

The Council Meeting was called to order at 7:01 by Mayor Michael Egelston at the Community Meeting Room, 100 Village Center Drive, Suite 150, City of North Oaks, Minnesota. Present were Councilmembers Marty Long, Gregg Nelson, Rick Kingston, Katy Ross and Mayor Michael Egelston. City Administrator Michael Robertson, City Attorney David Magnuson, Recording Secretary Linda Hanson and Videographer Maureen Anderson were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Truth in Taxation

Mayor Egelston opened the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing at 7:02 pm. Administrator Robertson presented the 2016 Budget. The proposed increase in the tax levy was 4% but the City's property value went up 6.8% so most properties will see the City portion of their taxes decrease. The City receives 59% of its budget from property taxes. The City expects a 6.2% increase in expenditures with Public Safety accounting for 42% of the City's expenditures. The average home in North Oaks pays \$712.29 to the City, of that \$333 goes for police protection and \$128 goes for fire protection. In terms of revenues the only major change is that the City is expecting a decrease in the number of new home permits for the next year. Administrator Robertson reminded the audience that if they have a question about their property valuation, questions should be directed to the Ramsey County Assessor (651-266-2131).

With no comments Councilmember Gregg Nelson made the motion to close the Truth-in-Taxation Hearing at 7:08 p.m. With a second from Councilmember Rick Kingston, the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

Councilmember Nelson moved to approve the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marty Long and passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

Scott Coyle, 37 North Oaks Road

Scott thanked the City Council for spending more on deer removal. He encouraged the Council to approve the goal to have ten or less deer per square mile which he believes will help reduce the incidents of Lyme's Disease.

John Murphy, 6 Evergreen Road

John wanted to thank the City Council for approving the Tick Borne Disease Committee and also wanted to thank the Committee for the work they have done at this time.

David Christianson, 2 Thrush Lane

David stated that he contracted Lyme's Disease but still enjoys the deer. He does not want to see the City Council go overboard on removing too many deer.

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of November 12, 2015 for approval
2. Minutes of the Natural Resource Commission of November 19, 2015 for approval
3. Licenses for Approval:

Mechanical Contractors Plumbing & Heating:

Arborists

Sewer/Water Installation:

Liquor Licenses: North Oaks Golf Club, Panino's, North Oaks Hospitality/Tria Restaurant & Bar, Winestreet Spirits, Suishin Restaurant, Inc, Taste of Scandinavia

Claims for Approval: Check numbers 011622-011643

Councilmember Long made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda with a second from Councilmember Katy Ross. The motion carried unanimously.

Petitions, Requests, & Communication

1. None

Unfinished Business

1. Road Clearance

Administrator Robertson stated that a discussion has been ongoing as to how involved the City should be in clearing the roadsides in North Oaks. The City pays to have the grass mowed along the roads once in spring and once in fall. Some have expressed that this is not enough and would like to see it mowed more often. Robertson said that the cost is between \$2000 and \$2500 to mow each time. Some areas are wooded right up to the road and if needed to be cleared would cost additional money. The City does have a Clearview Ordinance with the purpose of keeping motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists safe.

Mayor Egelston stated that safety is the City's first concern and then property maintenance would follow. It is the homeowners' responsibility to clear the vegetation 5 feet back and 12 feet high from the road. If the City would have to start removing vegetation, the cost would be passed on to the homeowner. Councilmember Kingston said that the homeowners should be asked to clear the roadway on their property first, and then if it's not done the City should contract it out passing the cost onto the homeowners. Councilmember Nelson stated that Operation Clearview is a City responsibility, but that the City should not be involved in aesthetics of how a property looks.

The Mayor reminded everyone that school buses and emergency vehicles need to have clear roads. Damage to their vehicles can occur from overhead branches. It was agreed that more work should be done on the Ordinance as City Attorney Magnuson stated that it needs to be clearly spelled out especially when removing trees and shrubs. Magnuson stated he would research the issues and work on a revised ordinance.

Councilmember Nelson made the motion to direct City Attorney Magnuson and Administrator Robertson to work on a new Ordinance and return to the Council for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ross and passed unanimously.

2. Approve 2016 Tax Levy

Administrator Robertson asked how the Council wanted to handle the proposed \$15,000 surplus before voting on the tax levy. Councilmember Kingston and Ross suggested that it should be left in the budget as it may be needed in 2016.

Councilmember Ross made the motion to approve Resolution 1309 approving the Pay 2016 Tax Levy. Councilmember Kingston seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

3. Approve 2016 Budget

Councilmember Nelson made the motion to approve the 2016 Budget with the \$15,000 surplus added to the Contingency Fund. With a second from Councilmember Kingston, the motion carried unanimously.

4. Recycling Lease Agreement

Bill McNee, NOHOA President, offered the City three options for settling the City's lease for recycling space. Administrator Robertson recommended the second option which was to sign a one year lease for the amount the City previously offered and continue to negotiate for a longer lease.

