

**WORKSESSION OF THE ANOKA CITY COUNCIL
ANOKA CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MAY 26, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist called the worksession meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present at roll call: Councilmembers Barnett, Skogquist, and Wesp.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Lee; Community Development Director Doug Borglund; Public Services Director Mark Anderson; Police Chief Eric Peterson; Finance Director Brenda Springer; City Attorney Scott Baumgartner; Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse; Recreation Manager Nickie Jenks.

Absent: Mayor Rice, Councilmember Freeburg.

3. COUNCIL BUSINESS and/or DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1 Discussion; COVID-19 Creating Outdoor Seating Areas.

Community Development Director Doug Borglund stated on May 20, 2020, the state outlined plans as mentioned in Executive Order 20-56 for bars and restaurants to open on June 1, 2020 for outdoor service so long as certain conditions, including social distancing, are maintained to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Beginning on June 1, 2020 restaurants and bars can reopen for outdoor service only as long as they have adopted and implemented a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, ensure a minimum of 6 feet of distance between tables, limit on-premises capacity to no more than 50 persons, limit table service to 4 persons, or 6 if part of one family unit, and require reservations in advance. Staff met with local bar/restaurant owners throughout the City on May 22 to develop a plan of action. Staff outlined the plan in detail that included sanitation, restroom use, and meeting all other requirements as outlined by the Governor's executive order. He spoke about the permit process that would include a simple site plan for proposed seating, hold harmless statement for utilization of public property. He noted business owners from the Jackson Street restaurants were present to speak about the possibility of street closures and logistics such as business deliveries and other concerns.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked about availability of barricade materials and picnic tables. Public Services Director Anderson replied they had 29 tables and 25 jersey barriers for use.

Councilmember Barnett asked about specifics regarding tents and the closing of Jackson Street and the need to provide a schematic of where people would sit per area restaurant then confirmed the barriers would be covered with reflectors for safety at night. Police Chief Eric Peterson explained as long as a tent had no sides it would not count as an enclosure but noted the City did not have a supply of tents then spoke about tape pedestrian gates/barriers or A-frames that could be used to ensure patrons adhere to the capacity rate.

Councilmember Wesp asked about the parking lot on the west side of Billy's by the antique store being private property and having access and hoping this would not be police's responsibility to monitor area and clean up after closing. Mr. Borglund said the 10PM closing was suggested by staff consistent with outdoor sidewalk seating operation.

Councilmember Wesp asked about ancillary activities such as pulltabs. Mr. Borglund confirmed locations could sell as long as on premise but would confirm with the Minnesota Gambling Board.

A representative from Billy's Bar & Grill (Stacy), confirmed that use of private patios was allowed until 1AM. City Manager Greg Lee said parklets needed to close by 10PM but private patios were allowed to be open until 1AM then asked those in attendance for thoughts on the closing Jackson Street for use.

Paul Justen, Billy's Bar & Grill, said they will not be using any extra areas so other bars could use theirs then said they could close Jackson Street to the dirt parking lot and use that lot for parking and garbage pick-up.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked how many people park from the restaurants and apartments and more about garbage service. Paul Justen (Billy's Bar & Grill) replied the parking lot was not supposed to be used for the apartments but customers from Peterson's Shoes do then noted garbage and recycling was picked up twice a week on different days.

Councilmember Wesp confirmed ownership and deliveries. Paul Justen (Billy's Bar & Grill) explained delivery access which was at a minimum now and how he allowed Peterson Shoes to access the lot.

Councilmember Barnett asked if the application included additional concerns such as deliveries or garbage and if staff was assigned should something needed to be moved quickly. Mr. Lee emphasized the street closure plan was from the bar owners and would include a soft barrier anyway to allow access from 7AM-10PM or suggested closing only half of Jackson Street and make it a one-way.

Councilmember Wesp asked how they envisioned curbside and patios and spoke about the need to address some traffic on Jackson Street. Paul Justen (Billy's Bar & Grill) confirmed they could handle both curbside and patios as they would not be busy enough with the limits of 50 people.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist said a partially closed street would include one ways and logistics to allow curbside and patio seating. Todd Young, Magillicuddy's, said he was not in favor of closing Jackson Street and would be discourage people from crossing the barricade and noted all bars have a private patio already and could take up one stall and make it work without the inconvenience of deliveries and garbage pick-up.

A representative from 201 Tavern (Bill), said the half-street proposal was the best option and could fit 35 distanced patrons, adding he would like to have additional space if available and believed Serum's would support a partial closure as well.

