

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 26, 2019, 6:00 PM  
Park Rapids City Hall Council Chambers  
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** The March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Regular Meeting of the Park Rapids City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Ryan Leckner, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Ryan Leckner, Councilmembers Tom Conway, Erika Randall, Liz Stone, and Robert Wills. Absent: None. Staff Present: Administrator John McKinney, Liquor Store Manager Scott Olson, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, Fire Chief Terry Long, Planner Andrew Mack, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Jennifer Therkilson, Tim and Cindy Little, Beth Baker-Knuttila, Cynthia Jones, and Robin Fish from the Enterprise.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the following addition to the Consent Agenda: #6.12. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$1,902.00 from Girtz Implement and Tire for Two (2) Motor Grader Tires and their Installation.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**4.1. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-March 26, 2019:** A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, City Council Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

**5. FINANCE:**

**5.1. Payables & Prepaids:** A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve the prepaids in the amount of \$390,471.19, for a total of \$390,471.19

**6. CONSENT AGENDA:** A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the following consent agenda items:

- 6.1. Approve Backhoe Operator's License to Work in the City of Park Rapids in 2019 for Backhoe Pete LLC.

- 6.2. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$60,575.51 for the 2019 Street Department Expenses for Gravel, Paint, Chloride, and Asphalt Patching from Various Vendors.**
- 6.3. Approve Repair Expenses and Tow Charges in the Amount of \$5,269.55 to Deitchler Repair for the repairs to the 1999 Single Axle Sterling Plow Truck for the Street Department.**
- 6.4. Resolution #2019-69 Re-Appointing Dan Dyre to Serve on the Airport Commission for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.5. Resolution #2019-70 Authorizing Sale of Excess City Property from the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.6. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for Ronald and Kory James to Close One (1) Block of Third Street East, from Park Avenue to the Back Entrance to Hugo's, on Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the Community Love Festival.**
- 6.7. Approve Permit for an Outdoor Music Concert and Dance on Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., in the Northwoods Parking Lot at 1200 First Street East.**
- 6.8. Resolution #2019-71 Approving Wage Adjustment and Step Increase for Part Time Accounts Payable Clerk Lisa Dormanen.**
- 6.9. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for Park Rapids Community Development Corporation to Close Main Avenue South, Blocks One (1), Two (2), and Three (3), on Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for Crazy Days.**
- 6.10. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for Park Rapids Community Development Corporation to Use Pioneer Park, on Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon for Crazy Days Kids Entertainment.**
- 6.11. Approve Multi-Vendor Transient Merchant License for Park Rapids Community Development Corporation on Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019, for Crazy Days.**
- 6.12. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$1,902.00 from Girtz Implement and Tire for Two (2) Motor Grader Tires and their Installation.**

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:** There were no comments.

**8. PLANNING:**

**8.1. Resolution for a Conditional Use Permit for Deane and Jill Johnson to Allow Construction of Roof-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Panels on the South Side of their Home, in the R-1 Zoning District, at 502 North St, PID#32.81.00400:** Andrew Mack stated this is a conditional use permit request for Deane and Jill Johnson at 502 North Street. The permit is for a small scaled solar panel system that would be located on the back side of the roof of their garage. There is an array of panels that will be located on the roof facing the south exposure. It will generate a thirteen-year payback for their investment in helping to provide a green energy source. The State of Minnesota has made code revisions for this sort of thing, more tailored specifically beyond the national code to Minnesota's particular needs. That has occurred in the last couple of years. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposal. There were no concerns received. Based on my observations the surrounding neighbors will not have a view of this and there will be no impact on the surrounding areas.

Mack stated the Planning Commission adopted findings of support and are recommending that the Council approve this with two conditions. One, approval by the Park Rapids Building Official and issuance of a building permit for the installation in full compliance with the Minnesota State Building Code Standards for small-scaled solar rooftop installations, and two, require an electrical permit with the State of Minnesota be obtained and inspected by an electrical inspector.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2019-72 Approve a Conditional Use Permit for Deane and Jill Johnson to Allow Construction of Roof-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Panels on the South Side of their Home, in the R-1 Zoning District, at 502 North St, PID#32.81.00400.**

**8.2. First Reading of Ordinance Rezoning Land to B-1 in the City of Park Rapids, PID#32.45.00600:** Mack stated this request is from Arch Simonson of Bemidji Management Company to rezone this additional real estate that was not acquired as part of the original plat for this area. At the time the zoning was completed for the redevelopment the additional properties along Main Avenue North, between the Swanson Law Office and the current gas station, were not rezoned. This is the additional real estate and the rezoning request to help bring that all in alignment up on Main Avenue along the east side of the road, the law office and Simonson's property, and to facilitate the redevelopment. The rezoning request is to change from R-2 to B-1, which will accommodate the use as a permitted use. The single-family house there now will be demolished as a part of the redevelopment. With that understanding and in support of the redevelopment project, we are recommending approval by the Council of the first reading of the proposed ordinance.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the first reading of the Ordinance Rezoning Land to B-1 in the City of Park Rapids, PID#32.45.00600.**

**8.3. First Reading of Ordinance Rezoning Land to R-2 in the City of Park Rapids, PID #32.26.01400:** Mack stated this request is from Property Park Rapids. This area was studied as part of a larger area of consideration with the Planning Commission in order to amend the comprehensive plan based on the analysis of the Planning Commission for this area that is all currently zoned R-1. There was a determination that this area which is guided for single family allows rezoning to either R-1 or R-2. The plans are consistent with the rezoning request. The Planning Commission said it's not necessary to amend the plan, we'll deal with the plan whenever we deal with updating the comprehensive plan on a more neighborhood basis and have the applicants initiate the requests and just proceed with the rezoning request. We re-noticed the hearing, conducted the hearing, and the Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezoning action, in this case for Mr. Eickman.

Mack stated the property here is different than the other requests. This is a vacant lot next to a rental home at 619 Second Street West. A few years back the city approved a variance for a side yard setback because of the narrow width of the lot. Based on the sides and width of the lot, which is sub-standard, the ordinance provisions allow a permit for this lot without a variance. There was a variance but that was for the side yard, but there won't be a variance required for the lot width or side based on the fact that this was an existing sub-standard lot before the request for a building permit. The rezoning won't trigger a variance to get a building permit. They do intend to build a two-family dwelling as a part of the rezoning, which in this case due to the narrow lot, vertically, up and down, not side to side.

Mack stated staff, as well as the Planning Commission, recommend approve for the rezoning request, without conditions, from R-1 to R-2.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve the first reading of the Ordinance Rezoning Land to R-2 in the City of Park Rapids, PID #32.26.01400.**

**8.4. First Reading of Ordinance Rezoning Land to R-2 in the City of Park Rapids, PID #32.55.08600 and #32.55.08700:** Mack stated this request is from the landowner, Curtis Paurus. He owns the two lots zoned R-1. One currently has an existing single-family home on it, and the lot to the east, also part of the request, is now a vacant lot that had a house on it, which was demolished. A part of the land use study for this request was done by Hubbard County Environmental Services GIS Department, who assisted on some of the map making duties without charge, which was greatly appreciated. These two lots are capable of having a two-family unit constructed on it without a variance.

Mack stated the rezoning request is from R-1 to R-2. A hearing was conducted and there were no objections. We do have some duplexes in this area, which have been grandfathered in. I suggested these requests be approved on a case by case basis as the developer's proposals come to us. Staff and the Planning Commission are recommending that the City Council approve the rezoning request.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the first reading of the Ordinance Rezoning Land to R-2 in the City of Park Rapids, PID #32.55.08600 and #32.55.08700.**

**8.5. First Reading of Ordinance Rezoning Land to B-1 in the City of Park Rapids, PID #32.45.00610:** Mack stated this request is from 3 Consulting LLC, to change from an R-2 to a B-1 zone. This is part of the redevelopment where the house is going to be demolished. The northern 1/3 of this lot 9 was divided. That ownership went to the Swanson Law Office at 120 Main Avenue North. They are requesting this rezoning change to facilitate the creation of an off-street parking lot for expansion of their commercial business. The parcels here were consolidated into three lots in the plat all in common ownership as a part of this house. It was reverted back into one lot, part went to the north and part to the south. This completes the rezoning of the east side of Main Avenue all to B-1, consistent with the redevelopment plans for commercial in this area. We are recommending approval of the change from R-2 to B-1.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve the first reading of the Ordinance Rezoning Land to B-1 in the City of Park Rapids, PID #32.45.00610.**

**8.6. Resolution to Approve Preliminary and Final Plat for the Simonson Second Addition for Bemidji Mgmt. Co, LLC consisting of One Lot and One Block, PID#32.45.00600 & 32.50.90100:** Mack stated this request is from Bemidji Management Company to approve a preliminary and final plat for the area that you have just approved for a rezoning change to B-1. The house located there will be demolished as part of the redevelopment. The property is being added to a replat of Simonson Addition. Adding this additional real estate to the plat, the application was made, the plans were submitted, and the plat is for both preliminary and final for simultaneous approval. The additional park dedication fees have been received. There is no development agreement or public improvements required at this point. The entire redevelopment site will now be contained as part of Lot One, Block One, of the Simonson Second Addition giving way for the development of this site. The reason for the creating of a new plat is the additional real estate not required as part of the original approval, so this basically just brings it into the fold. We are recommending approval of both of the items as part of one motion, without conditions.

**A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2019-73 Approve the Preliminary and Final Plat for the Simonson Second Addition to the City of Park Rapids.**

## **9. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**9.1. Ojibwe Signs of Welcome in Park Rapids City Parks:** Jennifer Therkilson stated Beth Baker-Knuttila and I are here on behalf of the Ojibwe Language Project to request the Council approve the installation of welcome signs in Ojibwe and English in all of the city parks. We have a number of people on our committee which support this issue. They have worked closely with some consultants and partners on this

project, specifically Michael Meuers, who started the Ojibwe Language Project and is responsible for it spreading throughout this region. Baker-Knuttila is in frequent contact with him. He is a fluent speaker. If he's not sure he contacts Anton Treuer a renowned professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University. We have other local groups that we work closely with, the Parks Board, the Park Rapids Arts and Culture Advisory Commission, and Action Park Rapids. We learned that the Parks Board already established this as a goal before we even had the idea. We were surprised and delighted to find that out. The Park Rapids Arts and Advisory Commission has developed an arts and cultural plan, which the City Council approved in June of 2017. In that plan, it includes to protect and promote Park Rapids historic and cultural assets, and to celebrate Native American heritage through Ojibwe signage. Therefore, we think this proposal from the Ojibwe Language Project offers the city a way to make significant progress on one of its already established goals.

Baker-Knuttila stated the Ojibwe Language Committee met to find goals and formulate a plan. We initially presented those ideas along with a prototype to the Downtown Business Association in early 2018. We were pleasantly encouraged by the interest shown by many of those members. Following that we applied for and received a grant from Itasca Mantrap's Roundup to assist with costs for supplies, design, and sample signage. After consulting with a local professional sign maker, Pat Ahmann, of Innovative Sign and Graphics, sample signage in two different styles was completed to offer for sale at cost. Committee members then visited and obtained orders from local businesses. From that beginning, we now have around sixty-three signs in more than twenty-five of the downtown businesses. We also assisted the Pine Point School in the design, purchase, and placement of more than thirty-five signs throughout their school building.

Baker-Knuttila stated we anticipate providing signage for the elder nutrition program, which currently is housed within the Pine Point School, when their remodeling project is completed. We received a request from Itasca State Park about the Ojibwe Language Project signage. We'll be meeting with them sometime in April. We've met with the administrators and Indian ed coordinator at the Park Rapids Public Schools and received their endorsement and desire to pursue signage within the schools. Nevis Schools have recently expressed an interest in using Ojibwe signage as well. Our committee is now negotiating with Hubbard County, with health care facilities, non-profits, as well as more local businesses. Signage has been requested by Itascauter Group for Soaring Eagle Ski Trail and warming house. The Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce will be putting five of the signs in their building during the month of April. We've also been surprised by other communities and groups, such as the Blandin Foundation, the library, day cares, and schools from the metro area, and as far away as Michigan have responded to our email address and requested information. We're encouraged and thankful for the interest that has been shown so far.

Therkilsen questioned so why install Ojibwe Language signs in Park Rapids city parks now? We think it would add to the unique cultural aspects of the Park Rapids area. The project aligns with several of the goals of the city's arts and cultural plan, and the city's comprehensive plan, which was approved in 2008, to promote community unity and spirit and enhance character and identity. We think the sign would create a more inclusive welcoming environment in our city parks. It's a way to acknowledge the indigenous people who have lived in this country for thousands of years prior to the white settlement and continue to live here as our neighbors today. We want to increase awareness of and

respect for the Ojibwe culture. We think it can help improve relations with Park Rapids residents, and its leaders, and our indigenous neighbors. For those involved in the ACES Summit, we see this as a small step to healing some of the historical trauma. We see that it enriches experiences of our tourists. We've had many stories of positive feedback from the tourists and then there's the likelihood that they will return to our community. This is a good time because we believe so strongly in this project that the Ojibwe Language Project is willing to raise the funds for the signs to be added to the newer signs in Red Bridge Park, Pioneer Park, Depot Park, and Lindquist Park. Expecting assurance from the city that when the park signs for the other parks are faded that Ojibwe signs would be included in with those in Deane Park, Rice Park, and the north side of Lindquist Park.

Therkilsen stated the Parks Board came up with a recommendation that the signs Come In, Come See Us Again, in Ojibwe would be installed. They also agreed with putting the sign third down from the English language signs, and to curve the bottom to match with the top sign. Baker-Knuttila stated there are samples at the back of the room to look at.

**A motion was made by Randall to refer Ojibwe Signs of Welcome in Park Rapids City Parks to staff.**

**Discussion:** Stone stated I'd like to have them explore this. I'm wondering what it would cost to have the graphics from the first two extended unto the third, Ojibwe sign. If this is something that we are going to do I think they should all match. Now that I see it all together, I think it's abrupt to switch to a different design completely. Leckner stated so they'd all go together. Stone stated to extend the original design unto the third panel, I know it can be done but it might be cost prohibitive.

Baker-Knuttila stated the color in the sample looks white, but it isn't. It's ivory. It likely would look less different than in the photograph. The other complication is that the other signage was done by a non-local sign maker, and not the sign maker that the project is working with. I felt that the Park Board approved this design as it was presented.

Stone stated they may have, but we have the final say. In looking at it, though I appreciate that we may want to keep our business local, I just don't like the way this looks with the others. Randall stated I agree. I'd like staff to get the cost from where these original signs were made.

Baker-Knuttila questioned are you asking us to change our sign maker? Randall stated we're not asking anything right now. We're referring this back to staff to obtain a quote and then we'll come back to this at a later time. McKinney stated the next step for us is we will contact you when we have more information.

Leckner stated the main thing for us is to have the signs in the parks match, but not for all of your signs. We're concerned that the parks signs blend together. We'll refer this to staff and get a cost, and then we'll talk to you about what the difference might be.

**The motion was seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried.**

**9.2. Hubbard County First Response:** Cindy Little stated I am a Hubbard County First Responder. Each year we go out to the townships and request funds for our organization to recruit and educate our first responders. I'm frustrated because I think that the Council has no knowledge of what we do. I'd like to present to you some information.

Little stated as a first responder we are called out at the same time as North Memorial Ambulance. We respond to calls in Hubbard County, and also extend into the

surrounding counties. We are a non-profit with twenty-seven members. We are not reimbursed for anything, not our time or mileage. We get the heart-filled warmth of being public servants to our community. We do ask the townships for donations so we can continue our service. We have a building, located in the old Belle Taine Glass location. We have a number of first responders that also work for North Memorial. Each time we bring a new member on it costs us around \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00 for training and equipment to get them up and running. There is another \$500.00 per year to keep them in radios, pagers, and supplies. We have snowmobiles and four-wheelers that we use and have to maintain. The cost for our equipment comes from the townships. The building maintenance and utilities costs are raised separately.

Little stated when we get a call, North Memorial always go to every call. As a first responder we go to the ones that are near us, or if we are available. We like to get two to five people per call. More people are needed at accident sites. There are some towns that don't have first responders. North Memorial staff has shared that in order for them to clear a scene and to go to these incidents it takes them another twenty to forty minutes just to finish the work they have to do. With two or three extra people coming to help the work goes faster. Our police department is doing a wonderful job protecting us at all of our scenes. But we are just responders.

Little stated the number of calls that come in for the townships are from zero to sixty annually. In 2018, there were a total of 722 first responder calls, 423 of them were in the City of Park Rapids. We don't ask for any funding from the city. I understand that you don't provide funding to non-profit organizations. But more than 50% of the calls are in the City of Park Rapids. I wanted you to be aware of that. It does cost money for us to keep going. We can't do anything about things unless you are aware of them. I felt like you should know what's going on in your community.

There has been a decline in the number of first responders nationally. To combat some of that two of our responders have started doing a class at the junior and senior level with Park Rapids Area High School. From that we have gotten five young folks that have joined our team. A number of them will go on to more schooling and possibly becoming paramedics or go into the medical field. If you can do nothing else to support us, just put in a good word for us. We do have gun calendars that we sell at local businesses that help us to keep running.

Leckner stated this is eye opening data to see those numbers. I had no idea. Randall questioned isn't part of Todd Township in the city limits? Little stated they were able to separate the specific calls out. Terry Long stated the townships are all 36 miles square. The city is in part of that. The calls were separated by if you are a city resident or a township resident.

Randall questioned what changed in 2012 and 2013? Our population didn't double within the city limits. There was a drastic increase in the number of calls from 2013 to 2014, then it jumps up again significantly in 2017. Long stated a number of things have changed. We have an aging population. We're making more calls. People in general are more apt to call for services than they used to be. With new technology everyone has a cell phone and it's very easy to call.

Randall questioned when did you acquire the building in Park Rapids? Long stated about five years ago, so 2014. Little stated the increase in the number of 911 calls is not unique to Park Rapids. It's all over. There has been an incredible increase in the number



of 911 calls. Randall stated I don't think our police department calls have increased that much. Little stated the first responders were at a site doing CPR and the police were not there. A neighbor came out and said we can shoot you if we want to and then they went back into there dwelling. Someone had to pull out of the scene. We don't get any compensation other than being good Samaritans. First and foremost, our first responsibility is to make sure we are safe. One person stepped back and the other person kept working and they waited for a police officer to come. The officer was able to secure the safety of the first responders. That's the mentality that is out there. People call a lot. You can judge and say that doesn't seem like a necessary thing to call for, but when you can get burned thinking that way. Maybe you think it's just a stomach ache, but when you get there it's a heart attack.

Stone questioned what's the average donation from the townships? Little stated some give nothing, some give several thousand. Long stated I've gone to some of the township meetings. You will see that the townships are quite a bit more supportive as they get away from the city limits. The ambulance is inside the city limits so as you get further away first responders are more valuable. There is a wide variety of what they give. Some of the higher ones are in the \$3,000.00 range, yet that's not the average by any means.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to refer the Hubbard County First Responders request for funding to city staff for more information.**

**10. CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:** McKinney stated regarding the tentative timing for the roundabout construction, the original plan was to start mid-May, now it will start at the end of May due to a utility conflict. The exact date has not been set. The anticipated completion will be the end of September to early October. There are four stages to the project. The frontage roads and Eleventh Street will be phase one. Phase two is just north of the junction of Highway 71 and CSAH 15, to the north end of the frontage road. The third phase is the north frontage roads to the north limits of the project, and the roundabout is phase four. From the end of May until some time in the end of summer the intersection will be wide open and the construction will be collateral to the intersection itself. The last phase which ends in late September will be the roundabout itself. At that point we'll be talking about detours and rearranging traffic. They are going to try to keep half of it open while they are working on the other half. This is the best information we have as of today.

**11. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:** Long stated the firemen's ball had a good turnout and everything went well.

**12. MINUTES/REPORTS/INFORMATION:** There were no comments.

**13. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** Stone stated I attended the Headwaters Regional Development Commission last Thursday. We heard from Dan Dorman who is the

Executive Director for the Greater Minnesota Partnership. There are ten things they are focusing on. Their top priority is the shortage in child care across the state. In Greater Minnesota we've lost 15,000 spots for kids because home daycares are decreasing. They are looking at creative ways to promote home daycares and funding them as well.

Randall stated kudos to Long and his crew for the firemen's ball. It was a nice turnout.

Conway stated Hubbard County Regional Economic Development Commission also discussed the child care issue. They are a couple of bills sitting in the house right now in support of trying to reduce legislation for some of the child care issues. I'm wondering if we shouldn't offer some support for those bills. Randall suggested reaching out to Senator Paul Utke. Brumbaugh stated the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is doing something on it. We can write to them to show the City of Park Rapids supports it.

**14. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m.**

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Mayor Ryan Leckner

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik  
City Clerk