

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Spring Lake Park City Council Work Session was held on January 16, 2024 at the City Hall, 1301 81st Ave NE, Spring Lake Park, at 5:30 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ken Wendling
Councilmember Lisa Dircks
Councilmember April Moran
Mayor Nelson (arrived at 5:33pm)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilmember Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff

STAFF PRESENT

Public Works Director George Linngren, Administrator Daniel Buchholtz

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. NMTC Merger Discussion

Administrator Buchholtz introduced the item, stating that the Blaine City Council would like the North Metro Telecommunications Commission to explore a merger, either with CCX Media or another telecommunications commission, citing challenges due to a changing regulatory environment and forecasted reductions in franchise fees and PEG fees. He said the NMTC Board of Directors requested each city discuss this prior to the next meeting to help inform them at their next meeting.

Councilmember discussed the topic. Mayor Nelson expressed concern about the negative impact such a discussion will have on staff. He noted that a merger would likely result in a loss of jobs in the combined organization. Councilmember Dircks noted that it would not harm anyone to have a conversation with CCX to determine if there is an interest in collaborating. Councilmember Moran agreed.

CONSENSUS of the City Council was to support NMTC opening an informal dialogue with CCX about their interest in a possible merger.

B. Liquor Ordinance Violations

Administrator Buchholtz stated that three liquor licensees failed their compliance checks on December 30, 2023. He noted that this is the second violation in three years for two of those licensees: Hy-Vee Wine and Spirits and Sunset Grill. He said this was the first violation for Taco Lindo. He stated that the City Council's practice on the first violation was to waive the 1-day license suspension and impose a \$500 administrative penalty. He stated that he

is seeking direction how to handle the two establishments that have failed their second compliance check in 3 years.

Administrator Buchholtz recommended notifying the licensees of the City's intent to impose a 3 consecutive day license suspension in addition to a \$1,000 administrative penalty. He said that the City Council is required to hold a hearing before imposing the penalty. He stated that the City Council, after the hearing, could choose to reduce the penalty based on specific facts presented at the hearing.

Mayor Nelson objected to imposing the three consecutive day suspension. He strongly urged the City Council to impose the administrative penalty. He noted that restaurants are still recovering from business losses due to the COVID pandemic and his belief that serious criminal actions are being overlooked throughout the State of Minnesota but that the City is focusing on enforcing the underage drinking statute.

Councilmember Moran stated that she agreed with the recommendation made by Administrator Buchholtz. She said it was important to maintain an ethical appearance of treating all businesses similarly and making decisions based on all of the facts as presented. Councilmembers Dircks and Wendling agreed.

CONSENSUS of the City Council was to direct Administrator Buchholtz to inform the business owners of the City's intent to impose a three consecutive day license suspension and a \$1,000 administrative penalty for Hy-Vee Wine and Spirits and Sunset Grill and a \$500 administrative penalty for Taco Lindo.

C. Council Salary Ordinance Discussion

Administrator Buchholtz presented the results of a survey of neighboring cities Mayor and City Council salaries. He noted that if the City Council wants to increase salaries for the Mayor and City Council positions, it needs to adopt an ordinance before the next general election setting those salaries and that the ordinance must take effect after the general election.

Mayor Nelson supported increasing the salary for Mayor and City Council, noting the amount of time he invests in his role as Mayor. Councilmembers Dircks, Wendling and Moran disagreed, noting that the City is in the top three for Mayor and City Council salaries and that there will be significant pressures on the 2025 property tax levy.

CONSENSUS of the City Council was to maintain the salary for Mayor and City Council at its current level.

3. REPORT

- A. Council Reports – Mayor Nelson noted that he objects to the new Minnesota State Seal and State Flag and would like the City Council to discuss adopting a resolution expressing the City's opposition to the new flag and seal.

B. Administrator Report – no report.

4. ADJOURN

Mayor Nelson declared the meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.

Robert Nelson, Mayor

Attest:

Daniel R. Buchholtz, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer