



CITY COUNCIL MEETING
City Hall—Council Chambers, 3989 Central Ave NE
Monday, July 22, 2024
6:00 PM

Mayor
Amada Márquez Simula
Councilmembers
Connie Buesgens
Kt Jacobs
Rachel James
Justice Spriggs
City Manager
Aaron Chirpich

MINUTES

The following are the minutes for the Meeting of the City Council held at 6:00 pm on Monday, July 22, 2024, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3989 Central Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, Minnesota

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Márquez Simula called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Present: Mayor Márquez Simula; Councilmember Buesgens; Councilmember Jacobs; Councilmember Spriggs; Councilmember James

Also Present: Andrew Boucher, City Planner; Aaron Chirpich, City Manager; Mitchell Forney, Community Development Director; Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; Sara Ion, City Clerk; Scott Lepak, City Attorney; Matthew Markham, Chief of Police; Charlie Thompson, Fire Chief

MISSION STATEMENT

Columbia Heights is a vibrant, healthy and connected City. We are here to actively support the community, deliver equitable services, build and strengthen connections, improve upon our past, and uphold our successes. We strive to be better and ensure Columbia Heights is a great place for everyone, today and in the future.

A. Minnesota State Flag Acknowledgement.

Mayor Márquez Simula read an acknowledgement about the Minnesota State Flag. She explained that the acknowledgement was going to be presented to the American Indian school representative liaison, Yolanda Dorr-Slowey but she was unable to attend the meeting due to the weather. The acknowledgement will be given to the school district and the American Indian community to help represent how the City would move forward and rectify the past.

B. Color Guard Presentation of Minnesota State Flag.

The Color Guard presented and posted the flag.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Mayor Márquez Simula thanked the Police and Fire Honor Guard and the local Boy Scout Troop 123

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember James, to approve the Agenda as presented. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITION, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GUESTS

A. Fern Shawhan Ostberg 100th Birthday Recognition.

Mayor Márquez Simula read the recognition of Fern Shawhan Ostberg's 100th birthday.

Fern Shawhan's daughter, Anne received the proclamation and noted that Fern has been an inspiration to many in the community and expressed what an honor it was to have Fern's birthday recognized.

B. National Night Out Proclamation.

Mayor Márquez Simula proclaimed August 6, 2024 as National Night Out and read the City's proclamation.

Police Chief Markham accepted the proclamation and thanked the Council. He noted that there were 20 registered parties and would like to have 40-50 parties registered. He explained that if anyone would like to host a party, they can call at 763-706-8100.

Mayor Márquez Simula added that it is free to host a National Night Out party. The City will provide some barricades for the street.

Police Chief Markham explained that everyone who signed up to host a party would receive a sign for their yard so people would know where the party is at.

C. Assistance Dog Day Proclamation.

Mayor Márquez Simula proclaimed August 4, 2024 as Assistance Dog Day and Councilmember James read the City's proclamation.

Police Chief Markham received the proclamation and noted that Officer Airreon Austin would be the dog handler for the new therapy dog. The Police Department is currently in the process of finding a dog. The dog will be a therapy dog for the Police Staff and plan to use the dog for special events.

D. Introduction of Police Department Leadership Team and New Personnel.

Police Chief Markham introduced the Police Department leadership team and new personnel.

Leadership Team

Capt. Erik Johnston, Capt. Jackie Urbaniak, Sgt. Tim Noll, Sgt. Jason Piehn, Sgt. Mohammed Farah, Sgt. Troy Vaughn, Sgt. Guy Juran, Lead Records Tech Becky Romanik

New Personnel

Officer Ahmed Abdullahi, Community Service Officer Alyssa Erickson, Community Service Officer Hunter Deinhammer, Records Tech Brenda Pliego-Geniz.

Mayor Márquez Simula expressed her pride in the Police Department and thanked them for their work.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Spriggs, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

- 1. Approve the July 8, 2024 City Council Meeting Minutes.**
MOTION: Move to approve the July 8, 2024 City Council Meeting minutes.
- 2. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 1699, an Ordinance Amending Chapter 3.315 of the City Code Relating to the Youth Commission.**
MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Ordinance No. 1699, there being ample copies available to the public.
MOTION: Move to approve Ordinance No.1699, an Ordinance amending chapter 3.315 of the City Code Relating the Youth Commission of the City of Columbia Heights and to direct staff to send a summary of the ordinance as presented, for publication in the legal newspaper.
- 3. Adopt Resolution 2024-54 Amending the Community Development Fee Schedule to Update the Business Use Certificate of Occupancy Fee.**
MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2024-54, there being ample copies available to the public.
MOTION: Move to approve Resolution 2024-54, a resolution amending the 2024 Community Development fee schedule
- 4. Request to Purchase Mobile Pro Systems 3100 Surveillance Trailer.**
MOTION: Move to approve the Police Department's purchase of a Mobile Pro Systems Commander 3100 camera trailer in the amount of \$57,008.00, with the expenditure coming from the Police Department's operating budget.
- 5. Police Department Purchase of Pass-through Evidence Lockers.**
MOTION: Move to authorize the Police Chief to purchase evidence lockers from Mid-America business systems in the amount of \$29,494.43 as quoted.
- 6. License Agenda.**
MOTION: Move to approve the items as listed on the business license agenda for July 22nd, 2024, as presented.
- 7. Rental Occupancy Licenses for Approval.**
MOTION: Move to approve the items listed for rental housing license applications for July 22, 2024, in that they have met the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code.

- 8. Temporary Rental Occupancy License for Approval for 3806 Jackson St. NE.**
MOTION: Move to approve the item listed for a temporary rental housing license for July 22, 2024, in that the owner has met the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code.
- 9. Review of Bills.**
MOTION: Move that in accordance with Minnesota Statute 412.271, subd. 8 the City Council has reviewed the enclosed list to claims paid by check and by electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$1,393,294.65.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 10. Consideration of Resolution 2024-55, Revocation of the License to Operate Rental Units Within the City of Columbia Heights Against the Rental Property at 4228 Madison Street NE For Failure to Meet the Requirements of the Residential Maintenance Codes.**
Fire Chief Thompson noted on May 25, 2024, Inspection Staff sent a letter requesting the owner of the property to submit the rental license application and fee for the property. The letter was sent by regular mail to the address listed in the property records. That on July 9, 2024, inspection office staff reviewed the property file and noted that the property remained unlicensed. A Statement of Cause was mailed by regular mail to the owner at the address listed in the property records. Based upon the records of the Enforcement Office, the property owner failed to submit the rental renewal license application and fees. All parties, including the License Holder and any occupants or tenants, have been given the appropriate notice of the hearing according to the provisions of the City Code.

Fire Chief Thompson added that Staff physically contacted the individual via phone and she indicated that she would come in on July 18, 2024 to take care of the application and fees. No one showed up to the office that day.

Mayor Márquez Simula asked if the property owner was in attendance. Fire Chief Thompson replied that he did not think the property owner was in attendance.

Mayor Márquez Simula opened the public hearing. There were no public comments.

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember James, to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Resolution 2024-55, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember James, to adopt Resolution 2024-55, being a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Heights approving revocation, pursuant to City Code, of the rental license listed.

Councilmember James asked Fire Chief Thompson if the property owner had any previous revocations and if they had any other properties. Fire Chief Thompson replied that there have been no revocations on the property in the past. However, since 2020 there have been a number of violations that have gone uncorrected for several months until the statement of cause. He added that there have been violations about three different times.

All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Ordinances and Resolutions

11. Consideration of a Rental License Exemption for 4302 2nd Street NE.

City Planner Boucher stated on July 16, 2024, the owner of 4302 2nd Street NE, reached out to the Community Development Department requesting an exemption from the single-family rental density cap. The property is located on Block 19 with three single family rentals out of 24 total single-family units and an allotment of two single family rentals. The property owners have parents that passed away and are going through the process of acquiring the property. The property owners intend to do some upgrades in the home and pass it onto their children. The rental density exemption would allow them more time to do the necessary upgrades and figure out the next steps. He added that the property owners are available via Teams to answer any questions.

Mayor Márquez Simula opened an opportunity for the property owners to speak.

Property Owner Barb Hagberg mentioned that City Planner Boucher covered it all.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Jacobs, to waive the reading of Resolution 2024-053, there being ample copies available to the public. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Mayor Márquez Simula expressed her condolences for the family's loss. She added that one of the best reasons to have the exemption is for situations like this and that she would be voting in favor.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember James, to approve Resolution 2024-053, being a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Heights approving the single-family rental exemption request for the rental application at 4302 2nd Street NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421. 4 Ayes, 1 Nay, Motion Carried 4-1. Ayes: Márquez Simula, James, Spriggs, Buesgens. Nay: Jacobs.

Bid Considerations

12. Bid Award for Safe Routes to School, City Project 1807.

Public Works Director Hansen noted on September 25, 2023, the City Council awarded a contract to SRF Consulting for engineering design and construction services for the City's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project consisting of sidewalk, pedestrian ramp, and pedestrian crossing improvements along and adjacent to 49th Avenue from Madison Street to Johnson Street and 47th Avenue from Fillmore Street to east of Pierce Street. In June, plans and specifications were advertised for bids in the *LIFE newspaper* and electronically on the City website and through Quest Construction Data Network. Four bids were received and publicly read aloud at the July 10, 2024 bid opening. Staff estimated that the

project would be \$600,000 and the lowest bid came in at \$488,503.50. Staff originally planned to do the work during the summer. The contractor will be able to do the majority of the work during the summer but it will be dependent on the release and approval of the bid process by the State. The project is an 80/20 split so if the City is eligible, the grant will pay for 80% of the costs. Columbia Heights and Hilltop will pay for the other 20%, depending on where the work is done.

Mayor Márquez Simula asked if the \$488,503.50 bid was the full bid for the project or the 20% the City would have to pay. Public Works Director Hansen replied that it was the full bid for the project.

Councilmember James noted that the improvements would make a big difference in safety. She expressed her excitement about the project. Mayor Márquez Simula added that she has received a few phone calls over the years about Monroe Street and 49th Avenue and that the community will be happy about the changes.

Motion by Councilmember Spriggs, seconded by Councilmember Jacobs, to accept bids and award the Safe Routes to School Construction, City Project 1807, to Concrete Idea, Inc. of Maple Lake, Minnesota, based upon their low, qualified, responsible bid in the amount of \$488,503.50 with about \$390,800.00 from SRTS Grant funding which uses an 80/20 split and the remaining from project funds; and, furthermore, to authorize the Mayor and City Manager to enter into a contract for the same. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

CITY COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Report of the City Council

Councilmember Spriggs mentioned he attended Music in the Park and a meeting with Congresswoman Omar, Representative Feist, and the Mayor of Saint Anthony to discuss the cost of living. He added that he has had discussions with the Housing Justice Center about ideas and options renters have. He noted that he had a meeting with Mayor Márquez Simula, City Manager Chirpich, and a representative from Blue Zones to learn more information and possibilities within the City.

Councilmember Jacobs stated she did a police ride-along and attended the National Substance Addiction Conference in Las Vegas. She congratulated the Police Department for their new positions as well as Mitch Forney for his new position. She facilitated two resident reach outs.

Councilmember James explained that she spoke with residents regarding alley conditions, and issues with native plants and grasses. She mentioned that she is looking forward to National Night Out.

Councilmember Buesgens noted she attended the Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization board meeting, the Sustainability Commission meeting, Music in the Park, and volunteered at Blooming Sunshine Garden. She congratulated the Staff and Police Officers that were promoted.

Mayor Márquez Simula stated she has been planning for the Monarch Fest that will be on August 8,

2024 at Sullivan Park from 5-8 pm and will be a bilingual event. She thanked the City, the Rotary for Columbia Heights and Fridley, HeightsNext and the Sister City for making the event possible. She attended Music in the Park, the Silver Lake Association picnic, a meeting with the Anoka Mediation Center, the Fire Department Association meeting, the neighborhood watch meeting, the Charter Commission meeting, the Blue Zones meeting with Councilmember Spriggs, and a meeting with the Police Chief and City Manager to coordinate the flag ceremony. She welcomed all the new businesses in Columbia Heights.

Report of the City Manager

City Manager Chirpich explained that Music in the Park continues this week and will feature Kathy G & the Hot Lemons on July 24th at Huset Park from 6:30-8 pm. Community members can register for National Night Out until July 24th. National Night Out will be on August 6th.

City Manager Chirpich mentioned that the Communications Staff won a Northern Lights Award at the Community Engagement Awards for the small entity. The award was for the City partnering with local artists on art work in the central place room.

City Manager Chirpich stated the Police Department is hosting the annual eat and greet event on Tuesday, July 30, from 5-7 at McKenna Park. There will be food, activities, face painting and more. The City is developing a safety action plan that is evaluating the safety issues for people driving, walking, biking, rolling and using transit in the City. There is an interactive map on the City's website where community members can provide feedback and input.

City Manager Chirpich noted that the Parks and Recreation Board and Charter Commission each have one current opening. Applications can be found on the City's website, the Library or City Hall and are due by August 1.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Derek Lind, City of Ramsey resident, stated he is with a citizen advocate group regarding election integrity called ACEIT. He asked if he would be able to come back and do a presentation which can range from 20-45 minutes. He stated two cities in Anoka County have already passed resolutions to extend the post-election review which means 10 days after the election, people would hand count the votes to ensure the machine count and hand count are the same.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember Spriggs, to adjourn. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sara Ion, City Clerk/Council Secretary