AGENDA 6b
DATE 3.29.16

CITY OF NORTON SHORES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
March 22, 2016

A regular work session of the Norton Shores City Council was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 4814 Henry Street.

Present: Mayor Nelund, Council Members Beecham, Dolack, Flanders, Martines, Moulatsiotis and Ostrom; also Mark Meyers, Anthony Chandler, Mike Huston, Jerry Bartoszek, Jon Gale, Bob Gagnon, Lynne Fuller and Doug Hughes

Excused: Council Members Hylland and Jurkas

1. Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment - Electronic Billboards

Public Works Director Jerry Bartoszek presented a draft amendment to the Zoning Ordinance relative to electronic off-premise advertising signs (billboards). As discussed at the February work session, the City received a request to amend the Zoning Ordinance to include electronic, digital off-premise advertising signs (billboards), specifically adding electronic, digital technology in the GI General Industrial district when adjacent to US-31. The proposed amendment creates a new category in the definition section of the sign provisions of the ordinance, but still restricts them to GI General Industrial districts when adjacent to US-31. Requirements for sign luminosity, timing of message changes and minimum distances between such signs were proposed using Federal Highway Administration standards. City Administrator Mark Meyers added that FHA standards exceed the City's current regulations for non-electronic billboards.

Council Member Ostrom voiced his concern that the City may have to revisit the ordinance to address the issue of prohibiting electronic animation but City Attorney Doug Hughes explained that animation or streaming messages would not comply with the 8-second content change requirement. Council Member Beecham stressed the problem of distracted drivers and the additional distraction caused by electronic billboards.

Council Member Dolack asked how this request differs from the electronic sign at Mona Shores High School. Mr. Meyers explained that the school's sign is on-premise and the current request pertains to off-premise billboards.

The consensus of the Council was to forward the proposed amendment to the Planning Commission for public hearing and recommendation to the City Council.

2. Proposed Building Fee Adjustments

Fire Chief Bob Gagnon proposed adjustments to the Building Division's trade fee schedule (plumbing, electrical and mechanical). Staff analyzed the City's fees in comparison to other area communities and found that Norton Shores' mechanical fees are lower than the average within the area. Therefore, fee increases are recommended to remain competitive with the surrounding communities in an effort to retain the best qualified trade inspectors and maintain the Building Division's budget.

Proposed increases are specifically mechanical fees for 1) manufactured fireplaces, 2) ducts and water lines, and 3) coolers, compressors and evaporators. In addition, increases to the hourly inspection rate and inspection fees are recommended. Council concurred with the recommendation to move the fee adjustments to the next Council meeting for consideration.

3. Street Solicitation Policy Discussion

Police Chief Jon Gale proposed an ordinance amendment to address the City's ongoing issue of solicitation in our roadways and the safety concerns that arise from anyone collecting money in the middle of traffic. The Police Department and Council members continue to get complaints about this and, on the advice of City Attorney Doug Hughes, any action taken to restrict intersection solicitations must include all groups and individuals. In order to survive a constitutional challenge, the City must prove that its regulation of solicitors does not restrict free speech. The proposed amendment was crafted using examples from the cities of Kentwood, Wyoming, Grandville and others that prohibit solicitation near the roadway and other specific areas.

Adoption of this ordinance would also prohibit non-profit organizations from conducting their fund raisers in or near intersections. For this reason Council Member Ostrom is opposed to the proposal. Council Member Moulatsiotis asked if this ordinance would be enforceable. Chief Gale explained that panhandling situations would be handled in a similar manner as others by issuing warnings before citations. Mr. Meyers also explained that the Police Department is already dealing with the panhandling but without the benefit of an ordinance providing a penalty for such activity.

Council Member Ostrom asked how this would affect the marching band's door-to-door fund raiser when they are walking and playing on or near the street. Chief Gale said that last year the department assisted the band to ensure their safety and unimpeded traffic. It was the consensus of the Council to move the proposed ordinance amendment forward to a Council meeting for formal consideration.

4. Proposed Fiscal Year 2017 Capital Improvement Program Budget

Mr. Meyers gave an overview of the budgeting process, its timeline, and emphasized that it is a team effort among the budget committee, department directors, and their staffs. He noted that the proposed budget follows three main themes: streets, equipment replacement and building maintenance and improvements. As in years past, street resurfacing, sidewalk repair and construction and gravel road improvements continue. Other important items include proposed improvements to the cemetery that would be funded by a transfer from the Perpetual Care Fund and paid out of the Capital Improvement Program, including replacing the fence. He also explained that in the

current fiscal year there is a $495,000 appropriation to replace a fire rescue vehicle, however, the vehicle will not be completed and delivered until after July 1st so the City will pay for the chassis at a cost of $204,038 this year. The balance due of $290,962 will be cut from the Fiscal Year 2016 budget and appropriated in Fiscal Year 2017. Notable building improvements proposed include carpeting the hallway in City Hall and counter and cabinet replacement in the Police Department break room. Mr. Meyers then asked Finance Director Mike Huston to review the figures presented.

Council Member Flanders inquired about a $25,000 appropriation for Black Lake Park. Mr. Meyers said staff intends to pursue grants for further improvements which include the possibility of a kayak launch. The cost for local matching funds may then be shared by Spring Lake Township. Mr. Flanders also asked about maintaining carpeting in the public areas of the building because of dirt, water, etc. being tracked in. Mr. Bartoszek explained that the carpet would be commercial grade squares that are more heavy-duty in entrance areas and easily cleaned or replaced if necessary.

Comments

Mr. Meyers reminded Council that the April 5th Council meeting has been rescheduled for next week, March 29, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Lynne A. Fuller

Lynne A. Fuller, City Clerk