

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

March 11, 2024

The East Bethel City Council met on March 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. for the regular City Council meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Lewis Brian Mundle Bob DeRoche
 Tim Miller Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Eric Larson, City Attorney
 Aaron Berg, Community Development Director

1.0 Call to Order

The March 11, 2024, City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Lewis at 7:00 p.m.

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3.0 Adopt Agenda

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt tonight's agenda. DeRoche stated I'll second. Lewis asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

4.0 Presentations and Public Hearings

None.

5.0 Public Forum

Dean Ehling, 20701 Monroe Street NE, stated he has been a resident of the City for 34 years. He read from a prepared statement regarding TIF on the two East Bethel Apartment buildings which he had spoken about last month at the Open Forum. He noted the East Bethel Apartments did not offer any apartments that were affordable for families at or below 50 percent of the areas median income. He indicated this was important because the 2020 City Council had approved the TIF project believing it was voting to require the developer to make 14 units affordable to low-income residents, but that never happened. He stated all units were currently offered at current market rates only. He indicated he had submitted his questions on this issue to Jeziorski who referred them to Ehlers, the City's finance advisors, for clarification. He read the questions he had sent to Ehlers and the responses he received from Ehlers. He handed a packet with all of his information to Look for distribution to the Council.

Suzanne Erkel, Okinawa Street, stated she thought the Council was going to get rid of them publicizing their addresses so "their enemies could not attack their house." DeRoche responded he thought they did. Ms. Erkel pointed out that the Council still asked for people's addresses.

Ms. Erkel stated she was on the Council in 2020 and she recalled what Mr. Ehling said was correct and that was the impression Council got that the complex would get housing assistance for a percentage

of low-income people. She thought that was the whole purpose of getting the high-density housing in order to get a percentage of housing for a percentage of the residents.

Ms. Erkel indicated she was a member of the senior's group and they had regular events, such as the Senior Dance and a vendor show. She asked if it would be possible to put such information on the reader board on Highways 65 and 22. Berg noted Frost would be the one who determines if that could go on the reader board.

6.0 Consent Agenda

Item A: Approve Bills

Item B: Approve Meeting Minutes February 24, 2024 City Council Work Meeting

Item C: MCES Reserve Capacity Loan Agreement Ratification

Item D: Approve MN Lawful Gambling 2023 LG510 Report

Item E: Successful Completion of Probationary Period: Finance Coordinator

DeRoche stated I'll make a motion to approve Consent Agenda as amended. Mundle stated I'll second. Lewis asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

7.0 New Business. Commission, Association, and Task Force Reports

7.0 A Planning Commission

7.0 A.1 Variance Request – 19455 4th St NE

Berg stated this property is located in the RR Rural Residential Zoning District and is located within the Norseland Manor Subdivision. The property owner is requesting a variance for the placement of a detached accessory structure closer to the street than the primary structure, on the South side of the lot.

Berg reviewed the three-factor test for practical difficulties.

Berg indicated the Planning Commission meeting held a public hearing and after discussion recommended approval of the variance to the City Council.

Berg requested the Council review the request, consider the Planning Commission's formal recommendation, and approve the variance as presented in Resolution 2024-21.

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-21, a Resolution Granting a Variance Request for the Placement of a Structure Nearer to the Front Property Line than the Principal Structure for the Construction of a Residential Detached Accessory Structure on Property Located at 19455 4th St NE (PIN: 30-22-23-24-0016). Miller stated I'll second. Lewis asked any discussion?

Mundle asked where the structure would be placed. Miller indicated the homeowner had it staked out already on his property. Berg showed on the map where the structure was being proposed.

DeRoche indicated he had watched the Planning Commission meeting and normally he did not agree with too much; however, it came up that this met 2 of the 3 factors which he outlined. He indicated as far as he could tell, there was nothing unique about this property. Lewis noted he understood that what was unique about this property was that the house is built in the center of the lot, so the homeowner was limited where he could put the garage.

DeRoche stated that was in a definition that they needed to figure out at another time. He noted he had his reasons for thinking this way, but he was not in a position to share them at this time.

Berg stated he had prepared both an approval and a denial Resolution, but the Planning Commission had recommended approval and that was why the Council only saw the approval, but he could bring up the denial if Council wanted.

DeRoche called the question.

To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes.

Motion passes unanimously.

7.0 B Economic Development Authority

None.

7.0 C Park Commission

None.

8.0 Department Reports

8.0 A Community Development

None.

8.0 B Engineer Report

None.

8.0 C City Attorney

None.

8.0 D Finance

None.

8.0 E Public Works

None.

8.0 F Fire Department

None.

8.0 G City Administrator Report

None.

9.0 – Other Items

9.0 A Staff Report

None.

9.0 B Council Reports

Mundle stated with spring coming up he asked if Council should be setting dates for the Spring Town Hall meeting to get on the next agenda. Look responded they could set a date and time for the Town Hall at next meeting.

Mundle asked if they would start broadcasting the Work Meetings. Look responded he had spoken with all of the Councilmembers and there were three Councilmembers that liked the way that it was conducted. He indicated this was an open meeting that anyone could attend. He stated by not broadcasting the meeting, it allowed for more robust discussion that might otherwise be on a televised meeting. He noted three Councilmembers were in favor of keeping it the way it was, one was opposed, and one was indifferent. He indicated from a majority rule standpoint, they would continue to have Work Meetings as a non-televised, open to the public meeting. He noted he had also contacted surrounding cities for their procedures and the majority of them did not televise their

work meetings as it was an opportunity for the Council to talk through issues and if no decisions were made at those meetings, and if a consensus was made at the meetings, then it would go through staff to prepare a report for a future Council meeting.

Mundle stated it was his opinion that Work Meetings have always been televised and he believed the residents should be informed of the decisions Council was making and how those decisions were decided on. He noted they had previously discussed how they could improve communications better with the residents and he believed broadcasting the Council Work Meetings should be done. Lewis stated it was duly noted.

DeRoche stated there is nothing decided at Work Meetings and it was a general discussion on ideas. He indicated if there was a serious issue and decisions were going to be made based on what they did there, that would be something different but usually there is just a lot of discussion. He stated he had nothing to hide though.

Both Miller and Smith stated they liked it the way it was.

9.0 C Other

Look gave a shout out to Frost who did a fantastic job on the voting that occurred for the primary election. He indicated everything went off without a hitch and it did not go unnoticed as there was a lot of training and working with tough equipment to ensure that everything was followed.

Lewis stated Frost was a very conscientious young lady.

Mundle stated he had spoken with Frost the day before and she said that she came in at 5:30 a.m. and stayed until 10 p.m. that evening along with coming in early the following morning again so that the results could be sent in. He indicated this was a heck of an effort.

DeRoche stated the City was lucky to have Frost and she is very smart.

Look thanked Berg for testifying on behalf of the City regarding the attack of the local planning and zoning efforts made by the State in enforcing different types of zoning requirements which may or may not be consistent with what the City had.

10.0 Adjourn

DeRoche stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Miller stated I'll second. To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

Submitted by:

Kathy Altman

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.