



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Regular Council Meeting Virtual Meeting held via WebEx

November 24, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez at 7:00 p.m. via WebEx.

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Ben Whalen; Mary Supple; Edwina Garcia; and Simon Trautmann

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; John Stark, Community Development Director; Melissa Poehlman, Assistant Community Development Director; Amy Markle, Recreation Service Director; Rachel Lindholm, Sustainability Specialist; Chris Regis, Finance Director; Jay Henthorne, Public Safety Director; Jane Skov, IT Manager; Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst; and Kelly Wynn, Senior Office Assistant

Others Present: Mary Stratton, President Civil Service Commission; Marty Kirsch, Chair Friendship Commission; Mia Simpson, Co-chair Arts Commission; and Joyce Marrie, Co-chair Arts Commission; Rebecca Kurtz, Ehlers; Brian Bochman, Principal with Enclave Companies

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Regan Gonzalez led the Pledge of Allegiance

OPEN FORUM

Senior Office Assistant Wynn reviewed the options to participate:

- Participate live by calling 612-861-0651 during the open forum portion
- Call prior to meeting 612-861-9711
- Email prior to meeting kwynn@richfielmn.gov

Senior Office Assistant Wynn stated there were no comments for the open forum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Supple, S/Whalen to approve the minutes of the (1) City Council Work Session of November 10, 2020; and (2) City Council Meeting of November 10, 2020.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE
- Garcia: AYE
- Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

Item #1	PRESENTATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT
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President Stratton provided an overview of the Civil Service commission and how they serve the Richfield Fire Department and community. She spoke of the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic and health concerns of Fire Chief Kewitsch. The commission was able to hire a new position of Battalion Chief, promoted Captains and Lieutenants and hired on new firefighters. She then thanked Council Member Garcia on her service and gave well wishes on her retirement

Council Member Garcia expressed her appreciation for the work the Civil Service does and how they are able to incorporate feedback from all firefighters to make the organization better.

Council Member Supple thanked the commissioners as they work quietly behind the scenes and do a fabulous job working with the fire department.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked President Stratton for her leadership and for all the Civil Service does for the fire department and community. She welcomed Battalion Chief Wood in her position and thanked Assistant Chief Mike Dobesh for stepping in during Fire Chief Kewitsch's absence. She also expressed gratitude to all the firefighters for everything they do for the residents of Richfield every day.

Item #2	PRESENTATION OF THE FRIENDSHIP COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT
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Chair Kirsch presented the annual report of the Friendship Commission

Council Member Garcia asked how many times Chair Kirsch has been to Costa Rica to visit the sister city of Heredia.

Chair Kirsch stated six times and would like to continue to make the trip.

Council Member Garcia stated how much she appreciates the commission and hopes to go back someday.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez stated she would love to make a trip to Costa Rica as well and visit with the local community there. She also asked about the possibility of pen pals.

Chair Kirsch stated how the school years are different so it is difficult to create pen pals. He spoke of how the commission hopes to have a group from Heredia come visit Richfield as well in the future.

Item #3	PRESENTATION OF THE ARTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT
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Co-Chair Marrie gave an overview of what the Richfield Arts Commission does for the community.

Co-Chair Simpson spoke of the commissions various projects including the 2020 poetry contest, Little Library at the Bandshell, City Hall and Community Center art displays, public art support and many more.

Co-Chair Marrie spoke of the challenges of the pandemic but the commission was still able to complete many projects. She thanked the commission members along with staff for thier work and assistance.

Council Member Supple thanked the commission for their efforts and going above and beyond to promote art within Richfield.

Council Member Garcia thanked Co-Chair Marrie for her service, contributions and leadership.

Council Member Trautmann expressed appreciation for the value of the work the commission has been able to accomplish and for the service of Co-Chair Marrie.

Co-Chair Marrie thanked the Council along with the commission for all their support.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez expressed gratitude for the commission and all their contributions to the community. She encouraged residents to support the Crossroads Panorama here in Richfield. She then shared some ideas for the commission to connect with the community to promote arts within Richfield.

Item #4	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
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M/Trautmann, S/Whalen to approve the agenda

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE

Garcia: AYE
Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

Item #5	CONSENT CALENDAR
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City Manager Rodriguez presented the consent calendar.

A. Continue a public hearing and consider the approval of a resolution regarding the modification of the Redevelopment Plan for the Richfield Redevelopment Project Area, the establishment of the 2020-2 Tax Increment Financing District: Emi (a redevelopment tax increment financing district), and the proposed adoption of a Tax Increment Financing Plan. Staff Report No. 148

M/Garcia, S/Supple to approve the consent calendar.

Council Member Supple asked for clarification that everything listed will be continued to a future meeting.

Assistant Director Poehlman confirmed that is correct.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

Regan Gonzalez: AYE
Supple: AYE
Trautmann: AYE
Garcia: AYE
Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

Item #6	CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS, IF ANY, REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR
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None

Item #7	PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A MODIFICATION TO THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND APPROVAL OF A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN FOR THE 2020-3 TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT: LYNK 65. STAFF REPORT NO. 149
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Council Member Supple read staff report 149.

Assistant Wynn reminded residents how to participate during public hearings and can call 612-861-0651 for live commenting.

Assistant Director Poehlman gave an overview of the staff report.

Rebecca Kurtz expanded on the analysis done. Ehlers, staff and developer worked together to fill the gap and provide more affordable units.

Council Member Supple opened the public hearing.

Assistant Wynn stated there were no callers for the public hearing.

Council Member Supple asked the developer to share how they were able to assist the current tenants at this location.

Brian Bochman spoke of a gathering three months ago with all the current tenants to explain the process and next steps along with exchanging information. Information was supplied regarding leasing costs and if tenants needed relocation material.

Director Stark explained that in March the EDA considered a displaced business grant fund. However, this was put on hold due to COVID. The hope is to bring it back in December or January.

Brian Bochman stated all the basement tenants are gone due to the economic down turn due to COVID.

M/Supple, S/Whalen to close the public hearing.

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

Regan Gonzalez: AYE

Supple: AYE

Trautmann: ABSTAIN

Garcia: AYE

Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 4-0 with 1 abstain from Council Member Trautmann

.Council Member Whalen commented on how he first opposed this project. He expressed appreciation of the developer working with the current tenants and deep gratitude for the creativity in making the affordable units possible that included two bedroom housing. He plans to support this item but believes more work has to be done to develop more affordable housing within the TIF district in the future.

Director Stark spoke of an example in this project is the amount of return the developer should be achieving. That amount changes all the time and staff works with Ehlers to find that amount. He explained how the HRA actually has more money to spend and staff will be working on a plan to put that money into future projects.

Rebecca Kurtz added one of the challenges with TIF is a timing issue of when the increment will come in which can hopefully be improved in the future.

Council Member Supple also appreciated the addition of two bedroom units as they are a great need for Richfield residents.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez echoed comments of appreciation on inclusion of two bedroom units and looks forward to developing more deeply affordable units. She then asked the developer to include staff and Council on the email chain with current tenants to keep up to date on changes.

Brian Bochman confirmed there would be no problem to include staff and Council on plans of the process and next steps. Tenants expressed the possibility to start the project after April to provide ample time to relocate if necessary. He then spoke of the constant communication they will be having with current tenants.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez asked about reducing miscommunication and misunderstandings with current tenants and being able to assist in relocation.

Assistant Director Poehlman spoke of the newsletter that had been provided during the Chamberlain project and staff would be happy to help facilitate the same kind of communication with this project.

Brian Bochman explained their project managers have done the same type of communication on previous projects and would happy to do the same on this project.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez asked that the tenants are provided information about relocation and the resources that are available to them.

Brian Bochman asked how they would like the communication whether it is a hand out or separate meeting to provide the information.

M/Supple, S/Garcia to adopt a resolution approving a modification to the Redevelopment Plan for the Richfield Redevelopment Project; and approving a Tax Increment Financing Plan for the 2020-3 Tax Increment Finance District: Lynk 65.