Mr. Borglund spoke about the lack of outdoor space available in front of Casa Rio.

Chief Peterson spoke about the temporary closure and barricades for emergency vehicle access and said partial would be best but would request more barriers be made available to ensure safety. He noted Serum's would be acceptable to use parking ramp/entrance if allowed.

Interim Fire Chief Jon Holmes agreed a partial closure would work.

Councilmember Barnett said she wanted to do what was best for the restaurants and said she would support execution of the greatest number of spaces.

Discussion was held regarding sufficient space for the various downtown locations. Mr. Borglund confirmed the compact and contained space needed for liquor license.

City Attorney Scott Baumgartner explained the area needs to be attached and contiguous and the need to confirm each license holder's liquor liability allows for coverage that far.

Councilmember Barnett said we will continue to see small business impacts and stressed the importance of curbside pickup continuing.

Councilmember Wesp said the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce stressed the importance of expanded outdoor seating but said he does not want to give up parking for other businesses except in special circumstances.

Jess Pratt, Ambi Wine Bar, spoke about the benefit to others to block off Jackson Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues to expand their patio on the other side as it would be better for weather and allow parking and accessibility for some of the other shops.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist suggested the group presenting a plan that would work for those businesses for review and approval.

Mr. Lee noted Council has made it clear that staff would be flexible in working with owners and would begin working together on a plan to make this happen quickly.

Mr. Borglund outlined the process and approval timeline that included updated insurance certificate and premise area and staff's intention to process applications quickly.

Mr. Anderson discussed closures with barriers and was confident staff could accommodate what was being proposed.

Mr. Lee shared how Anoka County was working on a process to allow food trucks to operate on County-owned property and staff's intent to make this a topic of discussion as allowing food trucks would work against current restaurants.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked about closing time of 10PM and shared his support of later closures and asked about tents would be covered under COVID-19 related expenses.

Councilmember Wesp said closing time was critical to businesses and felt while had good handle on activity had a little concern about alcohol being served along Jackson Street and felt 10PM was appropriate.

Mr. Lee said Council could adjust the budget as needed in terms of events and said while the City has rented tents for Halloween others had not been discussed.

Councilmember Barnett commented about not wanting to have loud music. Chief Peterson said staff wants to discourage outside pedestrian traffic coming in to engage with music as it could become problematic to have people wander in and overwhelm the 50-person capacity and not meet social distancing requirements so they envisioned no live or amplified music.

Paul Justen (Billy's Bar & Grill) asked how owners should address people standing in line to enter the restaurant. Chief Peterson spoke about how police and restaurant owners would monitor activity and prefer each enforces their rules based on the permit then spoke about the potential for lines and concerns about social distancing.

Mr. Lee said the requirement for reservations ensures restaurants do not go over 50 people and that managing this would be up to the businesses to enforce.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist spoke about the need to enforce and good communication so all restaurants are successful and encouraged owners getting plans in as soon as possible to get something in place by June 1.

Council consensus was to partially close Jackson Street and allow one-way traffic only for adjacent and contiguous spaces.

3.2 Discussion; Animal Containment/Law Enforcement Training.

Police Chief Eric Peterson shared a staff report with background information stating due to the upcoming sale of the City facilities at 641 Jacob lane, the removal of the Law Enforcement Training Center/Gun Range and the Animal Containment Facility will be

scheduled to be removed. Plans had been made to relocate the Animal Containment Facility at the new Golf Maintenance Facility on Green Haven Road. No official plans have been implemented to replace the Police Training Facility. He stated that on June 24, 2019 he had presented an option to relocate both the Animal Containment Facility and the Law Enforcement Center at the Public Safety Center Property at 275 Harrison Street and provided supporting facts as to why the existence of a Training Facility is important and why the location for both facilities should be located at the Public Safety Center. Chief Peterson said he would like to discuss this option with Council and present facts and estimated costs for this proposed project so that Council can provide direction to staff as to whether Council supports the construction of a Law Enforcement Training Center/Animal Containment Facility (LETC/ACF) at 275 Harrison Street or not. He said if Council moves forward with construction of the LETC/ACF the plan would be to add it to the bonding of the Park Maintenance building in early 2021. Estimated building costs \$1,830,000, estimated bonding costs \$71,000, and estimated total cost \$1,901,000. The financial impact to residents for a home with an estimated market value of \$250,000 would be approximately an additional \$20.22/year for a 20-year bond or additional \$24.79/year for a 15-year bond. He spoke about the benefits of having a range in the City by cost reductions and travel time.

Mr. Anderson spoke about the timing issues for 2021 project that were very conceptual in nature with 4-5 months to get plans ready and bid start in January 2021 for construction April/May. He spoke about pricing of the project and though \$1 million over was outfitting the ACF but the shell of the building for the LETC and needed to adjust numbers to \$1.9 million. He noted borrowing money was relatively inexpensive now and to push it off to 2022 could result in increases of 4-7% annually and if done now would save money.

Finance Director Brenda Springer spoke about estimates from Ehlers and Associates on both projects in one bonding issue and shared property tax impacts would be approximately \$20-25 per home per year.

Councilmember Barnett spoke about the cost increase but understood it would save overall then commented about the importance of training for police and asked if the \$1.9 million included all new elements and asked about parking impacts for weekend events. Mr. Anderson said the exterior finish would be very much like the existing police and fire buildings with interior finishes minimal for the ACF and LETC would be a shell for equipment at a later date.

Chief Peterson said parking for the LETC would be no more than 6 cars and would not have public or multiple agencies park although some have expressed interest in leasing the range with use of on street parking on Harrison Street when needed.

Councilmember Wesp spoke about bond costs for 20 and 15 years and shared concerns about the timing of the project with the current unemployment and limited restaurant service but understood costs to borrow was low but also need to be sensitive to additional tax impacts at this time. He said we should move forward but be cautious and asked that

Chief allow this to be a minimal building at this time. Ms. Springer estimated the 2.25% would not obligate us to anything at this point.

Councilmember Barnett agreed, stating there was a need to make difficult decisions and in order to communicate this to the community would like more data on cost savings now versus later, separate range training days costs, hunter safety, leasing the facility to other agencies that show while costly is an investment to benefit Anoka residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist said we will not be outfitting the LETC and echoed support for moving forward because we sold the building, noting we could have left the building alone but the decision was already made and building another for a need made this more palatable.

Chief Peterson confirmed the costs did not contain equipment but would be \$400,000 installed after the fact and while could be done through possible public donations it was unlikely at this time but hopefully when complete recognition could be provided.

Council consensus was to move forward with steps to do project.

3.3 Discussion; Aquatic Center/Parks Operations and City Summer Events during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Public Services Administrator Lisa LaCasse shared a staff report with background information stating the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to present unprecedented and rapidly changing challenges. As confirmed cases continue to rise in Minnesota, protective measures and restrictions are being placed on everyday routine activities. Many metro area communities have made decisions to cancel public events and close facilities as they strive to balance the health needs of the public/staff members and the economic ramifications. Staff is seeking direction from Council regarding upcoming summer operations and activities relating to the aquatic center, park facility usage (rentals), and city events (fireworks, concerts in the park, end of summer bash, etc.) At the regular meeting of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board on Tuesday, May 19, 2020, staff discussed upcoming summer operations and activities relating to the aquatic center, park facility usage (rentals), and city events (concerts in the park, end of summer bash, etc.). After much discussion, the Board made the motion to cancel open swim for the entire 2020 season at the aquatic center. She said Board members felt that even if it was possible to implement the restrictions anticipated and additional ideas presented by staff (assuming that the pool would be allowed to open at some point during the summer), that the crowd at open swim would still be highly unpredictable, and under the best circumstances, would put too many people at risk. Ms. LaCasse spoke about anticipated restrictions or limitations by governing agencies should swimming facilities open and if Council wished to have the center open would recommend items such as season passes, restricting the number of attendees, remove all of the deck furnishings and allow people to bring their own chairs, and concessions limited to prepackaged food items.

Ms. LaCasse then spoke about park facility rentals for parties/events, restrooms open June 1, and athletic field use allowed by Governor's expanded order. She spoke about concerts in the park beginning June and bands/duos willing to continue on the date or potential reschedule, enough room at both facilities for people to distance and liabilities on artists if contracted, July 3 fireworks and movies in the park. She shared surrounding communities' plans and how those who have closed their aquatic centers most are attached to a community center, then spoke about specifics on sanitizing, amenities and whether you can do things like a climbing wall, etc. Ms. LaCasse shared how open swim was the most lucrative but most difficult to control based on capacity and distancing and lifeguard requirements and how costs would still be the same and if opened would attract people from outside the City and County. She spoke about support for seniors and activities and staffing senior center for calls on information on food and others for support and spoke about potential for small focused groups.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist said he supported use of facilities with guidance for use but that decisions would be left to the residents and staff should not monitor. He said he was still hopeful athletic fields could be used but are polling for use in small groups and could revisit when someone proposes a request. Ms. LaCasse said staff would feel comfortable with having associations sharing their plans and if appropriate allow use of fields.

Councilmember Barnett asked about the City's role and would support as long as compliance with CDC standards occurred and said as soon as allowed would also support allowing citizens to participate in concerts and agreed with postponing to July for review.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist said large events were not even included in Phase III of the Governor's order such as fireworks, End of Summer Bash and movies in the park although he would like to see fireworks occur if possible, even though it would result in even more of a draw and stress police resources. Councilmember Wesp agreed fireworks was a popular event in any year and would be difficult to do now with so many others communities cancelling.

Councilmember Barnett said she would like to see fireworks happen by having people stay in their cars but understands this would not realistic for parking, crossing streets and enforcement and would like to see the End of Summer Bash be a larger event to compensate if possible.

Ms. LaCasse said the Park Board recommended full cancellation of the End of Summer Bash but suggested possibly a larger movie in the park event instead. Councilmember Wesp recommended allowing staff to determine this as more time passes and wait to officially cancel, including the movie in the park.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist confirmed no senior center use was appropriate at this time and thanked staff for staying connected with our seniors during this time.

Councilmember Barnett said she would support senior center use as long as they meet together for outdoor events or offsite but agreed no renting senior center space outside of seniors. She stressed the importance of responding to the needs of seniors and would be open to other ideas as developed that could include other spaces.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked about timing regarding the pool and getting it up and running. Recreation Manager Nicki Jenks replied all staff was hired and confirmed about their ability to work and only 2 of 52 were uncomfortable about working so staff could be ready to go but noted there was still training and certification needed for some members.

Councilmember Wesp said he was confident staff could be ready but in listening to State experts July 1 may be the soonest the pool could open and how a contagious disease and a pool may not be a viable function this summer. He said he understood how we can clean the water but not the chairs, restrooms and CPR considerations and may be too much additional work as well as potentially being unsafe and noted many other cities were not opening their facilities.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked about losses if we open late. Ms. Jenks shared best case scenario of filling all classes and staff expenses would result in revenue but that is if classes are full and does not include maintenance or salaries.

Ms. LaCasse outlined costs of \$70,000 that included staff, water, chemicals, and said she has confidence in the shut-down process and would have to put in water to circulate, etc. then spoke about programming time needed to do partial season passes and the difficulty in knowing a start date.

Councilmember Barnett said according to the CDC there is no evidence the virus can be spread through water at this time and chemicals should inactivate the virus so staff could activate and be safe and would do everything possible to make it safe but said it has to make financial sense and while the center may not make money this is a service that should be offered to Anoka residents if at all possible. She said if neighboring communities could participate that would be great and said she was reluctant to close for the season and asked if closed changes would have to occur to Ms. Jenks duties. Ms. LaCasse said staff would be redirected but is a challenge as some staff was already hired such as Public Works and would be assigned to painting and other projects typically done by the football team support.

Councilmember Barnett asked if lifeguard positions would be paid the same salary at hiring if redirected to other duties. Ms. LaCasse said staff would pay the lowest base salary which was approximately \$10/hour.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked if pool would be filled and wait to fill. Ms. LaCasse said we would fill if opened but said we would need to do staff training while waiting for licensing to reopen and hopefully would plan to train.

Mr. Lee commented how the aquatic center was established to teach youth to swim which was very important and to keep that in mind balanced against the potential of contracting COVID-19.

Council consensus was that they were willing to wait on a final decision regarding the aquatic center and to find creative ways to allow lessons if possible but likely not through open swim but limited focus and to begin facility start up actions and redeploy staff as appropriate.

Councilmember Barnett said she would like to open if at all possible and trusts staff to execute opening quickly when able.

Ms. LaCasse said staff anticipates the ability to start some programming small scale long before the Order is officially lifted and would keep the Council updated.

Mayor Pro Tem Skogquist asked about the use of Green Haven facilities. Mr. Lee said use for events was not discussed as staff was waiting for an update to the Governor's order.

3.4 Staff Update.

None.

4. COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENTS

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Wesp, seconded by Councilmember Barnett to adjourn the Worksession at 7:29 p.m. Motion carried.

Submitted by: Cathy Sorensen, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

Approval Attestation:

Amy T. Oehlers, City Clerk