

October 20, 2015

A regular meeting of the Scandia City Council was held on the above date. Mayor Simonson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was taken. The following council members were present: Council members Bob Hegland, Dan Lee, Chris Ness, Jim Schneider and Mayor Randall Simonson. Staff present: Attorney Andrew Pratt, City Planner Sherri Buss, City Engineer Ryan Goodman, Deputy Brandon Yetter, Fire Chief Mike Hinz, Public Works Director Dave Williams and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

PUBLIC FORUM

Janie O’Connor, 14682 Oakhill Court, presented information on a proposal going before the Parks Committee for installation of a pollinator garden on parkland owned by the City within Swenson’s Goose Lake Farm Estates, located at Oren Road and Olgilvie Avenue. The Soaring Eagles 4-H Club received grant funds from Pheasants Forever to plant native species in an approximately 1.5 acre plot. The project is also being endorsed by the Friends of Scandia Parks and Trails. Ms. O’Connor stated that it’s anticipated the Council would receive this recommendation to approve the project at their November 17th meeting and asked for their endorsement.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Simonson announced an addition to the agenda: 9.e) Mayor’s report. **Ness, seconded by Hegland, moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried 5-0.**

CONSENT AGENDA

The following Consent Agenda was presented:

- a) Minutes
 - 1) September 15, 2015 Regular Meeting
 - 2) October 1, 2015 Special Meeting
 - 3) October 13, 2015 Special Meeting
 - 4) October 14, 2015 Special Meeting
- b) Treasurer’s Report

Beginning Balance 09/01/2015	\$ 3,723,485.62
Receipts	+ <u>23,913.24</u>
Expenditures \$439,497.39	
Payroll <u>24,658.94</u>	- 464,156.33
Adjustments: Aug. HSA fee	- 1.00
Recycling Grant Oct. Deposit	+ <u>8,106.00</u>
Ending Balance 09/30/2015	\$ 3,291,347.53
- c) Payment of Vouchers
- d) Step Increase, Deputy Clerk
- e) Step Increase, Office Assistant
- f) Contractors Request for Payment No. 1 and Final – Pilar Road Ditching Improvements – Scandia Trucking & Excavating LLC
- g) Contractors Request for Payment No. 1 – Pilar Road /Paris Ave Ditching Improvements Project 2 – Peterson Excavating

Lee, seconded by Ness, moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Council member Lee, Committee liaison, reported that the Parks Committee is working on Vinterfest activities.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Variance to construct a detached garage closer to the road right-of-way on property located at 19225 Larkspur Avenue North. Herbert Olson, Applicant. (Resolution No. 10-20-15-01)

Planner Buss presented the request from Herbert Olson to construct a detached garage within the required setbacks on property at 19225 Larkspur Avenue. Buss explained that the Planning Commission held the public hearing at their October 6th meeting and recommended approval to construct a 24'x30' garage located 19' from the bluffline of Big Marine Lake, 14' from the road right-of-way and 4' from the south parcel boundary of the property. The small size of the lot, along with the location of the house and bluff were identified as practical difficulties not caused by the landowner and unique to the property as rationale for the variance.

A resolution with findings and conditions of approval was presented. Conditions included that the existing driveway be closed prior to creation of a new driveway, and parking within the Larkspur Avenue right-of-way be prohibited during the winter months to allow for snow clearing and to prevent potential property damage due to snow clearing.

Simonson, seconded by Hegland, moved to approve Resolution No. 10-20-15-01, Approving a Variance for 19225 Larkspur Avenue North. The motion carried 5-0.

Variance to construct an accessory structure (a horse barn) closer to a parcel boundary for structures that house domestic farm animals on property located at 20575 St. Croix Trail North. Greg Amundson, Applicant. (Resolution No. 10-20-15-02)

Planner Buss presented the request from Greg Amundson to construct an accessory structure within the 100-foot setback from the parcel boundary for structures that are used to house domestic farm animals. The 40'x56' horse barn would be located 50' from the southern boundary of the parcel. Buss explained that the property had been a reclaimed gravel pit with existing slopes that limit placement of the barn elsewhere on the property. The structure will be 190' from an existing pond that was created by the gravel pit and defined as incidental and not subject to buffer requirements. Buss described the Engineer's recommendation to improve the driveway onto 205th Street with a paved apron to reduce runoff into the street. The Watershed will not require a permit but suggested a vegetative buffer be maintained around the perimeter of the pond.

Planner Buss explained the concerns about drainage easements brought up at the Planning Commission meeting from the adjacent homeowners within Ekdahl Estates. The City Attorney advised that the structure would have no effect on drainage and is within the City's ordinance to allow in the proposed location. Buss summarized that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the variance with findings and conditions presented in a resolution.

Simonson, seconded by Hegland, moved to approve Resolution No. 10-20-15-02, Approving a Variance for 20575 St. Croix Trail North.

Council member Ness asked if the pond drains anywhere. Planner Buss replied that it is a landlocked basin that has no impact to water downstream; only a 500-year flood event would cause water to overflow from its basin. Ness asked if the number of feet to be maintained as a buffer should be designated within the language of the condition. Buss explained that this wasn't a mandatory requirement from the Watershed, and the applicant has agreed to stop mowing what is now mowed to meet this condition. Ness replied that he was fine with that.

Mayor Simonson stated that he has taken many phone calls and e-mails on this variance and the bottom line is that Mr. Amundson is allowed to have this structure on his property and no further comments need to be taken.

Mayor Simonson called for a vote on the above motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Conditional Use Permit for installation of a Community Solar Garden on property located at the northwest intersection of TH 97 (Scandia Trail) and County Road 15 (Manning Avenue). Gordy Simanton, Forest Lake Holdco, LLC, Applicant. (Resolution No. 10-20-15-03)

Planner Buss presented the request from Solar Stone Partners and Forest Lake Holdco to develop a Community Solar Garden on 59 acres located at the northwest corner of TH 97 and Manning Avenue. This is the site of a former sand and gravel quarry with low agricultural value. The applicants are working with Xcel Energy on an Interconnection Agreement proposed to be completed in December. MnDOT required that the permanent site access come from County Road 15A (Manning Trail) and that existing vegetation along TH 97 be maintained to reduce potential glare.

Planner Buss explained that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the project following the public hearing at their October 6th meeting with added conditions related to screening. They asked that a landscape plan be submitted that would provide for approximately 40% screening of the view from TH 97 and Manning Avenue, which would include a mix of coniferous and deciduous tree and shrub species consistent with Scandia's rural character.

Planner Buss stated that the applicants are proposing to prepare the site this fall before the interconnection agreement is finalized. The ordinance requires that the agreement be submitted to the City before any permits are issued. Buss relayed the City Attorney's reply that there is no way around this requirement – if the applicants did not obtain an interconnection agreement and site alterations had already occurred, there would be no way for the City to require restoration of the site.

Planner Buss explained the conditions written into a resolution for approval and stated that Condition #1 could be altered since a revised site plan showing access on Manning Trail was received on October 19th.

Mayor Simonson stated he was in favor of approval but would recommend removing Condition #2 regarding the screening requirement. Simonson explained that a solar garden is an opportunity to showcase the community's environmental goals and doesn't see a reason to buffer it from view.

Council member Ness stated he was in favor of leaving the screening language as it's only 40% and will provide some screening if the open acreage is developed in the future. Council member Lee agreed with this position and added that trees take a long time to grow and would be there to screen future development.

Mayor Simonson replied that the City should find ways to encourage development and this just puts an added cost to the entrepreneur. Council member Hegland asked if the applicants are agreeable to this condition. Planner Buss stated that they do not object to the screening condition. Hegland stated that it should be left in the resolution as the panels could be a distraction to drivers and they will still be partly visible. Council member Lee added that the City routinely asks for buildings to be screened and the applicants are willing to do it.

Council member Schneider asked what the ordinance requires for screening. Planner Buss explained that solar gardens should be screened from public right of ways by existing landscape and topography which this application meets. Schneider noted that it may be a good idea to have some additional screening and that this is a good use of a reclaimed pit.

Simonson, seconded by Hegland, moved to approve Resolution No. 10-20-15-03, Approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Community Solar Garden on Parcel ID 18.032.20.33.0001, with amended language to Condition #1. The motion carried 5-0.

BUILDING OFFICIAL

Building Official Chuck Preisler's activity report was received. Twenty permits were issued in September and 147 year to date.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Deputy Brandon Yetter provided a summary of police activity within the past month. A string of mailbox vandalism and theft is being investigated, a catalytic convertor was stolen from a vehicle parked at the Bone Lake public launch, suspicious vacuum cleaner salesmen are being reported, and there have been several arrests of driving after license revocation.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Mike Hinz reported that the department responded to thirteen calls in September – two fire-related and eleven rescue calls. Council member Hegland congratulated the department on the successful open house event held on October 6th.

CITY ENGINEER

City Engineer Ryan Goodman stated that a preconstruction meeting for the Watershed's 197th Street Ravine Stabilization Project is scheduled for October 27th. A refund check from

Geotechnical Services in the amount of \$1,500 was received by the City for the inaccurate soil boring reports performed on Quinnell Avenue last year. The company also redid the reports at their cost. Goodman summarized the safety improvements done along Highway 97 this year. Mayor Simonson asked for more information about the emerald ash borer report in Washington County. Goodman will continue to provide information to the Council as he receives it.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Dave Williams provided a written report and explained the recent improvements to the hockey rink boards and plans to install lines under the ice for this winter season. Williams had 15 loads of soil brought to Lilleskogen Park from the Pilar Road project to fill in and smooth out the area behind the newly paved parking surface. Mayor Simonson remarked that the Pilar Road ditches look to be in good shape. Council member Lee asked if the Log House Landing road is washing out with the fall rains. Williams explained that the road is being regularly graded at a 4-6% grade to the north, and it's not in bad condition. No extra gravel has been added to the roadway, only grading what is there. In response to Council member Schneider's question on the 201 SCADA system, it is working well on the department's cell phones to control the pumps and diagnose problems, although there have not been many alarm callouts yet.

HIRE SEASONAL PT, ON-CALL MAINTENANCE STAFF (SNOW REMOVAL)

Public Works Director Williams recommended the rehiring of two seasonal, on-call maintenance workers for snow removal this winter, at last year's hourly rate of \$17.34.

Ness, seconded by Lee, moved to approve the hiring of Clarence Seefert and Bruce Swenson for Part-Time, On-Call Maintenance Workers for the 2015-16 season. The motion carried 5-0.

HIRING AND ADVERTISING FOR SEASONAL ICE RINK STAFFING

Public Works Director Williams recommended that Ben Johnson be re-hired as the Ice Rink Maintenance Worker for this season at a rate of \$10.25 per hour. John Beattie has agreed to return as Ice Rink Manager at the current pay rate of \$11.32 per hour, and two Ice Rink Attendants will return at the new rate of \$9.00 per hour, the new minimum wage. Staff recommended that 2 additional rink attendants be hired for the season.

Lee, seconded by Simonson, moved to authorize staff to advertise and interview for Ice Rink Attendants at the \$9.00/hour rate, and approve hiring Ice Rink Maintenance Worker Ben Johnson, Ice Rink Manager John Beattie, and Ice Rink Attendants Eric Jacobs and Gunny Stolts all at the recommended pay rates. The motion carried 5-0.

WASHINGTON COUNTY STAR TRAIL ASSOCIATION LETTER OF SUPPORT

The Stillwater Snowmobile Club contacted the City on behalf of the Washington County Star Trail Association to request a letter of support to accompany a federal grant application to purchase trail grooming equipment. There would be no expenditures associated with the request, only a letter of support.

Ness, seconded by Schneider, moved to authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support for the Washington County Star Trail Association for federal grant funds on behalf of the City. The motion carried 5-0.

AUTHORIZE CULVERT REPLACEMENT AT MELANIE TRAIL/MEADOWBROOK AVENUE

Public Works Director Williams recommended that a culvert be replaced under Melanie Trail that is no longer functioning and causing soil washout under the roadway. Williams received two quotes for the work:

Scandia Trucking (culvert work) and Lindell Asphalt (road patching)	\$6,850
Peterson Excavating	\$7,850

Schneider, seconded by Hegland, authorized culvert replacement at Melanie Trail/Meadowbrook Avenue to be awarded to Scandia Trucking and Lindell Asphalt at a cost of \$6,850. The motion carried 5-0.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Simonson stated that a budget meeting is scheduled on the calendar for October 27th and asked if anyone had budget topics to discuss. There were no budget items to add to the agenda. Simonson reported that the meeting could be scheduled for consideration of the City Administrator employment agreement. There was consensus to proceed with the October 27th meeting for this purpose, which would be scheduled for 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Ness, seconded by Schneider, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk