

**CITY OF SHOREVIEW
MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
June 10, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Martin called the workshop meeting of the Shoreview City Council to order at 7:00 p.m. on June 10, 2015.

ROLL CALL

The following attended the meeting:

City Council: Mayor Martin; Councilmembers Johnson, Quigley, Springhorn and Wickstrom

Staff: Terry Schwerm, City Manager
Rebecca Olson, Assistant to City Manager
Tom Wesolowski, City Engineer

Environmental Tim Pratt, Chair
Quality Committee: Paige Ahlborg
Lynn Holt
Sue Rengstorf
Lisa Shaffer-Schreiber

MEETING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE (EQC)

Mr. Tim Pratt, Chair of the EQC, stated that every two years the EQC goes through a goal setting process to identify projects that need work. At this time, the Committee has decided to discontinue its booth at the *Slice of Shoreview*. The Committee provides information to the Council and to residents on an ongoing basis on three areas of focus: water, energy and plants.

Water Issues:

Ms. Ahlborg stated that the Committee's focus is to keep clean water in the many city lakes. The Committee is pleased to see the several initiatives taken by the City, such as odd/even watering dates, gray water use by public works, stormwater control with porous concrete. Education about what residents can do to help water quality is a key goal. Even with the odd/even watering policy, the EQC would like to see further water conservation. The Committee would propose allowing watering only two days a week. Another idea for water conservation would be to offer incentives or grants for installing low-flow shower heads or dual flush toilets. The Committee would also like to see requirements for developers to use less irrigation, more landscaping good for pollinators, and less mowing. There are grants through the Rice Creek Watershed and Ramsey/Washington Watershed to encourage developers to use such building methods.

Mayor Martin stated that there is a big education effort to get residents to honor the odd/even watering days. There might be a big push back to reduce watering to two days a week. She asked if other cities are doing this. Ms. Shaffer-Schreiber stated that it is her understanding that such a policy is being considered in Woodbury. Mr. Schwerm added that in the immediate vicinity of Shoreview, he does not know of any cities imposing such water restrictions. The odd/even policy is easier to educate residents and to enforce. A different policy would require more enforcement by staff. He noted that Woodbury created a number of tiers of water usage to create a financial disincentive to higher water use. He suggested that might be a better approach.

Councilmember Wickstrom suggested not allowing watering between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., the hottest part of the day, when water evaporates. That might be a more effective way to curb high usage.

Councilmember Quigley stated that the community is already doing a number of things to conserve water, including tiered rates and the conservation policy. He suggested publicizing these added measures that residents could do to use water responsibly.

Mayor Martin referred to recent reports that show that the City is using significantly less water. Mr. Schwerm added that the City's water usage per household is down from about 24,000 gallons a day to 18,000 to 19,000 gallons a day, a 20% decline. Some of that is explained with aging households with fewer children, but he believes people have become more sensitive to watering due to its high cost and interest in conservation.

Ms. Olson stated that there will be an article in the next *ShoreViews* that talks about how the City has reduced water consumption.

Mayor Martin suggested water consumption as a topic for the Committee's Speaker Series. She noted that when water consumption decreases, the City would likely have to raise rates to cover expenses to operate the water system.

Ms. Rengstorf stated that she believes residents would prefer to pay more and further reduce usage. She uses rain barrel water to water her garden flowers. Plants do better with rain water.

Chair Pratt stated that Roseville is a city with one of the highest sales of rain barrels. Mr. Wesolowski stated that the City advertises the Roseville sale.

Mr. Pratt reported a conversation with someone from the Metropolitan Council who said there is no water crisis. What is happening is that at the rate the water level is being drawn down is not sustainable. Awareness of the issue is key. He suggested lower rates for those using rain gardens or low usage watering methods.

Councilmember Johnson suggested engaging children through school presentations to create awareness of water issues. Children are instigators to help change behaviors.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that raising rates on the top tier water users already has shown the most significant impact to usage. She would support another significant raise in rates to the

top tier. Mr. Schwerm stated that another tier could be added. He noted that the type of soil is a contributing factor. More irrigation is needed with sandy soil. Irrigation systems are used in some parks, such as Rice Creek Park, because of the sandy soil but not in others. He agreed that water usage would be a good topic for the EQC Speaker Series.

Councilmember Springhorn suggested further reaching out to organizations and property associations who use sensors and timers so sprinklers are not on during rain storms.

Energy Issues:

Chair Pratt stated that to encourage efficiency and decrease the carbon footprint, the Committee would recommend different programs in solar energy. The first is the Pace Program, which allows a second mortgage to pay for the installation of solar panels. Energy savings are used to pay off the loan. The loan stays with the property, which is paid off over time on property taxes. The loan does not have to be paid off in one owner's term of ownership. The property taxes can be deducted from income taxes. There is only one fiscal agent in Ramsey County that handles the Pace Program, the St. Paul Port Authority. The St. Paul Port Authority is not working with residential properties but only with businesses, non-profits and multi-tenant buildings. One option would be for the City to become a financing agent for the Pace Program. That would require an initial capital investment by the City. Payments made by residents go back into the fund so it is self-sustaining.

Another approach would be community solar where a developer puts in a solar garden. Individual investors can buy a share of the garden and get rebates from using solar energy to pay off their investment over time.

Councilmember Wickstrom suggested adding this type of work onto the housing loan program established by the Economic Development Authority (EDA). Mr. Schwerm noted that some energy savings, such as replacing windows and doors, are already included in the housing loan. Further research would be needed to determine whether a solar garden could be incorporated into the housing loan program.

Councilmember Quigley cautioned a thorough analysis of the economics of offering a program regarding solar energy. Mr. Schwerm agreed but stated that a number of other cities are looking into these issues.

Ms. Rengstorf noted that solar technology is changing. The panels are smaller, costs are less.

Mayor Martin noted that the Maintenance Center received Gold LEED status and thanked the EQC for their recommendations.

Pollinator:

Chair Pratt stated that seven cities in MN have passed resolutions to use good pollinator plants. .

Mayor Martin suggested monitoring work being done by Ramsey County with the new library. Mr. Pratt stated that a rain garden is planned for the new library. There are some nice plans being put together.

Mayor Martin expressed her great appreciation to the EQC for all their work and especially for the Speaker Series, which is very successful in the community.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED RECYCLING AGREEMENT EXTENSION WITH REPUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Wesolowski stated that the City is under a five-year contract. There is an option to extend the contract and based on the good service being provided, the City has approached Republic Services about an extension. The current contract expires December 31, 2015. The extension could be for 18 months or 30 months. A cost increase for 2016 would be approximately 3%. Staff would prefer the 30-month extension so as not to have to renegotiate the contract so soon and to guarantee no more than a 3% increase in rates over the time of the agreement.

This information was presented to the EQC who recommends the 18-month extension in order to deal with organic recycling. The latest Solid Waste Master Plan asks cities to have a plan for organics collection by January 2017. Ramsey County is recommending development of a composting plan. The County is in the process of identifying drop-off sites for organics. Also, at the end of the contract, the City could purchase the carts. Ramsey County would reimburse up to 50% of the cost of the carts.

Mayor Martin asked the reason the County would offer this reimbursement. Mr. Pratt stated that the County is doing whatever possible to encourage recycling. If the carts are purchased, then the cost of switching carts with a new vendor with a new contract is not necessary. Mayor Martin added that the cost of the carts would then need to be put in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Schwerm stated that a 30-month extension guarantees increases of only 2% or 3%. If the City goes out for bids for a new contract, the initial increase may be 2% or 3% but could jump to 5% or 7% or more. That is the risk.

It was the consensus of the Council to try negotiating for a 30-month extension with the provision that organic recycling can be added.

DISCUSSION REGARDING STORAGE OF REFUSE/RECYCLING CONTAINERS

Mayor Martin stated that she receives many complaints on residents who leave containers in front of the garage.

City Manager Schwerm stated that Code requires that the containers be stored in the garage or screened from view in the front yard. Enforcement is now done on a complaint basis. A note is left informing residents of the proper place for storage. There is not a lot of time for this type of code enforcement, as there is only one staff person who is overseeing the SHINE program, taking care of property maintenance code enforcement and conducting rental licensing inspections. It is difficult to find time to follow up on container storage. Illegal parking of vehicles in yards and property maintenance are considered higher priorities for enforcement.

Most other cities are also handling this issue on a complaint basis. Many neighborhoods tend to be self-policing. However, sometimes in older neighborhoods with single car garages or zero lot line developments there is no place to store the containers.

Mr. Schwerm further explained that the offense is currently considered a misdemeanor. One possible option would be to change it to a petty misdemeanor so it could be comparable to a parking ticket with a City adopted fine schedule. However, there would still be administrative fees added by the county court. There is also the issue of staff time to educate the community and provide enforcement. He suggested a program similar to the SHINE program where sweeps of neighborhoods are done. Notices would be sent to residents before the sweep informing them of City regulations. A certain period of time after the sweep, a follow-up inspection would be done and citations issued at that time. If the Council believes enforcement of container storage is a priority, there would be time for the SHINE program to only inspect one neighborhood per year instead of two.

Councilmember Johnson stated that rather than decrease the SHINE program, she would like to see it increased in light of the age of the City's housing stock and the hoarding issues that exist.

Mayor Martin suggested trying to have some type of appeal process for unique circumstances. She would like to find some in-between action before enforcement, such as a strong letter. Mr. Schwerm agreed and stated that the issue could continue to be addressed on a complaint basis. Ultimate compliance would mean stricter enforcement and possible citations.

Councilmember Quigley stated that he believes there are other more serious issues than the refuse/recycling containers. He agreed with sending a letter before enforcement measures are taken. Enforcement measures should be left in place to be used if necessary.

The meeting adjourned.