

Committee-of-the-Whole
April 26, 2010
Municipal Center

- Call to Order The Champlin City Council met as a Committee-of-the-Whole (COW) and was called to order by Mayor Mark Uglem at 5:50 p.m.
- Roll Call Present were Mayor Mark Uglem, Councilmembers Eric Johnson, ArMand Nelson, Greg Payer and Julia Whalen.
- Absent: no one.
- Also present were City Administrator Bret Heitkamp, Community Development Director John Cox, City Planner Scott Schulte, Code Enforcement Officer Diana Jones, City Clerk Roberta Colotti and City Attorney Darrell Jensen.
- Approval of Agenda Motion by Councilmember Whalen and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the April 26, (April 26, 2010) 2010 COW agenda as presented. Voting in favor were Mayor Uglem, Councilmembers Johnson, Motion Nelson, Payer and Whalen. Voting against: none. Motion carried.
- Code Enforcement Annual The Community Development Director provided an introduction to the Code Enforcement Program Report 2009 Annual Report.
- The Code Enforcement Officer reviewed the report in detail. Highlights of the report included:
- In 2009 the City received 2,064 code complaints, not including grass and weed violations that are processed by the Weed & Tree Inspector.
 - The complaints resulted in 1,292 code violations.
 - In 2009 the City issued 24 citations involving a court appearance and in most cases, a fine set by the Court.
 - An address number sweep was conducted in 2009 and of the 6,544 homes 444 were in need of a house number.
 - The City expanded its building inspection software program, Permit Works, to assist with the management of our code enforcement program.
 - In 2009 we received 39 complaints via the website complain form.
 - The education programs included use of local cable TV programs, writing articles for the Champlin Chronicle and Champlin Dayton Press, posting information on the City's utility bills and website.
 - Inter-departmental cooperation remained a key component of our code enforcement effort last year.
 - In November 2009, the Code Enforcement office was granted limited access to the Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) data base. This information facilitates the issuance of citations.
 - Last year, the City began tracking and monitoring habitual code offender for violations. There were 32 properties on the monitoring list which were visited at least once every 60 days during the summer months.
 - The City began licensing residential rental properties in 2007. In 2009 we licensed 906 rental units, including 222 single family homes, 89 duplexes and 595 units in multi-family buildings.
 - As part of the licensing program, rental units are inspected once every three years. Last year, the City completed the first round of inspections. Roughly 85% of the rental housing stock had at least one correction order. Smoke detectors were the most common correction.
 - The licensing program has a three strikes component aimed at stemming police calls. Last year the City issued 90 first instance notices, 26 second instance notices and 8 third instance notices.
 - There were a lot of success stories last year resulting from our inspections and correction orders, which were detailed in the report.
 - In May the City hosted the second annual landlord forum.

- Consistent with national trends, Champlin has been significantly impacted by the high rate of mortgage foreclosure. Over the past three years, 377 Champlin households experienced foreclosure; of that total 125 occurred last year.
- The City has implemented a foreclosure Response Plan.
- The tall grasses and noxious weed abatement process was reviewed.
- It is estimated that 400 illegal signs were confiscated from public right-of-ways last year. Most of these signs were posted by non-Champlin businesses.

The Code Enforcement Officer reviewed the Code Enforcement Department Expectations and Service Philosophies.

Councilmember Payer requested that the next time the Council discusses code enforcement that their information on what other cities charge for rental licensing fees be presented. He noted that Brooklyn Park has a higher fee and a six month inspection time frame.

Councilmember Whalen requested that the information on the fees be brought back with information on what inspections and other program elements are being provided for the fee being charged by neighboring cities.

Mayor Uglem concluded the discussion by saying that Champlin has come a very long way in this process. He noted that prior to the addition of the Code Enforcement Officer we were operating on a complaint basis instead of doing pro-active enforcement. He stated that we are improving neighborhoods through code enforcement. He commended the Code Enforcement Officer for being compassionate but firm. He stated that this is a great program and he hopes to continue it into the future.

Entryway Signage Options

The City Planner stated that in December of 2009 the City Council authorized staff to engage the services of a landscape architect to prepare entryway concept plans for three intersections including:

- Highway 169 & Dayton Road
- Douglas Drive & 109th Avenue
- Highway 169 & 109th Avenue

The City Planner stated that this evening he would like to review the concept plan for the Douglas Drive & 109th Avenue location. He stated that staff is working with MnDOT on the other two locations.

