

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the Council in and for the City of Albany, Stearns County, Minnesota, was called to order by Mayor Tom Kasner at 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other Council members present were: Councilors Keith Heitzman, John R. Harlander, Al Amdahl, and Adam Rushmeyer. None were absent.

Other's present were: Tom Schneider, Clerk/Adm., Joe Mergen, Public Works Supervisor, Jeremy Mathiasen, the City Engineer with the firm of Stantec, Inc., St. Cloud, MN, Herman Lensing, Staff Writer, the Star Post, Carter Fish, Patrol Officer, and Ozzie Carbajal, Police Chief.

The council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The council took notice of approval of payment of bills. After due discussion, a motion was made by Al Amdahl and seconded by John R. Harlander to authorize electronic payments (payroll), transfers, and the payment of the following bills: Check Numbers 71427 to 71453. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mayor Tom Kasner called for any corrections or additions to the minutes of the regular meeting of the council held on November 17th and hearing none declared them approved.

Open forum/public comments: none

Councilor Adam Rushmeyer, Planning Commission Liaison, informed the council the Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 30th on a request by Jon Siegle, 131 1st Street, for a variance to relax the requirement of ten (10') feet between an existing detached accessory structure and the proposed construction of a garage (26' x 36') with breezeway attached to his home. Mr. Rushmeyer noted due to existing structures and conditions on the property, the new garage addition could not be constructed farther to the east. After due discussion and upon the recommendation from the Planning Commission, a motion was made by Adam Rushmeyer and seconded by Al Amdahl to approve the request by Jon Siegle, 131 1st Street, for a variance to relax the requirement of ten (10') feet between an existing detached accessory structure and the proposed construction of a garage (26' x 36') with breezeway attached to his home as follows:

1. Variance request is to construct an attached garage with breezeway to an existing principal structure (home) closer than 10' from an existing detached accessory structure. The garage doors facing the alley is greater than twenty (20) feet.
2. The variance request is consistent with the comprehensive plan in that it encourages new construction and increased property tax base.
3. The variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare.
4. The variance will allow homeowner to construct an attached garage and additional storage.
5. Due to an existing detached accessory structure, reconstructing a new foundation and moving the structure would be challenging.
6. Due to the character of the home, windows, electrical service, and gable roof, constructing the garage addition to the east five (5) feet is prohibitive.
7. As per Section 80.10, Subd. 3(b-iii) driveway shall be hard surface (concrete, bituminous, pavers)
8. The variance is not sought solely for reasons of increased financial gain.
9. The exterior materials of the proposed garage and breezeway shall be residential vinyl and shingle roof to match the home.

All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Rushmeyer also updated the Planning Commission on the following:

1. 2021 Capital Improvements Map (future improvement projects)
2. 2021 Lake Avenue/Church Avenue Improvement update: (from 3rd Street to 6th Street, 3rd Street, 4th Street, 5th Street (each between Lake Avenue and Forest Avenue), Church Avenue (from 2nd Street to 5th Street), and trunk storm sewer replacement west of 7th Street and north of Shamrock Lane.
3. 2022 Midland Avenue (from 1st Street to 6th Street), and 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets (between Railroad Avenue and Midland Avenue, and adjacent Alleys.
4. 2022 1st Street and Railroad Avenue (TH 238) intersection improvements and 8th Street and Shamrock Lane Sidewalk Improvements.
5. 2022 Golf View Drive Lift Station Improvements.
6. Potential future redevelopment of the former hospital/clinic at 300 3rd Avenue by the Albany Area Schools.
7. 2023 County Road 54 resurfacing east end of the city beginning near Par Drive and 2024 County Road 157 reconstruction beginning at the intersection of 8th Street and Railroad Avenue.

Pursuant to due notice, at 6:37 PM, Mayor Tom Kasner called the public hearing into session to consider approving the 2022 Budget and the amount of property taxes being proposed to be collected to pay for the costs of services the city will provide in 2022. Mr. Schneider noted a notice of the public hearing was published in the Star Post on November 24th. Mr. Schneider presented to the council the proposed employee benefits, hourly wage increase, revenues, capital equipment fund, and department operations (water, sewer, park, police, street, administration, library, elections, fire). Mr. Schneider noted the 2021 levy was \$1,068,428 and the proposed 2022 levy is \$1,093,413, a 2.43% increase. Mr. Schneider noted the following budget highlights: 1) 11% debt service levy increase for the purpose of funding the 2022 Capital Improvements (Midland Avenue), 2) \$45,000 increase in capital equipment fund, 3) \$30,000 Pickleball Court improvement in North Park, 4) \$15,000 repave pedestrian trail in North Park, and 5) \$50,000 major administration software technology upgrade. Mr. Schneider informed the council if the proposed 2021 levy is approved, the city's 2022 tax capacity rate is estimated to be 43.569%, a slight decrease from the previous year which was 44.7479%. Mr. Harlander questioned what is the projected 2022 increase in chemical costs for the water treatment plant knowing costs are increasing for all cities and businesses. Mr. Mergen noted he will provide projected increases to the council at the next meeting. Mayor Tom Kasner closed the public hearing at 6:55 PM. Mr. Schneider informed the council a resolution to approve the 2022 budget and levy will be presented to the council at the regular council meeting held on Wednesday, December 15th.

Mr. Mathiasen appeared before the council to discuss the proposed changes to the 2022 8th Street and Shamrock Lane Sidewalk Improvements. Mr. Mathiasen noted the project will include a new sidewalk within the MnDOT right of way along on the west side of 8th Street (TH 238), south of the 8th Street and Railroad Avenue intersection or known as the 4-way "Stop" and ending on the northern right of way on Shamrock Lane adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Shamrock Mobile Home Park. Mr. Mathiasen noted the original 8th Street sidewalk improvements did not connect to Railroad Avenue and had ended at the Lake Wobegon Trail. Mr. Mathiasen questioned how snow removal will be handled being the new sidewalk is proposed to be constructed directly behind a new curb similar to main street. Mr. Mergen informed the council he will contact MnDOT to request they participate in partially funding snow removal within their right of way similar to main street funding. After due discussion, a motion was made by Keith Heitzman who introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-29
CALLING PUBLIC HEARING ON A LOCAL
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
(8th Street and Shamrock Lane Sidewalk Improvements)

The motion for the foregoing Resolution was seconded by Adam Rushmeyer and after a full discussion thereon and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Mayor Tom Kasner, Councilors Adam Rushmeyer, Keith Heitzman, John R. Harlander, and Al Amdahl, and none voted against the same; whereupon the said Resolution was declared duly passed and adopted. The full text of the said Resolution is on file at the office of the City Clerk/Administrator for public inspection during regular office hours. Public Hearing to be held at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, December 15th at City Hall.

Mr. Mergen informed the council Kurt Beuning, Laborer in the Public Works Department, successfully completed his six-month probationary and recommend he be approved for full-time status. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Al Amdahl to approve Mr. Beuning to full-time employment status. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Councilor Al Amdahl updated the council on upcoming Albany Area Schools Community Education and Blattner Energy Arts Theatre (BEAT) activities and programming.

Mr. Schneider presented to the Council the proposed 2022 Albany Schedule of Fees and Charges, "Appendix A" beginning January 1, 2022. Mr. Schneider noted the water and sewer rates will increase four (4%) percent as per the city water/sewer capital improvement plan. Mr. Schneider also noted the city will begin to charge customers a small percentage if a credit card is used to pay city fees. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander who introduced the following Ordinance and moved its adoption:

CITY OF ALBANY
ORDINANCE 2021-01
APPENDIX "A"
ALBANY SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES

The motion for the foregoing Ordinance was seconded by Adam Rushmeyer and after a full discussion thereon and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Mayor Tom Kasner, Councilors Al Amdahl, John R. Harlander, Adam Rushmeyer, and Keith Heitzman, and none voted against the same whereupon the said Ordinance declared duly passed and adopted. The full text of the said Appendix "A", Albany Schedule of Fees and Charges 2022, is on file at the office of the City Clerk/Administrator for public inspection during regular office hours.

Mayor Tom Kasner announced the next regular Council meeting for 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, and adjourned the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.