

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Regular Meeting/Work Session – September 11, 2006

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting/work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, September 11, 2006, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Meuers, Hellquist, Johnson, Erickson, Markeson, Lehmann; Absent: Downs

Staff Present: Ron Eischens, Alan Felix, Kay Murphy-Schuett, Curt Oakes, Rita Albrecht, Shawn Swenson

Others Present: Dick Slinkman, Tim Flathers

Mayor Lehmann stated that the purpose of the meeting was to approve amended resolutions regarding the Ballot questions for the general election and to discuss the Growth Management Plan. Lehmann requested to add approving declaration of equipment, a 2000 police car, as surplus equipment to Agenda as number 3 and Ron Johnson requested discussion of having a Special Work Session regarding this year's election issues, which was added to the Agenda as 3B.

Motion by Johnson, second by Hellquist, to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ballot Questions

Murphy-Schuett provided a sample of what the City's ballot questions would look like if placed on the ballot as currently approved. She stated that if the ballot language is not reduced in size, it will go over into two columns. Because the City is allowed only one column, one or two things would be required. It would either require the County use a 17 inch ballot or the County would have to add an additional page to the ballot and, either way, the City would bear the cost. Moreover, there is a concern that either of the above solutions may also cause a problem with the City tallying ballots at the end of the night. Felix and Murphy-Schuett presented recommended language changes for the questions. If the recommended language changes are approved and, if the language of the questions are changed to 9 point font and the explanation to the Event Center question, specifically, is changed to 8 point, it all may fit into one column.

Motion by Markeson, second by Meuers to accept recommended changes to the ballot questions and changing the font of the text to avoid a larger ballot or additional page to the ballot. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Growth Management Plan

Oakes handed out a draft of the Greater Bemidji Area Zoning and Subdivision Regulations proposed by the Joint Planning Board with the hopes of the Ordinance to go into effect January 1, 2007. A new Planning Commission will begin January 1, 2007, consisting of six members from the City, three from Northern Township and three from Bemidji Township. Oakes also noted that Travis Guida from the Planning Commission is now planning to build a house outside of City Limits and the Planning Commission will need to replace him.

Flathers gave a brief background of the Joint Planning Board's work process in developing the Land Use Plan that consists of 72 square miles. He believes that both the Zoning Ordinance map and Land Use Plan are in final draft form.

Felix stated that with the added managerial duties he has had to perform, he has not had the opportunity to review the documents and does not feel that anything should be adopted without the review of legal staff. He suggested that with the possibility of having a new manager on board as early as mid-October, that the Council request the Ordinance implementation date be pushed back to March 1, 2007 to allow legal staff more time to review and approve the documents.

Erickson asked what had happened with her request of changing the setback on City lots that were less than 5,000 square feet from 30 feet in the front yard and 30 in the backyard, as this creates a hardship for those who want to make improvements to the front or back of their home and those who want to add a garage. She stated that first, these people need to

go to the Planning Commission, pay \$300 and then need to prove a hardship to get a variance. She stated that she checked with the City's GIS Coordinator Brett Case and found out there are 1,032 parcels in the City that are 5,000 square feet or less. Flathers stated that the Commission did discuss this issue and everyone felt comfortable changing the setback to 25 feet, but no less.

Motion by Erickson, second by Johnson, to schedule a meeting with the Joint Planning Board to discuss the current situation and request the possibility of receiving an extension of the Ordinance going into effect no later than March 1, 2007, rather than January 1. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Surplus Equipment

Motion by Meuers, second by Markeson, to declare 2000 Chevrolet Impala 4-door as surplus equipment and authorized staff to sell it. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Coalition for Greater Minnesota Cities

Johnson requested that the Council have a Special Work Session. He has spoken with Tim Flaherty, who would like to come to Bemidji and talk informally with Council, staff and candidates to discuss some of the City-related election issues. The City would invite all candidates to participate or just to come and listen. Johnson suggested Tuesday, October 3 at 5:30 p.m. Johnson will coordinate with the City Clerk.

Oakes commented that there would be Government training regarding planning and zoning on Saturday, October 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and all elected officials and townships are invited.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Hellquist, second by Markeson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn M. Swenson
Deputy City Clerk