

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

APRIL 14, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a Workshop meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 14th day of April, 2021 in the Conference Room of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes. Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the City Council members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.

Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.

Mayor John Keis called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Keis, Council Members Fischer, Torkelson, McGraw & Miller.
Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Chris Heineman, Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen, Public Works Director Bill Dircks, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell, Finance Director Brenda Malinowski, City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller, Bill Weber with Weber Community Planning and Mark Kasma with Bolton & Menk

DISCUSS ZONING CODE UPDATE

The Community Development Director provided a summary of the progress so far, the objectives of the update and the proposed major changes to the zoning code. She reported that she has talked to several business owners in the city, and reviewed the comments that she has received.

Torkelson stated that he would like to see a shaded map or a parcel count to see how many properties the zoning changes would actually affect. Mr. Weber stated he should be able to do that. Fischer asked why there is a proposal to not allow the garages to be in front of the house since at least half of the existing homes in the city are set up that way now and there is very little opportunity for new development. Miller asked if this was only for aesthetic design. Mr. Weber stated it is aesthetic and helps soften the street views, but noted that it would only affect a small number of properties. He stated that front porches are also encouraged and an added front porch could encroach into the front setback with the updated zoning code.

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The Community Development Director stated that there some questions that she is looking for feedback from the Council on:

- 1. Minimum lot size in the R-1 district:** Should the minimum lot size for a detached house in the R-1 district be rolled back to what it was previously? It is presently at 11,000 square feet but until 2008 it was 10,000 square feet.

Fischer asked how many properties would now be able to split their lot and previously could not. The City Administrator stated there would not be very many.

- 2. Minimum lot width for detached houses in the R-1 and R-2 districts:** Should the minimum lot width for a new detached house in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts be reduced? The R-1 district was a minimum of 75 feet wide until 2008 when it was increased to 85 feet. The minimum lot width in the R-2 district is 75 feet.

Keis stated he has no problem with going back to 75-foot lot widths. There was no opposition from the Council to reducing the lot width minimums back to 75 feet.

- 3. Two-family dwellings in the R-1 zoning district**

The updated code would allow two-family dwellings as Conditional Uses on corner lots in the R-1 district. The minimum lot size for an R-1 corner lot is 11,000 square feet. The building would have to be judged to be architecturally compatible with others in the immediate vicinity.

- 4. Increased density for two-family dwellings in the R-2 district**

Staff has proposed to allow higher densities for two-family buildings in the R-2 district. This change would require a 9,000 square foot lot for a two-unit building instead of presently, a 15,000 square foot lot is needed. This change is proposed in order to promote this housing type as recommended in the comprehensive plan and to be more line with the density regulations of neighboring cities and contemporary practices.

- 5. Accessory dwelling units in the R-1 district**

Is the Council comfortable with the idea of allowing detached accessory dwelling units in the R-1 zoning district? The minimum lot size for the existing house would be 15,000 square feet, and there would be regulations addressing maximum floor area, setbacks, total lot coverage, building height, exterior appearance, short term rental, parking, owner-occupancy of the principal dwelling and prohibition of separate sale.

McGraw asked why the code would be changed if it only affects a few properties. Mr. Weber stated that the Comprehensive Plan talks about higher density and alternative housing options. Torkelson stated he likes this option and feels it could provide a good option for income, and would like to see what the results and impacts have been in other cities. Fischer stated that his concern is people asking for exceptions because

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they have a family situation and ask for a variance. McGraw stated he has seen over the years that if something is allowed for some, then everyone wants it.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ASSESSMENT POLICY

The Public Works Director stated that the City last updated its assessment policy in 1995. He explained that a base rate was set at that time and the new rate is calculated using the Consumer Price Index each year. He stated there have been some questions regarding the application of the policy during the past couple of years, so staff has decided it is a good time to take a close look at the policy and update it to fit the current best practices in the area. He reviewed the proposed changes and edits that should make the assessment process easier to apply to each street.

The Public Works Director stated that another topic that could be added to the policy include a section on irrigation and other items in the right-of-way. He explained that in the past, the City has had the street contractor or an irrigation contractor handle irrigation repairs or other repairs to items in the right-of-way, such as invisible fencing or landscaping. He stated that there generally have not been many issues, however, last year the Pitrina Park Townhome Association's irrigation repair cost \$28,000. He explained that the Council could opt to make property owners responsible for their own repairs in the right-of-way, which could be addressed in the assessment policy or a new standalone policy to cover right-of-way issues during street projects could be created.

The Public Works Director reviewed the current assessment cap rate and what has been used since 1995, and options for going forward. He stated that the city has used the Consumer Price Index rate for the annual increases, but there are also National Construction Index and the Minneapolis Construction Index rates that could be used. McGraw stated that maybe since street improvements are construction, using a construction index is more applicable. Keis asked if the city receives MSA funds, how are they used. The Public Works Director explained that any MSA or grant funds that the city receives are put into the fund and used for the city's share of street construction costs.

The Public Works Director asked the Council what the consensus is for which rate to use. There was Council consensus to use the Minneapolis Area Construction rate.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

John T. Keis, Mayor

Attest:

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Christopher Heineman, City Administrator