It was decided that Councilmember Ross would join Robertson in working with NOHOA to resolve space needs in the Mel's Service building.

Councilmember Nelson moved to approve a one year lease with NOHOA at \$7.50 per square foot with Councilmember Ross and Administrator Robertson continuing to negotiate a multi-year agreement. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Road Signage & Striping

NOHOA has asked the City to look into passing the responsibility to do road signage and striping to the homeowner's association. City Attorney Magnuson stated that he would want to look into if the City could delegate its governing authority to a private entity. The City would need to delegate the standards that would need to be followed.

Councilmember Nelson asked how long the City has had this responsibility. The City has been doing this since the 1950's. Councilmember Nelson would like a formal presentation from NOHOA before considering any change. Mayor Egelston stated he was not comfortable giving up this responsibility.

Councilmember Nelson made the motion to end the discussion and keep the road signage and striping responsibility at the City level. With a second from Councilmember Ross, the motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion of Deer Permit Application

Administrator Robertson presented the proposed letter to the DNR asking for a permit to remove a greater number of deer this season. The City has contracted to both trap and shoot up to 200 deer. The goal is to reduce the number of deer to 10 or less per square mile.

Mayor Egelston thanked the Tick Borne Disease Committee for the work they have been doing. He stated that the City intends to remove more deer based on the Committee's recommendation. The Council approved an increase in the 2016 Budget to remove a greater number.

Councilmember Nelson made the motion to approve the letter to the DNR requesting a permit to remove up to 200 deer. Councilmember Kingston seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. Community Service Officer (CSO) Position

The Community Service Officer Bob Parrott intends to retire in mid-February. Because of this Administrator Robertson has been working on a revised job description. The main concern is that the current CSO position does not allow for the person to write citations. Robertson estimated that a full-time officer would cost an additional \$45,000 a year. Councilmember Kingston was also concerned about the number of complaints of lack of follow up. He would like to see a deputy hired and also have the person report to the Council on a regular basis. Mayor Egelston stated that if the City did hire a full time deputy, it would cost the average homeowner approximately \$24 a year more in taxes.

Councilmember Long agreed to work with Administrator Robertson to investigate what should be done with this position. Councilmember Long and the City Administrator will come back to the Council with a recommendation.

4. Approve 2016 Water & Sewer Rates

Administrator Robertson recommended that a small increase in sewer and water rates be approved for 2016. He also recommended an increase from 5% to 7.5% for administration charges. These increases will help build a financial reserve capable of paying for any major problems.

Mayor Egelston noted that talks continue with North Oaks Company on the City taking over their private sewer and water systems.

Councilmember Ross moved to approve Resolution 1308 approving changes in sewer and water charges in the City of North Oaks. With a second from Councilmember Long, the motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Reports

Councilmember Katy Ross

Councilmember Ross attended the Lake Johanna Fire Department Board meeting. She stated that they had an active quarter and were able to respond quickly to any fire calls. They have hired five new firefighters, most with previous experience. They also are happy with the training they are receiving from Regions Hospital.

There was no Planning Commission meeting in November or December. Chair Bill Campbell plans to retire in 2016, so the Planning Commission will be looking for a new member.

The Home Improvement Committee will meet on December 7th, 2015.

Councilmember Marty Long

VLAWMO did not meet this past month.

The Natural Resource Commission is working on a Best Practices document for water. Some homeowners are in violation of feeding wildlife. It was recommended that letters be sent and if not stopped a citation be issued.

Councilmember Long spoke at an Edina Realty luncheon. An interest in how to market North Oaks was a topic. With the privacy concerns, it is not always easy for realtors to get information out to potential buyers.

Councilmember Rick Kingston

Councilmember Kingston is working with the North Oaks Historic and Architectural Preservation Project (NOHAPP Committee). They are working on a list of homes that have architectural significance.

Councilmember Gregg Nelson

The Finance Committee met to finalize the 2016 Budget. They are also working to determine the value of the gate house.

The North Suburban Cable Commission will meet on December 3rd, 2015.

Mayor Michael Egelston's Report

No additional report

Administrative Report

No report

City Attorney Reports

No report

Miscellaneous

Next Regularly Scheduled Planning Commission Meeting December 2, 2015 @ 7:00 pm in the Community Meeting Room was cancelled due to lack of items.

Next Natural Resource Commission Meeting December 17, 2015 @ 7:00 pm in the Community Meeting Room

Next Regularly Scheduled Council Meeting January 14, 2016 @ 7:00 pm in the Community Meeting Room

Mayor Egelston thanked Chair Bill Campbell for all his years and hard work done on the Planning Commission.

Adjournment

On motion duly made by Councilmember Long, seconded by Councilmember Ross and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Attest:

Respectfully Submitted

Mayor Michael Egelston

Linda M. Hanson
Recording Secretary