The City Planner reported that the landscape architectural firm, LHB & Associates, recommends the City create a “gateway” feel at the intersection that includes the following elements:

- An upgraded and improved Holiday Station sign at the northeast corner;
- A City entryway sign at the northwest corner; and
- Common landscape improvements at each corner.

The City Planner reported that LHB believes the northeast corner, consisting of a Holiday Station pylon sign, plantings and utility boxes is too cluttered and busy to merit the investment of a City sign. The sign would simply get lost. Instead they recommend that the City invest in an entryway sign at the northwest corner and work with Holiday Station to provide a similar feel and look at the northeast corner. The entryway sign would dramatically improve the northwest corner which is quite open.

The City Planner stated that LHB estimates the cost of the City improvements (i.e. fencing, plantings and a City sign) to be \$90,000 to \$120,000. The cost of a new, upgraded Holiday Station Store sign is estimated at \$45,000 to \$55,000. The City Planner cautioned that these cost estimates have not been reviewed by any contractors. The City Planner stated that in addition to Holiday’s participation, the plan requires easements from the property owner at the northwest corner. He stated that preliminary discussions with this owner indicate that he may be willing to participate, at no cost. In addition Holiday officials have shown an interest in working with the City on common materials and streetscape elements, however, they have not as of yet, seen a concept plan or estimated cost.

The City Planner requested that the City Council approve the concept plan for Douglas Drive & 109th Avenue as presented and authorize staff to meet with Holiday Station representatives regarding their

participation.

Councilmember Payer commented that Holiday has an electronic sign without a masonry base.

The City Planner stated that their sign was constructed prior to the requirement that a masonry base be used was adopted.

Councilmember Payer questioned the proposal that the Holiday sign would not have either the name or logo for the City of Champlin.

The City Planner stated that while there would not be the City name on this sign there would be design elements that the City adopts incorporated into the sign.

Councilmember Payer suggested that the City name could be placed where the proposed car wash sign is located.

Councilmember Payer commented that the owner of the property on the northwest cornered was not interested in business signage at this site.

The City Planner confirmed that the owner of the northwest property was not interested in commercial signage as he felt the existing building signage was sufficient.

Councilmember Whalen stated that she believes the Holiday sign should have the City's name and/or logo; otherwise the sign will look like a developer sign not a City entryway sign.

Councilmember Johnson questioned how the signage would withstand having kids climbing on it as they pass by on their way to school.

The City Planner stated that was a consideration of the designer as the sign was being developed.

Councilmember Johnson stated that in addition to being designed to be able to withstand possible damage from kids climbing on the sign, the snow removal plan will need to be reviewed to avoid damaging the sign.

The City Planner stated that the plans show a stone that is more durable than other materials. He added that the colors, design and logo are consistent and the materials are customized to the site.

Councilmember Johnson stated that he understands that the City is trying to brand the City; however, he questioned how this was going to be funded.

The City Planner stated that while the funding for this project has not been formally identified by the City Council, two suggested sources are the existing funds which were developed at the time when other signs were removed and EDA project funds.

The City Administrator stated that this evening it is requested that the City Council develop a plan so we are consistent in our design work as we move forward with the Douglas Drive reconstruction project and its related signage.

The City Planner presented additional information on the theme for the entryway design.

Councilmember Nelson stated that there is fencing proposed on the Holiday side. He asked if you could move the fencing location and put the City's name on the bottom.

Mayor Uglem stated that he would be hesitant to put our name near the gas pricing in the car wash spot as we might look like we are branding the commercial operation. He commented that the proposed stonework would last for many years. He stated that the logo should be included. He stated that the proposed EDA funding source was appropriate for this project.

Councilmember Payer stated that in the future the owner of the northwest corner could put up a sign behind the City's sign. He added that if he does it would mitigate the City sign's impact.

Councilmember Payer stated that a resident of the Anderson Estates had expressed concern over the proposed signage and lighting expenditure.

Mayor Uglem stated that this is a path we want to go down, however, we need to be fiscally responsible.

Councilmember Johnson stated that he would favor having the City name and logo on the City funded side of the project.

Council Consensus

It was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to bring back options, including the option of moving the fencing on the Holiday side and placing the City's name on the bottom of the sign. To request staff to further review whether the City's name should be on one side or two of the street.

Adjournment

The Committee-of-the-Whole meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Mark W. Uglem, Mayor

Attest:

Roberta Colotti, CMC, City Clerk