
MEMORANDUM



TO: Mayor Walker and Councilors
FROM: M McPherson, City Administrator
SUBJECT: **Bi-Weekly Administrator's Report**
DATE: March 13, 2024

I have the following observations and information to share from the last update on February 21, 2024:

Airport

Troy Minske submitted his resignation effective immediately. Assistance in recruiting a new member is requested.

Work continues on the ALP and parcel release request.

Word on the tree clearing grant is yet to be received from MNDOT. This would be in the area on the west side of the airport within the second AWOS site.

Baldwin Township

The hearing for Baldwin Township's incorporation request was held March 7 and 8. It was an interesting process but very long. Attorneys Bourgeois and Toven, Public Works Director Gerold, City Clerk Tadych, Community Development Planner Marquardt, Mayor Walker and I testified on the afternoon of March 8. Councilors Gerold and Edmonds were in attendance as well.

The next steps in the process are:

1. Written public comments may be submitted up to 4:30pm on March 22, 2024.
2. The Township's final brief and response to written comment and the City's legal analysis regarding our request to be granted Township lands are due to the OAH on April 19, 2024.
3. The judge will then review the record, analyze the statutory requirements, and issue an order within 90 days of April 19, 2024. The order is appealable to District Court.

The City has posted the order as directed on the website as it was written. The Township chose to editorialize the order in their posting of it. As staff receives calls, there are directed to the website for information.

Building Inspections

The transition to MNSPECT continues to go well. Almost all the handouts have been posted to the website. Training on MNSPECT's software will occur on March 14, 2024. While the City is not using the software for the bulk of the permitting process, staff will be able to enter over the counter permits and check on the status of other permits to answer inquiries from applicants.

Development

Staff met with a national builder interested in entering the Princeton market on February 21. They are in potential discussions with a local landowner and information regarding the School District's parcel was provided to them. They indicated this week that they are completing a market analysis for the area to aid in their decision-making process.

We have completed some preliminary TIF runs for the developer interested in the 40-acre parcel in Princeton Township near the airport. We will be meeting with them in the next week to review the numbers.

Fire

The transition team, minus the former Chief, continues to meet weekly. Topics that have been discussed since February 21 include:

- Training needs: focus on continuing education, limiting budget impacts, and sources.
- Personal Protective Equipment: vendor provided training on March 5, measured for replacement suspenders; the old equipment is being sorted and that which can be donated will be sent to places like Russia.
- Vehicle maintenance: new rear tires on Tender 9 and Ladder 1, monitor the cut tire on Tender 4, light replacement on Engine 5
- Budget: process, grants (Fire Act, ECE have been submitted), seeking donations
- Facebook: determining who has access to and a process for approving posts.

The meetings have been productive.

Two applications for the Chief's position have been received to date.

Great Northern Trail

There was a GNT Partners meeting on February 23. The agenda included updates on grants received (for a segment in Zimmerman), a future grant application (trailhead in Zimmerman), and the logo for the GNT. Staff from the City of Elk River re-worked the logo that had been completed by the master plan consultant; two options were provided and input from the partners given.

Legislature

LMC and CGMC are tracking issues of local interest that are moving through the legislature. Two specific items to note:

1. Changes to the School Resource Officer legislation adopted in 2023. The bill is making its way through the legislature. Hopefully, it will be passed and signed in the next week or so.
2. Legislation that would pre-empt local zoning controls in order to promote additional affordable housing. There have been modifications to the legislation, but it continues to be problematic for cities in outstate Minnesota.

I continue to participate in the monthly call with Congressman Emmer's office. Staff will submit the funding request to his office for the simulcast equipment; a request has been submitted to Congressman Stauber's office.

Relocation Program

Emergency Manager Lawrence and I met with HSEM staff on February 22 to discuss the REP program given the recent staff changes. They are also working on procedural changes at their end regarding training of station leaders and volunteers that will aid in making roles and responsibilities much clearer. There may be a change to the Middle School from the High School, so they toured the city after the meeting.

School Resource Officers

Police Chief Frederick and I met with Superintendent Barton and Director of Business Services Czech on February 29 to discuss a new contract for the School Resource Officers. I drafted a new, comprehensive contract based on the previous contract for their review. Barton assured staff that the SRO program is important to the District staff and they don't intend to cut the program, but make modifications to ensure it is meeting today's needs of the District.

We will be meeting again to discuss the billing amount for the first portion of the 2024 school year (September-December 2023).

Upcoming Meetings and Reminders:

- March 15 – I will be out of the office but available by phone if needed.
- March 19 – Special Election for House District 27B
- March 26 – Fabulous Finds Ribbon Cutting; 9:45 am. 1900 1st Street Suite 1