



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

May 24, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order by Mayor Regan Gonzalez at 6:15 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Mary Supple; Simon Trautmann; Sean Hayford Oleary; and Ben Whalen

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Chris Link, Deputy Public Works Director; Scott Kulzer, Administrative Aide/Analyst; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; and Kari Sinning, City Clerk

Others Present: None

ITEM #1	DEPUTY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR CHRIS LINK AND ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE/ANALYST SCOTT KULZER WILL PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE CITY'S FORESTRY INITIATIVES AND THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (MNDNR) PREPARING FOR EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB) GRANT PROJECT THAT IS UNDERWAY
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Mayor Regan Gonzalez turned the work session over to City Manager Rodriguez who introduced Deputy Public Works Director Link and Administrative Aide/Analyst Kulzer. A presentation was given that highlighted what Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is, the impact and photos of EAB, and the treatment of EAB via an insecticide and removal/replacement. They described the EAB Grant that was received from MNDNR, how that was used to help remove and replace trees in the city, and the communication between residents regarding EAB.

Council Member Supple asked if it's cheaper to remove the tree before it gets too infested. Deputy Director Link shared that contractors have stated that if the tree is completely dead the costs could be higher for removal because it is tougher on equipment and unpredictable.

Council Member Trautmann asked for clarification about the decision to remove and replace the trees on the east side of the city. Deputy Director Link explained that the trees were already chosen to be either injected with the insecticide or removed and they chose to remove them due to safety concerns.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked about the preservation of trees and how they decide to remove/replace. Deputy Director Link described the balancing act of having younger trees intermingled with older trees to preserve the canopy.

City Manager Rodriguez asked if there is a chance of saving trees that are treated. Deputy Director Link stated that once treated, the tree must be treated for the lifetime of the tree which gives it a chance of survival but you are required to keep up on treatments that can become costly over time. Dutch Elm Disease is very similar to this and we have learned that we need to diversify the type of trees we have.

Council Member Trautmann asked if there have been recommendations of trees from ecologists that would be heartier and stand the tests of time. Deputy Director Link stated that MNDNR has given a list of different tree recommendations that would be suitable for the city.

Deputy Director Link and Administrative Aide/Analyst Kulzer gave an overview of the forestry services and encouraged residents to contact at least three contractors for free estimates that could be assessed as a part of the property taxes. He explained that the shade of the trees helps roads last longer. The City has partnered with Tree Trust to ensure tree planting and at the direction of the Sustainability Commission more native trees would be considered to be planted.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez asked about the effect of global warming on deciding the types of trees that could be planted. Deputy Director Link stated that they work with some of the tree nurseries that have stated that we might be able to plant trees that are normally grown more south.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked if a boulevard tree gets removed and the property owner does not decide on the type of replacement tree how a tree is chosen. Deputy Director Link stated that they try to pick a tree to add diversity to the block. Council Member Hayford Oleary commented on the inconsistent distance from the curb that new trees are being planted especially on streets where there is an anticipated sidewalk as it could affect funding for the projects. Deputy Director Link understood Council Member Hayford Oleary’s comments that there is not a lot of consistency because depending upon the tree that is planted it could affect the curb and mentioned that it is a process that could be changed.

Council Member Whalen shared his positive experience with the replacement process and asked why we don’t plant pine trees. Deputy Director Link stated that if they remove a pine tree that they would probably replace it with one but there are sightline issues and don’t offer a lot of shade.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked them and Public Works staff for their work on the trees throughout the winter and preserving our canopy. She shared that this is a really good example of getting funding to help the community and thankful that Administrative Aide/Analyst Kulzer took the time to apply for the grant as Richfield could be a top contender for a lot of grant opportunities.


ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:56 p.m.


Date Approved: June 14, 2022



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Kari Sinning
City Clerk



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager