

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, May 3, 2023, in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other Council members present were councilors Keith Heitzman, John R. Harlander, Adam Rushmeyer, and Al Amdahl. None were absent for the meeting.

Other's present were Tom Schneider, Clerk/Adm., Police Chief Ozzie Carbajal, Joseph Mergen, Supervisor, Public Works Department, Jeremy Mathiasen, the city Engineer with the firm Stantec, Inc., St. Cloud, MN, Tim Hennagir, Staff Writer, the Star Post, Roland Hanson, resident, Ray and Betty Mrozek, residents, and Frank Haynes, resident and member of community group identified as Friends of North Park.

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 Keith Heitzman and seconded by Adam Rushmeyer to approve/authorize payroll (3657-3671), electronic payments, transfers, and the payment of the following bills: Check Numbers 72634 to 72659. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mayor Tom Kasner also called for any corrections or additions to the minutes of the regular meeting of the council held on April 19th and hearing none declared them approved.

Open forum/public comments: none

The council took notice of a Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month (May). Betty Mrozek informed the council she is a board member of the local organization affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and provided information about local events held in the area to promote awareness of mental health illness in the month of May. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Al Amdahl to authorize Mayor Tom Kasner to execute the Proclamation for Mental Health Awareness Month on behalf of the city of Albany. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Mergen appeared before the council to inform the council a meeting was held with Jennifer Kaminskie, Environmental Specialist, Stearns County Environmental Services, to discuss the existing wetland locations in North Park that potentially may be impacted by park improvements. Mr. Mergen noted Ms. Kaminskie was very helpful in providing information as to how the construction of improvements may proceed and there have been no violations of the work that has been done to date. Mr. Mergen informed the council the following improvements were discussed with Ms. Kaminskie:

- Pond excavation in wetland located between Jaycee shelter and 2014 playground equipment.
- Addition pedestrian trail and boardwalk along northern shoreline of North Lake.

Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council, informed Mr. Mergen and Mr. Haynes the council had no objections to the aforementioned improvements but requested a design and materials to be used for the proposed boardwalk be submitted to the city for review and instructed Mr. Mergen to schedule a meeting with Ms. Kaminskie to identify the location of the pedestrian trail which includes a boardwalk, grass, and granite surface.

Mr. Mergen presented to the council a design for the construction of one (1) tennis court and six (6) pickleball courts to be located on the existing concrete now being used as tennis courts in North Park as proposed by Bryan Schiffler and his community members. Mr. Mergen noted new concrete would be added to the existing concrete to meet the required dimensions for the project. Mr. Mergen informed the council the city's financial contribution to construct the aforementioned improvement would be \$28,500. Mr. Mergen also noted several local concrete contractors reviewed the condition of the existing concrete and recommended it not be removed or replaced. Mr. Mergen informed the council it would be his

recommendation to approve the design, location, and city funding assistance for the aforesaid improvement. Mr. Harlander noted he has no objection if the consensus of the council is to allow the existing concrete to remain but his recommendation would be to construct one (1) tennis court and two (2) pickleball courts in addition to completing the construction of three (3) pickleball courts east of the skateboard ramps. Mr. Harlander noted if the council approves his recommendation, he will volunteer his services to seek additional funding to complete the project. Mr. Heitzman noted he has no objection to using the existing concrete for the project and would like to see one (1) tennis court and two (2) pickleball courts. Mr. Amdahl noted he has no objections to one (1) tennis court and six (6) pickleball courts as proposed. Mr. Rushmeyer noted he agrees with Mr. Mergen's recommendation but questioned what would be the future plans for the area east of the skateboard ramps that had been set aside for three (3) pickleball courts. Mr. Rushmeyer also questioned if the city had funds available for the city's contribution to the project. Mr. Schneider noted the city does have park funds for the improvement as recommended by Mr. Mergen and there are no plans for the future use of the area east of the skateboard ramps. Mr. Haynes appeared before the council to inform the council pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the last three years and strongly recommended the council approve the design for one (1) tennis court and six (6) pickleball courts having done considerable research on the design presented to the council. After due discussion, a motion was made by Al Amdahl and seconded by Adam Rushmeyer to approve the construction of one (1) tennis court and six (6) pickleball courts, as designed, using the existing concrete on the former tennis court in North Park and the city's contribution of \$28,500 for the project. Voting for the motion were Mayor Tom Kasner, Councilors Al Amdahl, and Adam Rushmeyer. Voting against were Councilors John R. Harlander and Keith Heitzman; whereby the motion carried.

Councilor John R. Harlander questioned if the minutes of the meeting held on April 5th had to be corrected relating to the approval by the council to request new concrete be poured for the pickleball courts at the former tennis court site in North Park. Mr. Schneider recommended the council rescind the motion from April 5th having just approved the use of the existing concrete based on discussions with local concrete contractors who recommended the concrete be salvaged and not replaced. After due discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Tom Kasner and seconded by Al Amdahl to rescind the motion from the April 5th minutes approving new concrete for the pickleball courts at the former tennis court site in North Park. Voting for the motion were Mayor Tom Kasner, Councilors Keith Heitzman, Al Amdahl, and Adam Rushmeyer. Councilor John R. Harlander voted against and the motion carried. Mayor Tom Kasner informed the council and members of the public the council will no longer consider rescinding motions in the future relating to the North Park improvements. Mayor Tom Kasner also noted there will be no further discussion related to future North Park improvements until all the improvements in Phase I are completed. Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council, noted the dog park will be located south of the softball field in North Park.

Mr. Mergen informed the council the city received two applications for the part-time seasonal lawn mowing position and recommended Rolland Hanson, 301 Lake Avenue, be hired for the said position. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Al Amdahl to hire Mr. Hanson for the part-time seasonal lawn mowing position in the Public Works Department. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Mergen also informed the council the city paid a local contractor as per the Snow Removal Agreement nearly \$52,000 for the 2022-2023 snow season. Mr. Mergen noted the city did collect \$11,205 from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for snow removal services on Railroad Avenue which is designated as State Highway #238. Mr. Mergen also noted nearly 95 inches of snow fell this year, which was nearly a record when in normal years only 50 inches of snow is received. Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council thanked Mr. Mergen and his staff for keeping the streets and Railroad Avenue (main street) clear of snow in a timely manner all season.

Mr. Schneider informed the council an appraiser hired by the League of Minnesota Cities Trust, the city's insured, completed an assessment related to replacement value on the municipal buildings and contents; whereby the overall total property value is nearly \$25 million compared to \$14 million a year ago. Mr. Schneider noted the assessment is typically done every six years and the values on buildings and contents typically increase three to five percent annually. Mr. Schneider informed the council the property

insurance premium is estimated to increase from \$26,788 to \$46,936 for 2024, a significant increase due to the higher replacement cost (labor/materials) and other economic factors.

Mayor Tom Kasner announced the next regular council meeting for 6:30 o'clock or as soon as thereafter on Wednesday, May 17th and adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.