

CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 23, 2020**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Saint Peter was conducted in the Governors' Room of the Community Center on March 23, 2020. Under M.S. 13D.021, the City is able to conduct meetings by electronic means in the event of a state-wide emergency. Governor Walz has declared a state-wide peacetime emergency and as such City Council meetings will be conducted remotely using GoToMeeting software until further notice.

A quorum present, Mayor Zieman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present in the meeting room: Councilmember Ed Johnson and Mayor Zieman. The following members were present through the GoToMeeting platform: Councilmembers Keri Johnson, Shanon Nowell, Brad DeVos, and Emily Bruflat. Absent was Councilmember Grams. The following officials were present in the meeting room: City Administrator Prafke and City Attorney James Brandt.

Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by Nowell, seconded by Bruflat, to approve the agenda with the addition of a resolution continuing the emergency declaration previously signed by Mayor Zieman related to the COVID-19 situation. With all in favor, the motion carried and the agenda was approved as modified.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Bruflat, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2020 regular City Council meeting. With all in favor, the motion carried and the minutes were approved. A complete copy of the minutes of the March 9, 2020 regular City Council meeting is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Proceedings 19.

Councilmember Grams arrived at 7:07 p.m. through the virtual meeting platform.

Public Hearing: Petition for Annexation of Land – City Administrator Prafke reviewed the procedure for conducting public hearings. Mayor Zieman opened the public hearing at 7:09 p.m. Community Development Director Wille reported two parcels of land, (one owned by Gustavus Adolphus College and one owned by Ruth Ann Weelborg Trustee), which the City's land maps showed were annexed into the City, were in fact not. Wille stated the Planning and Zoning Commission had petitioned for annexation of the two properties to correct what was assumed to be an error on the City's part and the two property owners had agreed to the annexation. Wille indicated that if approved, the Gustavus property would be zoned as EID (educational) and the Weelborg property would be C-3 (commercial). Wille also noted the City would fund the \$350 annexation petition fee and the \$5/acre (\$100 minimum) fee to the State of Minnesota for the 1.03 acre parcels. There being no further speakers, the hearing was declared closed at 7:12 p.m.

Visitors – There were no visitors in attendance in the meeting room and no visitors present on the virtual meeting.

Consent Agenda – In motion by Nowell, seconded by Grams, Resolution No. 2020-30 entitled "Resolution Approving Consent Agenda" was introduced. Councilmember Nowell thanked the Election Judges who were being paid as part of the consent agenda. Councilmember Grams questioned how often the heat assembly tubes, which were included as a purchase on the consent agenda, were replaced. Public Works Director Moulton indicated it was the first time since the wastewater treatment plant opened. Councilmember Bruflat questioned what specific chemicals were being used by TruGreen for fertilizing and weed control at Community Spirit Park and whether organic options had been investigated. Public Works Director Moulton indicated his belief the public's tolerance for organic (manure) fertilizer would not be high even if the City did have the necessary equipment to apply the manure and he believed the product being used was a synthetic chemical. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-30 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

Annexation Petition – Following the public hearing, Community Development Director Wille recommended adoption of the annexation petition. Councilmember Bruflat asked about the cost of the action. Wille noted the application fee would be paid by the City but the cost of publication would be substantially higher than the fee due to the length of the ordinance. In

motion by Johnson (E), seconded by Johnson (K), Ordinance No. 46, Third Series entitled “An Ordinance Of The City Of Saint Peter, Minnesota, Annexing Land Located Within Oshawa Township, Nicollet County, Minnesota Pursuant To Minn. Statute 414.033, Subdivision 2 (2), Permitting Annexation By Ordinance.” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Ordinance No. 46, Third Series is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Ordinances 2.

Cold Weather Rule Extension – City Administrator Prafke explained the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule was set to expire on April 15th and recommended the Council extend the protections of the rule to May 22, 2020 in light of the COVID-19 situation. Prafke said that the 30-35 customers who are currently protected by the rule were expected to continue to struggle and with school being remote learning at this time, shutting off electricity would be even more of a struggle. Councilmembers discussed whether the deadline could/should be extended even further. Prafke noted that the recommendation was a conservative one to help out those few customers while protecting others that are paying. Councilmember Nowell questioned whether the same action should be taken relative to water accounts. Prafke noted the policy for shut-offs follows that of electric accounts and it is very rare to shut off water accounts. In motion by Johnson (K), seconded by Bruflat, Resolution No. 2020-31 entitled “Resolution Extending Minnesota Cold Weather Rule For City Of Saint Peter Residential Utility Customers” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-31 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program Application – Public Works Director Moulton requested authorization to submit a \$408,343 grant application through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation grant program for a project to make improvements in Minnesota Square Park. Moulton noted the grant would require a 50% matching amount from the City which could be funded by \$100,000 from the Community Center, and \$40,000 from the Parks Capital Improvement fund along with in-kind labor and equipment use. Moulton noted most applications are not successful the first year and if the grant was not awarded, the City’s share of \$140,000 would be reserved for park improvements in 2021. In motion by Nowell, seconded by Grams, Resolution No. 2020-32 entitled “Resolution Authorizing Submission Of DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program Application” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-32 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

Emergency Declaration Continuation – City Administrator Prafke and City Attorney Brandt recommended adoption of a resolution that would continue the emergency declaration signed by Mayor Zieman. Brandt pointed out that State Statute only allows for a three-day emergency unless officially continued by action of the City Council. Prafke noted that such continuation would allow for remote meetings and may qualify the City for aid packages which may be provided in the future. In motion by Bruflat, seconded by Nowell, Resolution No. 2020-33 entitled “Resolution Declaring Continuation Of Emergency Declaration Due To COVID-19 Emergency” was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-33 is contained in the City Administrator’s book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

Reports

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Zieman thanked all residents for staying home when they can and practicing social distancing. The Mayor also encouraged everyone to fill out their Census 2020 forms.

COVID-19 Impact – City Administrator Prafke reported all City buildings are now closed to the public to protect staff, but offices remain open for business. Prafke encouraged the public to follow the most recent notices by liking the City’s Facebook, Twitter and webpages and to sign up for the weekly newsletter through his office.

Board of Appeal and Equalization Meeting – City Administrator Prafke stated the Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting which had been scheduled in April, had been rescheduled for May 19th.

Goal Session Schedule - City Administrator Prafke indicated the March 30th goal session was being changed to a workshop session with a limited agenda. Prafke also stated a special meeting would be held at 5:30 p.m. (before the workshop) to consider approval of a microloan program expected to be recommended by the EDA.

City Administrator Prafke reported staff had conducted a conference call with 39 business owners to provide information on options available through SBA, DEED, and REDA to assist local businesses with economic challenges due to COVID-19.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Bruflat, to adjourn. With all in favor, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Charles Zieman
Mayor

ATTEST:

Todd Prafke
City Administrator