for October 27.

The Council scheduled a Work Session meeting for October 27 at 5:30 p.m.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Ms. Murillo asked how the City will be notified about what the Council decides for enforcement after business hours for unlawfully trimming or tree removal in the wetland area of the river. Thunstrom shared that when they have an established process, they have considered mailing a notice to all of the homeowners along the river to notify them. She said there will still be a lot of work and planning that needs to be done before they are able to get to this point.

Mr. Willard asked about the process of making the Mayor's term longer. He said that Mayor Vogel has done a great job, and he thinks it makes sense to have the Mayor's term be as long as the Council terms. Thunstrom shared that they have discussed this with the Charter Commission and the Council, and they have talked about placing a question on the ballot for the next Presidential election.

11. REPORTS

A. City Administrator's Report

Thunstrom shared that the search is continuing for a new Community Development Director. She said they are close to launching the new website. She added that Staff continues to work on the budget and the Fire District agreements. She noted that they are also taking care of some housekeeping items. She shared that the Highway 47 project continues to move forward, and they have seen some informal designs and will be discussing them with the State this week.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

The Council shared the meetings and events they attended in the past few weeks, as well as highlighting upcoming events.

Robinson thanked the residents who had taken the time to come and share their opinions with the Council. He encouraged this continued involvement from residents.

Faanes agreed and shared that she is so happy to see so many residents coming

and interacting with the Council.

Muehlbauer thanked Mr. Willard for what he is trying to do on Facebook. He encouraged him to meet with Mulvihill to help him better understand the financial aspects of the City. He encouraged any residents who are concerned with the City's spending to meet with Mulvihill to get more information directly from her. He noted that someone has put on Facebook that the City has a \$15,000,000 water budget; however, in conversations with Mulvihill, he was told that this is the overall budget for all funds in the City.

Udvig thanked Police Chief Schwieger and the Police Department for all of their work with what has been going on with the School District over the past few days.

Mayor Vogel thanked Schwieger for his work at the School District during his personal time. He also thanked Mr. Willard for organizing community meetings. He shared that he is always happy when residents call him; however, if they have questions that they are looking for answers to, Staff would be the best to contact as they are very knowledgeable and approachable. He added that he has had some preliminary discussions with potential buyers for the hardware store. He noted that he also met with ACEIT and Anoka County.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

October 11 - French Toast Breakfast 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

October 11 - Recycling Event 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

October 13 - City Offices Closed in Observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 15 - Planning Commission Meeting - Cancelled

October 20 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm

October 28 - Public Works Truck or Treat Event - 5:00 pm -7:00 pm

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Vogel adjourned the regular City Council at 7:48 p.m.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk