

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 13, 2012, 7:00 PM  
Park Rapids Public Library-Lower Level  
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** The March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Park Rapids City Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Nancy Carroll, and everyone present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Nancy Carroll, Councilmembers Dave Konshok, Sue Tomte, and Paul Utke. Absent: Councilmember Patrick Mikesh. Staff Present: Administrator Bill Smith, Public Works Superintendent Scott Burlingame, Planner Dan Walker, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, Liquor Store Manager Scott Olson, Police Chief Terry Eilers, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Ulteig Engineer Jon Olson, Alan Zemek, Ellen Albee, Ed Ranson, Cynthia Jones, C. Maki, Linda Hanson, Tim Flathers, Sally Shearer, and Anna Erickson from the Enterprise.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Utke, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the following change: for Item #6.4. Add J&B Foods to the resolution approving off sale 3.2 beer licenses.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**4.1. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-February 28, 2012:** A motion was made by Tomte, seconded by Konshok, and unanimously carried to approve the February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 City Council Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

**5. FINANCE:**

**5.1. Payables & Prepaids:** A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Utke, and unanimously carried to approve the payables in the amount of \$31,114.77, and the prepaids in the amount of \$117,848.96, for a total of \$148,963.73.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA:** A motion was made by Utke, seconded by Tomte, 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 2012 for Minnesota Energy Resources.

- 6.2. **Resolution #2012-52 Approving a Wage Adjustment and Step Increase for Full Time Public Works Mechanic Fran Hauber.**
- 6.3. **Resolution #2012-53 Permitting the Destruction of Aged Documents as Determined by Adopted Minnesota General Records Retention Schedule.**
- 6.4. **Resolution #2012-54 Approve the Renewal of an Off-Sale 3.2 Beer License for T&M Express, Northern Convenience, Coborn's, Casey's General Store #2192, and J&B Foods in the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.5. **Resolution #2012-55 Authorizing Proper City Officials to Execute the Paperwork Associated with the Labor Agreement for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.**
- 6.6. **Approve Transient Merchant License for TNT Fireworks for June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to Sell Fireworks from a Tent in the Wal-Mart Parking Lot.**

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:** Cynthia Jones thanked Ulteig Engineers and city staff for working through and resolving all of the banner issues on Main Avenue.

**8. PLANNING:**

**8.1. Resolution for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow a Bed and Breakfast in the C-1 Zoning District at 118 Washington Avenue North, PID**

**#32.41.00100:** Walker stated the applicant, Fishhook Properties LLC d.b.a. Red Bridge Inn, is requesting a conditional use permit to allow a bed and breakfast inn. The property is located at 118 Washington Avenue North, is zoned C-1, Conservation District, and the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan designates this property for commercial use. The applicant is requesting to reopen the Red Bridge Inn which was closed in early 2010. The property is currently vacant but was previously used as a bed and breakfast inn. The previous owners abandoned the use on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009 and the parcel has been vacant since. Since the use has been vacant for over a year, the old conditional use permit has expired.

Walker stated the applicant has stated that they wish to refurbish the inn with seven guest rooms and a manager's apartment for the on-site caretaker. They intend to have the rooms available year round with typical bed and breakfast amenities, very similar to how the inn was previously operated. They aren't planning any major alterations at this time, just painting and general upkeep inside the building.

Walker stated they are required to have two parking stalls for each room to be rented out so a total of nine parking stalls are required on site. They submitted a site plan

which shows nine parking stalls. There was discussion at the Planning Commission meeting that there probably isn't room for nine stalls for cars. But we felt that since they are basically opening the use for what it was before, and there were no parking issues with the old inn that it probably should be okay this time.

Walker stated one of the conditions that they did add was they want staff to monitor the site. If it becomes an issue then we'll work with the applicant. Staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval of the conditional use permit to allow a bed and breakfast inn in the C-1, Conservation District, with the four conditions outlined in the staff report.