RESOLUTION NO. 11793

RESOLUTION APPROVING A MODIFICATION TO THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE RICHFIELD REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT; AND APPROVING A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN FOR THE 2020-3 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT: LYNK 65

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

Regan Gonzalez: AYE

Supple: AYE

Trautmann: ABSTAIN

Garcia: AYE

Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 4-0 and 1 abstain from Council Member Trautmann

Item #8	<p>CONSIDER A RESOLUTION AND A FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE VICINITY OF VETERAN'S PARK. THE MORATORIUM WOULD APPLY TO PROPERTIES THAT ARE GUIDED FOR MEDIUM AND HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL USE IN THE 2040 RICHFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. STAFF REPORT NO. 150</p>
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Council Member Whalen presented staff report 150 with recommendation to extend to a nine-month moratorium instead of six-months.

Director Stark explained why staff is recommending an additional three months in that additional analysis needs to be done to define what community space might look like and what financial obligations the city could have for the space. He reminded everyone the moratorium can be lifted early or altered at any time by Council.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez clarified this is a first reading to have a robust discussion on the very important piece of property. The following meeting will contain a public hearing and second reading.

Council Member Garcia asked if the developers have worked with anyone to develop a practical idea.

Director Stark stated Ehlers Associates will be assisting in identifying funding sources.

City Manager Rodriguez spoke of staff working with Ehlers to see if buying the property or partnering with a developer is a feasible option for the city.

Council Member Garcia asked if Director Regis will be a part of discussions with Ehlers.

City Manager Rodriguez confirmed she spoke with Director Regis and he will be brought into discussions on the feasibility of the project.

Council Member Garcia spoke of what an institution Veteran's Park is to the community of Richfield. She would like to see an organization that will work with the city to preserve the area and the American Legion Post 435.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez asked for clarification on the item for voting tonight which will be on the moratorium.

Assistant Director Poehlman explained the need to adopt a resolution inclusive of a moratorium so as to not receive any building applications between the first and second readings.

City Attorney Tietjen confirmed this is a necessary step.

Council Member Supple thanked Post 435 for their presentation at the work session. She then asked staff about the boundaries of the area.

Assistant Director Poehlman explained the boundaries are extended as the area is slotted for high density and the homes included in the boundaries are vacant and owned by the HRA.

Council Member Supple would like the city to consider things carefully to be financially prudent but would like to see it done expeditiously as to not put more burdens on Post 435.

Director Markle spoke of the unique opportunity of this area and that time is needed to see what should be developed. Veteran's Park is very important to many residents and needs to be aesthetically tailored to the existing surroundings.

Council Member Trautmann expressed appreciation of discussion around this area. He supported comments from Director Markle. He then asked about the zoning of the area.

Director Stark spoke of the degree of what will happen but it is currently zoned for housing so it may need to be re-zoned depending on the findings.

Council Member Trautmann asked if zoning or developing and financial analysis could be done simultaneously.

City Manager Rodriguez explained the Post 435 needed to go through the process with their members before bringing any discussion to Council. She realizes this is going to take longer than the Post 435 would like but the process needs to take place. She believes this will be a two-step process where the first step will be to see if it is financially feasible and second step will be planning.

Council Member Whalen agreed this is an important process and should be conducive to what already exists within the park. He echoed the comments of having this done as quickly as possible but would also like it done correctly. He asked about the possibility to provide answers of city involvement after the financial findings are presented to Post 435. He would like see a plan that serves Post 435 and the community needs.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez asked about member involvement from Post 435 and if they are still in a process.

City manager Rodriguez stated to her knowledge, the members have voted to sell the property but engagement regarding their presence on the property in the future is ongoing.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez spoke of the balancing act of doing what is right for the community and Post 435. She reiterated the value of the land and once in a lifetime opportunity. She does not wish to stunt the growth and involvement Post 435 has in the community. Community engagement will be a high priority in this process.

Council Member Supple asked about community engagement going forward and the public hearing in the next meeting.

