

LAUDERDALE CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Lauderdale City Hall  
1891 Walnut Street  
Lauderdale, MN 55113

Page 1 of 3

February 14, 2023

**Call to Order**

Mayor Gaasch called the Regular City Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Councilors present: Duane Pulford via Zoom, Sharon Kelly, Jeff Dains, Evan Sayre, and Mayor Mary Gaasch.

Councilors absent: None.

Staff present: Heather Butkowski, City Administrator; Jim Bownik, Assistant to the City Administrator; and Miles Cline, Deputy City Clerk.

**Approvals**

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were any additions to the meeting agenda. There being none, Councilor Dains moved and seconded by Councilor Sayre to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were corrections to the minutes of the January 24, 2023 and January 30, 2023 city council meetings. There being none, Councilor Kelly moved and seconded by Councilor Dains to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023 and January 30, 2023 city council meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were any questions on the claims. There being none, Councilor Dains moved and seconded by Councilor Pulford to approve the claims totaling \$123,128.96. Motion carried unanimously.

**Consent**

Councilor Pulford moved and seconded by Councilor Kelly to approve the Consent Agenda thereby approving the pay equity report and the 2023-2025 union contract and acknowledging the quarterly investment report.

**Informational Presentations/Reports**

**A. City Council Updates**

Mayor Gaasch shared that she, Council Pulford, and Councilor Kelly attended an event hosted by the St. Paul Chamber on race equity. Gaasch stated that the state legislature is discussing some topics that pertain to Lauderdale including bills to curb catalytic converter theft and the restriction of corporate purchases of residential single-family homes. Gaasch shared that Senator Claire Oumou Verbeten and Representative Leigh Finke will be hosting a town hall meeting February 22 on Zoom. Gaasch continued to say that she attended a Regional Council of Mayors meeting where they discussed the topic of affordable home ownership.

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Page 2 of 3

February 14, 2023

Councilor Kelly asked if any other council members would like to attend the conversation at Brimhall Elementary School in her place. She continued to say that she attended a Zoom meeting with Ramsey County legislatures.

**Discussion/Action Item**

**A. Ramsey County Public Works Staff Update on Eustis Street Project**

In August, John Mazzitello, Ramsey County Engineer, met with the council to discuss the County's vision for rehabilitating Eustis Street south of Larpenteur Avenue. Since then, Ramsey County collaborated with St. Thomas University to begin design work along and complete soil assessments. Alan Maxwell has been the County's lead engineer on the project. He attended the meeting, along with John, to update the council on the project's progress and discuss alternative designs, especially with regard to the hill between Idaho Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue.

Ramsey County has been uncomfortable with the idea of putting a sidewalk between Idaho Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue because the slope is greater than what is allowed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As this would no longer be a county's road if the council accepted the turnover, they defer to the City's judgment. There is an exception in the ADA which allows the sidewalk to be constructed but it leads to other liability questions.

Staff spoke with an LMC trial attorney and the City attorney about liability when maintaining a sidewalk that steep, and implications during the winter months when ice and snow are hard to control. The advice given by both attorneys was to close the sidewalk during the winter months. The slip and fall immunity cities have is thin and the likelihood of a serious fall is high. That is their advice, but the council has the discretion to do otherwise.

The discussion focused on many aspects of the project. The council felt all four scenarios should be presented for community discussion. Ramsey County will present their alternative plans to the public at their open house at Lauderdale City Hall on March 7.

**B. Planning for No Mow May**

Last year the City supported the "No Mow May" campaign sponsored by Bee City USA. Residents were offered signs to put in their windows if they participated and code enforcement for rank growth was suspended through the end of May.

The No Mow May idea started in 2020 as a partnership between Bee City USA, Lawrence University, and the city of Appleton, Wisconsin. Their research was initially promising showing an increase in the number and species found in unmown versus mowed yards. However, this research has been retracted with the findings being called into question.

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Page 3 of 3

February 14, 2023

Folks loved the idea of No Mow May, as it seems like a win-win— good for the bees, and easy for property owners to participate. The research and reality are more complicated than that, and a debate remains on whether No Mow May is helpful or hurtful to bee populations.

Staff are wondering whether the Council wants to support No Mow May again this year. If yes, staff will draft a resolution suspending enforcement of rank growth ordinances. Staff also would research the cost for yard signs, as participants were unhappy receiving window signs last year.

After discussion, the Council asked staff to create a resolution for No Mow May, but in the future plan to discuss ideas for encouraging residents to plant native species preferred by native bees.

**Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

Butkowski stated that the February 28 council meeting might include Just Deeds and Mapping Prejudice, a League of Women Voters presentation, revisiting the speed study, and the City Administrator employment agreement.

**Work Session**

A. Community Development Update

Butkowski shared that the City audit is complete. Maggie Duerwachter is amending our shade tree ordinance.

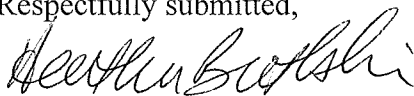
B. Opportunity for the Public to Address the City Council

Mayor Gaasch opened the floor to those in attendance interested in addressing the Council. There being nobody interested in speaking, Mayor Gaasch closed the floor.

**Adjournment**

Councilor Dains moved and seconded by Councilor Sayre to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Heather Butkowski  
City Administrator