**A motion was made by Utke, seconded by Tomte, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2012-56 Approving a Conditional Use Permit to Allow a Bed and Breakfast in the C-1 Zoning District at 118 Washington Avenue North, PID #32.41.00100.**

**8.2. Resolution for a Variance from Total Site Signage in the B-1 District at 320 Career Path, PID #32.19.04031:** Walker stated the Hubbard County DAC, who is the owner of the property, is requesting a variance to allow two-hundred and forty-six square feet of total site signage where only two-hundred square feet is permitted in order to construct a one-hundred and fifty-nine square foot wall sign. The property is located at 320 Career Path and is being used as a reuse retail center. The property is currently zoned B-1, Highway Business District, and the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan designates this area for commercial use.

Walker stated at the public hearing for the Planning Commission the applicant provided information in support of their case. They have said that the distance from the roadway, which is approximately five-hundred feet, the shape of the lot, the unpaved street, and increased visibility are the reasons for the additional signage. The applicant has argued that these are unique features specific to this lot and that the increased signage will help facilitate traffic safety, and increase traffic to the business. The applicant also noted that both signs would be within the scope of an individual sign allowed by ordinance, although both signs would be at nearly the maximum signage allowed for each sign. There is currently an existing eighty-nine square foot pylon sign adjacent to Highway 34 on the property. The variance would increase the size of the signage allowed on the site by 25%, and the size of the wall sign would nearly meet the 10% coverage for a single wall. Without the variance, the applicant would still be allowed up to one-hundred and ten additional square feet of signage, which staff considers a reasonable and adequate amount. Staff does not believe that the additional signage meets the criteria for the granting of the variance. The parcel is addressed from Career Path but they do have some frontage along Highway 34, which is actually to their benefit because they are allowed to have a pylon sign much closer to Highway 34 than similar businesses which are addressed from side streets and do not have frontage. The applicant would also be allowed to erect a one-hundred and ten square foot wall sign without the variance. There is also a clear site line to the building driving from both directions, although when you are heading east the distance is shorter.

Walker questioned if the Council wanted him to read through the findings of fact. Carroll stated the Council has received your report, recommendation, and minutes, and we don't want to go through the whole public hearing again. Your recommendation this time happens to be different from the Planning Commission's. The Council declined to have

Walker read the findings of fact since they had already reviewed them. Carroll stated they are part of the public record without being read aloud.

Walker stated the Planning Commission read through the findings of fact. Staff did not believe the findings of fact met the criteria for granting the variance but the Planning Commission felt that they did on all counts. There was discussion in the minutes on number one, which is, can the property be put to reasonable use in absence of the variance? Also, number three, can the variance be granted without upsetting the purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance? Based on that staff had recommended denial, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the variance to allow two-hundred and forty-six feet of total site signage, where two-hundred square feet is permitted in the B-1, Highway Business District, in order to construct a one-hundred and fifty-nine square foot wall sign for Hubbard County DAC, at 320 Career Path Drive, PID# 32.19.04031.

Carroll stated the county had a training session for county and township planning commissioners. We talked a good deal about variances. All that information presented came from the county's attorney who handles all their land use issues. Based on my renewed training, I agree with the Planning Commission's recommendation. One thing, it's a unique situation. The applicant did a good job of describing the unique circumstances. This property is different from our typical rectangle shaped lots along the highway. If in the future, some of the larger lots are subdivided we need to be very careful that we don't approve this kind of a shape so we can avoid a similar circumstance. The attorney said that there is no precedence in law and it's the first thing that you have to forget about. You have to be exactly the same in the use and the time. Since you didn't have any other variances of this sort the other night, the time factor is gone. It's pretty unlikely that we'll have an exact use. The selvage depot is a unique use and also the setback of the building. If we were talking about the sign ordinance to begin with, things were based on being fairly close to the road and they had good frontage, they were not setback five-hundred feet. So the size of the lettering and what you can read made sense. But it's five times deeper than that and I think this is a fairly unique situation. It won't hurt the ordinance or compromise the purpose or intent of the zoning ordinance to approve the variance. I understand having any kind of a variance is a challenge to the strict adherence to the zoning ordinance. I've always supported the zoning ordinance so I think this is a real different situation.

Utke stated that's why we have variances. It's impossible to govern every parcel in the city with one ordinance. There has to be some variations. I emailed my thoughts to the commissioners. I serve on the board of the DAC so when we do vote, I will be abstaining. I'm just one voice, but I encouraged them to look at this because in this case it's a selvage depot, but if it was retail, they'd all be in the same boat. You're trying to draw customers off of Highway 34. It's different than the previous couple of uses for that building. Their traffic was created through different sources. Retail establishments are more visual. I support the variance too. I think it is very acceptable.

Tomte stated I've not participated with the Planning Commission so I'm not up on all the sign ordinances, but it doesn't seem unreasonable to me, and I would support the variance.

Konshok stated this is an unusual situation in where the staff and the Planning Commission don't concur. I'm also familiar with signage issues here in town. It is on the scenic byway. That's always a concern and we should pay particular attention to signage along that route, even though some of our neighboring communities don't seem to bother

too much with that. I don't see it as a gross violation of the ordinance. I'm fine with the Planning Commission's recommendation.

**A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Tomte, to approve Resolution #2012-57 Approving a Variance from Total Site Signage in the B-1 District at 320 Career Path, PID #32.19.04031.**

**The following Councilmembers voted yes: Carroll, Konshok, Tomte.**

**The following Councilmember abstained: Utke.**

**The motion carries 3-0.**

**8.3. First Draft of an Ordinance Amending the Park Rapids City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 151 Zoning, Section 151.151 Screening and/or Fencing:** Walker stated staff is requesting to amend Chapter 151.151 of the Zoning Ordinance which addresses screening and/or fencing. We receive a lot of questions about fence construction especially about height, materials, and setbacks. As we are getting closer to the spring construction season, we have already started receiving calls and would like to formally address the issue. In the past, we have advised residents of the items we are proposing, but they have never been formally codified in writing. This will help us to more easily answer the resident's questions and maintain consistency with what information that we're giving. The previous planner had been giving this information out. There isn't anything controversial. Carroll questioned it just wasn't in the ordinance? Walker stated we were informally giving people this information, but it has never been codified.

Utke questioned this is for all fencing on property in the city? One thing, under G, it says above ground electrified or barbed wire fences are prohibited in residential districts. Utke stated I have a problem with electrified. A number of us fight deer problems. Some are successful with an electric fence around their gardens. I don't think we want to say you can't do that. It's effective to maintain a garden. Walker stated the reason that was put in there is because people have suggested that as a way to keep their neighbor's pets out as a deterrent. It becomes a liability issues and I understand that. Utke stated where are we going to go because we are going to have people put electric fences around their gardens for deer. Now, what problem are they going to get into? We're not going to have fence police.

Carroll questioned are these fences intended to separate one property from another? Utke questioned can we say perimeter fencing? That would take care of that problem. Walker stated I don't have an issue with that. It was no electrified fences but the issue was raised that people have underground dog fences. It's meant so that people aren't putting up electrified fences to keep their neighbors out. It's not an issue for gardens. Utke stated if it was listed as a border fence it would be fine. We don't want to give out variances for people to fence in their gardens. We don't want to create those problems. Walker stated obviously I don't think you want to encourage people to put up electrified fences around their yards.

The Council added the word "perimeter" to section G, to read: Above ground electrified and barbed wire perimeter fences are prohibited in residential districts except those associated with a permitted agricultural use. **The Council acknowledged the first reading of the Ordinance Amending the Park Rapids City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 151 Zoning, Section 151.151 Screening and/or Fencing, with the addition of the word "perimeter" to section G.**

**8.4. Resolution Authorizing Proper City Officials to Execute the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Local Trail Connection Program Grant on Behalf of the City of Park Rapids:**

Walker stated the City of Park Rapids purchased the vacant lot adjacent to Red Bridge Park in early 2011 for future construction of a parking lot for Red Bridge Park and the Heartland Trail. Last year the Council authorized staff to seek a Federal Recreation Program Grant and a State Legacy Grant to fund the total cost of the improvements. The total amount requested for both grants was \$137,865.00, with 50% requested for each grant to offset the local match requirement. Staff was successful in obtaining the Federal Recreational Grant in the amount of \$68,932.50, but there was a lot of competition and unfortunately the Legacy Grant was not funded for 2012.

Walker stated we're now requesting authorization to submit a Local Trail Connections Program Grant to seek funding for the remaining match for the Federal Recreation Grant. The project is identified in the Capital Improvement Plan for construction in 2013 in conjunction with a scheduled trunk line utility project in the same area. The funding for the Federal Grant requires that construction be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013. If we are unsuccessful in this grant application, we would still have time to submit another Legacy Grant Application this fall, but the planning and engineering work would be much tighter for 2013 construction. I spoke with Jon Olson and he believed that the timeframe would still work.

Walker stated the project would meet the eligibility requirements for reimbursements outlined in the program manuals. Engineering and administrative costs are also reimbursable expenses for these grants as long as they do not exceed 20% of the project cost. The design and construction of the project would meet or exceed all state regulations and local ordinance requirements. Both grants are reimbursable, which means that we would fund the initial outlay of the project and then request reimbursement after completion. We're asking for the Council to approve or deny the resolution for staff to proceed with the application.

Tomte stated so this is filling out paperwork with the same thing as what we were planning on doing before but with a different funding source. Walker answered yes.

**A motion was made by Tomte, seconded by Utke, to approve Resolution #2012-58 Authorizing Proper City Officials to Execute the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Local Trail Connection Program Grant on Behalf of the City of Park Rapids.**

**Discussion:** Konshok questioned in the last application do we reference the fact that the state is looking to replace the bridge? Walker answered yes. That was referenced. Konshok stated so they recognized that this is a companion project. Walker stated the Legacy Funding last year had ninety submissions and they funded thirty programs. It's pretty competitive. That's why we need to try it again. Konshok stated make sure we're making the case that this area is going to be torn up if the state project proceeds, and hopefully that will bump us up in priority. **The motion carried unanimously.**

**9. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**9.1. Linking Clean Water and Land Use Decisions Workshop:** Sally

Shearer stated I'm here to advocate education. I don't think we can learn all that there is to know about how we link our clean water to our land use. This class is put on by the University of Minnesota. They are partnered with Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO). They started in 1992 in Connecticut. They went national and then came to Minnesota about three years ago. Three years ago I joined the program as coordinator with the University of Minnesota Extension at the fairgrounds. This is a valuable piece of education material to teach how to ask the questions. Not how to make the decisions, but understanding that link between water and land use. So that at the end of the day, there isn't confusion as to why a land bound piece of property would have a footprint on the water source. There are many people that believe, I don't live on the lake, so therefore my septic is not a concern. That is what this class is about. It's on Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Faith Baptist Church. Above all it is free to the public. Your county commissions understood the value of education and when they revamped the education office, I agreed to do five-hundred hours a year so that they wouldn't drop the budget, but use it for education. We were able to keep the line item for the extension budget. Since the man hours were dropped, the rest of the money goes to free education for the people. Hubbard County has three watersheds, the Mississippi, Leach Lake, and the Crow Wing. The City of Park Rapids is in the Mississippi watershed, but we're all interactive. She encouraged the Council to sign up for the class.

**9.2. Resolution Establishing Precincts and Polling Places for the City of Park Rapids:**

Carroll stated the information for the city's precincts is based on the 2010 census. We have had one annexation since then. The census map doesn't show that property as being in the city's precinct. Will Discovery Circle people be voting in the city? Vik stated definitely the annexed Henrietta Township properties will be voting in the city this year. Carroll stated we'll be using the same precincts and polling place as before. Once we approve the resolution it will go to the county and then they'll know for sure what our boundaries are and that should help them with their district boundaries.

Konshok questioned has the state approved the Henrietta Township annexation? Smith answered yes. Vik stated it was approved officially on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. **A motion was made by Tomte, seconded by Utke, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2012-59 Establishing Precincts and Polling Places for the City of Park Rapids.**

**9.3. Main Avenue Flowers:** Cynthia Jones stated the total from Hafner's Greenhouse for the flowers for Main Avenue is \$2,310.00. The flowers last year were a total success in which the city helped with a financial contribution for the flower pots. The Downtown Business Association is requesting a contribution from the city of \$500.00 to help defray the costs, and will assume the rest of the costs themselves.

Smith stated the Parks Board discussed this item at their meeting last night. They unanimously concurred with a \$500.00 contribution towards the flowers, which is what they have traditionally done. We did put \$500.00 in the general fund budget for this. **A motion was made by Tomte, seconded by Konshok, and unanimously carried to approve a \$500.00 contribution towards flowers for Main Avenue, as per the Parks Board recommendation.**

**9.4. Discovery Circle-Tim Flathers/HRDC:** Tim Flathers, from Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC), stated there have been a couple of issues involving Discovery Circle. I've heard directly from a couple of the residents in the area. It seems there's a little distress among the residents of the cost of the improvements, and the cost of the hook-ups over the next few years.

Flathers stated I wanted to try to provide some information to make people aware that there may be some possible opportunities to provide some level of assistance. There are some programs that can help people with the individual service lines, the actual lines from the stub to the home. The programs tend to be housing rehabilitation programs. They tend to be income based, but allowing people to hook up to municipal services when they used to be on private well and septic, especially when public improvements are done for some environmental reason. There's certainly interest in helping people try to make those connections. I provided a snippet of information about the programs that I'm aware of. Sometimes people need to ask questions, you don't necessarily read this and know which option is the best for them. I would encourage people to call our staff at the Hubbard County HRA number that rolls over to our office. We can try to steer people if they're interested in that.

Flathers stated USDA/Rural Development is a great program for lower income seniors. It's great because they have grant funding available for people 62 and older that are low income. It's not grant money, its deferred loans, but the lien period is only three years. When you're dealing with seniors, they will give up anything, they won't make improvements if it means they won't have anything to leave their kids. If you have a short lien period it's a much more marketable program. That can be really beneficial. The other programs that tend to have a variety of sources are listed through the Hubbard County HRA. They are income based. There are different terms. We have to help steer people in terms of what's the best deal for you. Most of the programs operate on some type of deferment. It could be twenty or thirty years. There are some installment programs as well, if you make more money and have some repayment ability. For the service hookups, the private part, there's virtually something for everybody because the banks have a home improvement loan they run through Minnesota Housing, and people can get some level of assistance up to making \$93,000.00 a year. There's not a whole lot of people getting left out from getting something. I think its good public information. I've heard people say they're going to lose their homes. If we try to package resources that can help people, we can alleviate a lot of their concern. This is good information to share with the residents. There are some options out there.

Flathers stated the public side may be a little more challenging. I want you to be aware of at least one option for discussion. The program that you're running right now for the downtown and one neighborhood for housing improvements, that's the Small Cities state version of a community block program. They fund a variety of different things, but one of them that is eligible, is assessment abatement. They don't really abate assessments, but pay off assessments that are already made. One of the opportunities is you could apply to the Small Cities Program for funds to pay the assessments. But the caveat would be that you would pay the assessments of income eligible homeowners in the neighborhood. They don't abate any commercial properties or rental properties. But low and moderate income homeowners. So that's for any household that owns their home and earns less than 80% of the county median. It's not an extremely low income program, but it's moderate at \$48,000.00 annually for a family of four. One of the challenges is full

disclosure, and it's political. If you have a family of four that makes \$47,500.00 they could get their assessment completely paid for, and if you have one that makes \$48,500.00 next door, they pay in full. It's all or nothing. You qualify or you don't. That can be somewhat of a challenge. The second challenge is that because these are federal funds and it's directly linked to the construction project, Davis-Bacon wage rates would apply to the construction. It probably wouldn't have happened last year, but DEED just got audited by HUD. It's elevated this whole discussion about how those things are linked. The position that you would be put in is you would have to bid it out as a Davis-Bacon project and do the construction using prevailing wages on a speculative basis because you wouldn't necessarily know if you would be funded. I don't think it's going to have a huge impact on costs, but it could have a little bit. There is a risk that you would need to be aware of.

Jon Olson stated for a project of this size and scale, the increase we would see in wage rates is typically, fairly nominal. If it was a larger scale project, a larger contractor typically do pay those rates. Utke stated I would think their operators are already in that wage range. Olson stated yes, that is a correct statement. We would have more administration with certifying the payrolls and verifying that they are paying in accordance with Davis-Bacon. Flathers stated that is just if you had to do it, because the other piece of it is if DEED provides funding it comes with some administrative dollars that defray that. It's not the general contractors, it's some of the small subs, which would be a small part of the project. I'm thinking it's not a huge deal but with full disclosure, you should know that.

Flathers stated the other thing is timing. Applications this year are due April 12<sup>th</sup>. It's way past the time to do an application. This year there was a two stage process where there was a pre-application due in September. If you were invited in, it followed with a full application in April. They don't even know if they're going to have a second phase. Since they were monitored by HUD they're doing things differently. They may not have a two stage application. We don't know a lot of details about next year's process. I would say they would likely have a process where full application will be due about April, and funding would be available, if you were successful, in July of 2013. The timing might be pretty good because if what you're really trying to do is pay off those assessments, you want to get them paid off about that time when they're going to start hitting people's property taxes. That's something to keep in mind.

Flathers stated another thing, I have no idea what the demographic characteristics are in this particular neighbor. How many people would even qualify? My gut sense is if you had twenty households say they are going to lose their homes because they can't afford it, that's probably not accurate. When it comes time to document income to qualify, is it going to be a lower number than that? I think a good process is to have a household survey done. That would not give you documented income. But would give you a general sense of how many homeowners would meet the criteria. I think when it comes to actually doing an application, next winter, it makes sense to do a pre-application to the households and require them to provide income documentation and then you would know when putting an application together as to exactly how many qualified homes you have and then develop your budget based on documented numbers. The worst case scenario is if you did this type of activity and didn't budget enough money and there's no more money to go to. Conversely, one of the things the state is equipped to give money out. They really don't like taking money back. They don't have systems for that. You don't want to be in that situation. With grant funding you want to use the funds and do it wisely, and not using the

funds and giving it back doesn't give you good marks in their eyes. If people don't provide you with the documentation, they're not eligible.

Carroll stated there are some vacant homes in the area. What do you do in that situation? The assessments will be there until somebody purchases the property. Flathers stated that's a tough one. I would say that it might be interesting to link this up with some type of marketing program to income eligible people to purchase those homes. If they're in there prior to the requirement that they have income documentation you could make that work. Just a vacant home is not going to be eligible. It's got to be homeowner occupied and income eligible with tight documentation.

Flathers stated there are a couple of different options if you were to pursue something like this. The assessment abatement is a single purpose public facility orientated activity. You could link that to request funds to do housing rehabilitation and have both activities. They call that a comprehensive. I have no idea what the need or interest is in that area. It might be something worth considering. If you have a smaller number of people that would actually qualify for the hook-ups, it might be good to have some of the housing rehabilitation as well so you can get a little bit more funding as part of your package. If your grant award is too small, it makes it administratively more difficult that you'll have enough base funding to do a really good job doing the activities that you need to do. And you'll meet a greater amount of community need. I suspect there's a fair amount of need in the neighborhood. It's a really nice neighborhood, but I also think it's kind of at the age where there's likely people that have some deferred maintenance. There are people there, like fixed income seniors that probably could use some help.

Carroll questioned would these grants, loans, programs, apply to people across the city, for anybody that has assessments on their property? Flathers stated you would have to do a proposal for a specific area, especially for this type of project. Tomte questioned these applications are coming from the city, not the individual property owners? Flathers stated the city applies for the program and then administers it.

Konshok questioned this is a variation on the Small Cities Program we had for downtown and the southwest quadrant of the city? Flathers stated Park Rapids has done a number of projects using Small Cities funds over the years. Konshok stated it would be interesting to make this larger than Discovery Circle and include the east side. I've heard comments from the older section of town, wondering why they got left out. Flathers stated that gets really difficult with this program. If you're looking at a comprehensive, they really want to see the two activities you're doing are geographically related. I think the opportunity that we have, they don't like assessment abatement, but I think the way you would be coming at it, is documented and so tight that you have a really solid opportunity. You could do something like that but you'd be better off doing a second phase and still picking up that area.

Carroll questioned the Riverside Project, where you have existing sewer and water where it's very old and worn out, would be considered a similar environmental thing like going from septic to city? Flathers stated state staff doesn't really like replacement because they assume that as a local government you have a replacement fund, or you should. It's not very competitive situation. My experience with this program is the more universal the need, the less likely it's going to get funded, because they don't have enough money to go around. They're really looking for these niche needs. Tomte stated this might work.

Utke questioned what is the plan now? Are we going to get this information to those property owners to start this education process? Smith stated we could do a letter and provide this contact information. We don't want to promise too much, just here's the information and it might work for you and it might not. Follow that with an income survey to collect some demographic information. Once we have that in hand, then formulate the next step. Utke questioned when people get that and have questions who do they call? Flathers stated it's early for the people with sewer hookups. They're not going to be moving forward yet. From my perspective, I want people to have some hope that there's something that might benefit them. That's really my objective. The application stuff will come later.

**10. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE:** Smith stated we had scheduled a ribbon cutting for the outdoor ice rink. Due to the mild winter, we canceled that. Hopefully, next season when we get it opened up we'll reschedule it. We wanted to acknowledge the people that worked on that project and we didn't get the opportunity to do that. For right now to get some official recognition I'll read their names. The real moving force behind this was Paul Larson. He worked hard and was assisted by Aaron Warmbold. Others contributing were Gary Warmbold from DCC Inc, Donn Hoffman from Hoffman Electric, Kurt Dickinson, Josh Hoffman, Don Selseth, the Park Rapids Fire Department, RDO Training Center, RDO Trucking, RDO Farms, Charles Roth, and from Itasca Mantrap Coop, Mike Monsrud, Tim Huewe, and Kevin George. Scott Burlingame, Dean Christofferson, Steph Paulson, Bill Smith, Dan Walker, Rod Nordberg, the Park Rapids Park Board, the Park Rapids School Board, Glenn Chido, and the Park Rapids City Council. So we'd like to recognize those bodies and those people.

**11. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:** Walker stated the DNR is done with the testing of the Red Bridge. They are now doing some design work. One of the concerns that they had was the height of the bridge. It may not be what we want, the distance from the water to the bridge. You need to be aware of that. They know that they can't go any lower, but I don't know that they're going to be able to get any height. I know there are issues with boats and whatnot.

Walker stated the Urban Forestry tree giveaway was wildly successful. We had initially ordered one-hundred and fifty trees. They went very quickly. We ordered another fifty and they are gone. We're still getting calls and have a waiting list. Maybe we should just do another round next year. Budgeting that in would probably be the most appropriate way to do that and just administer what we've gotten ourselves into this year. Carroll stated there are a number of Rotary members willing to help with the distribution of those trees.

Walker stated we did get our MN DOT Partnership grant for \$4,000.00 for planting on Highways 34 and 71. Hopefully, we can get everything ordered in time. The planting will occur on April 28<sup>th</sup>, Arbor Day. We did ask for community involvement for that.

Scott Olson stated Thursday we will be resetting the wine and liquor sections of the store. In May, we'll be doing the same thing in the beer coolers.

Jon Olson stated the field staff was out in Discovery Circle collecting data for the survey. We're working on the next step, which is the design phase. There are some areas of concern for storm drainage. We need to look at it on paper. There are some depressed areas. I'll have some information, as to what our options are for the next meeting.

Brumbaugh stated she is busy preparing for the audit. The field auditors will be here the third week in April. Standard and Poore gave us an A+ bond rating for our refunding bond. Our rate is still good, it's very similar to our previous rating.

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

**13. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** Konshok stated there was standing room only at the last Park Board Meeting. There were a number of boy scouts there for their civic badge. The Parks Board has been doing a lot of things and making progress on a lot of different fronts all with little or no city money involved. It's been volunteer labor and private donations. It's good to see people taking an interest in it. There is an initiative in the Parks Boards to get an outreach program going between the public and the parks. We'll try to link up with the schools and get the kids out to the parks, and so we can highlight some of the good things that have been going on in the parks. The Pioneer Park plan is progressing. It's basically a vacant lot and we're trying to fit a lot in it. Hopefully, we'll get a plan finalized and get underway this summer.

Tomte commended the fire department for their excellent response time and excellent work for a fire call at my house. They came in, did what they needed to do and they were gone. By the time I got there everyone was gone. I truly appreciate how effective and efficient they were. They were in and out and contained the fire and the house is still intact.

Utke questioned who is responsible for the speed limits signs on County Road 6? Is putting up more signs something that we could ask for? It would be nice to have a reminder that the speed limit is forty miles an hour. Burlingame stated that is the county's responsibility.

**14. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Utke, seconded by Konshok, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

[seal]

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Mayor Nancy J. Carroll

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik  
City Clerk