Assistant Director Poehlman defined the public hearing will be specifically on the moratorium and not any kind of development plan. In regards to community engagement, that will take place later in the process as to not provide options that may not be financially feasible.

Director Markle added there has been some desire for a community center gathered from the parks master plan a few years ago.

M/Whalen, S/Garcia to adopt the attached resolution and conduct a first reading of the attached ordinance establishing a six-month moratorium on the development of properties in the vicinity of Veteran's Park that are guided for Medium or High Density Residential, or Commercial use in the 2040

Comprehensive Plan, and schedule a public hearing and second reading of the attached ordinance for December 8, 2020 with the amendment to change to a nine-month moratorium.

RESOLUTION NO. 11794

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A NINE-MONTH MORATORIUM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE VINICITY OF VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK THAT ARE GUIDED FOR MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, OR COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL USE IN THE 2040 RICHFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AND DIRECTING THAT A PLANNING STUDY BE CONDUCTED

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

- Regan Gonzalez: AYE
- Supple: AYE
- Trautmann: AYE
- Garcia: AYE
- Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

Item #9	CITY MANAGER REPORT
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City Manager Rodriguez provided an overview of the Bloomington Public Health presentation during the work session provided by Nick Kelley, PhD., Acting City of Bloomington Public Health Administrator regarding COVID.

Council Member Supple expressed her thankfulness for the information provided at the work session. She commented on some of the key things driving the spread was the need for people to go to work to support their families due to not having paid sick leave. She is hopeful that is something that can be changed in the future so families do not have to make the choice.

Council Member Whalen commented on the new application for smartphones ‘CovidAwareMN’ that will anonymously and privately track what phones you have had close contact with in assistance with contact tracing when it comes to the spread of COVID.

Council Member Garcia expressed appreciation for staff to work together in keeping residents apprised to the virus and what is happening within the city.

Council Member Trautmann thanked staff for their efforts regarding the pandemic and pivoting so quickly during this time.

Item #10	CLAIMS AND PAYROLL
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M/Garcia, S/Trautmann that the following claims and payrolls be approved:

U.S. Bank	11/24/2020
A/P Checks 291318 - 292709	\$ 1,394,545.59
Payroll: 158076 - 158376	666,336.46
TOTAL	<u>\$ 2,060,882.05</u>

Executive Analyst Martinez Gavina took roll call vote:

Regan Gonzalez: AYE
 Supple: AYE
 Trautmann: AYE
 Garcia: AYE
 Whalen: AYE

Motion carried 5-0

Item #10	HATS OFF TO HOMETOWN HITS
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Council Member Garcia congratulated Jenell Wood as the new Battalion Chief. She also gave accolades to Director Kristin Asher on all the wonderful work she has done. She has been doing an outstanding job. She also appreciates it when she sends her staff to certain commissions to keep them up to speed when something happens within the city. She then thanked Mayor Regan Gonzalez for her leadership and involvement in the community.

Council Member Trautmann congratulated a resident, Carol Schroeder, on her poem that is along 66th Street and read the poem. He appreciates how the city has provided the opportunity to create such beautiful works of art throughout the community every day.

Council Member Whalen commented on discussions moving toward organized collection and encouraged residents to reach out to Council and staff if they have questions or concerns. He also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and encouraged residents to be safe and stay home if it is an option.

Council Member Supple echoed comments on congratulating Director Asher being recognized by her colleagues. She also thanked everyone involved in keeping the community safe and moving forward through this pandemic. She then encouraged residents to apply for commission as applications will be opening December 1st. There are so many opportunities for residents to serve their community.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked the whole community for the amount of acts of kinds and courage that have been displayed during these times. She appreciates all the hard work residents, staff, students, teachers, front line workers, first responders and many more for pulling together. She then wished a Happy Thanksgiving to all and hopes everyone will make choices to stay safe.

Item #11	ADJOURNMENT
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The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:15 p.m.

Date Approved: December 8, 2020



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Kelly Wynn
Senior Office Assistant



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager