

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

March 25, 2024

The East Bethel City Council met on March 25, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. for the regular City Council Work meeting at City Hall.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Aaron Berg, Community Development Director
 Rodney Sanow, Fire Chief

1.0 Capstone LLC Fire Department Discussion

Look introduced Jerry Streich, representative of Capstone.

Streich stated Capstone had some questions related to the Fire Department. He summarized his background and experience noting his entire career had been related to police and fire EMS, including being a Fire Chief in a St. Paul district.

Streich reviewed a slide presentation regarding the Minnesota Fire Service. He stated when he looked at East Bethel, many services were contracted out such as the law enforcement and EMC and they had no control over those service areas.

Lewis asked if right now the City had three EMTs. Sanow replied that currently the City has two paramedics, eight EMTs, and the rest of the department is EMRs. Sanow explained that with the City's medical variance from the Allina Medical Director, our EMRs can do the same thing EMTs can, including administering epi-pens, nitro, etc.

Lewis stated he was asking Streich to help the Council understand what is involved in managing a fire department.

Lewis noted the Fire Department was a large part of the City's budget and if they were supposed to do due diligence, not knowing what they were exercising due diligence over was difficult. Berg told the starfish story and the moral of the story being that they never knew when they responded to an emergency if it would make a difference to someone's life.

Lewis told of when he relied on emergency services in his own medical emergency.

Look stated if it was the consensus of the Council to proceed with an evaluation, staff would meet with Streich and put together a professional services agreement.

Streich noted he had conducted a similar survey with the City of Delano, who had a similar department as East Bethel. Lewis believed it was worth spending the funds for an evaluation to give ideas for operational improvements.

Mundle asked what would the cost be and was it capped at \$10,000. Streich responded he did not remember the scope, but it was a matter of time. He noted he would not be able to start until May and it might take 64+ hours talking to people, putting it on paper, evaluating it, creating the survey for the firefighters, etc.

Lewis stated he was in favor of this.

Miller asked if the goal at the end was something like an efficiency report which could help the Fire Department on how they could cover the residents better. Streich responded that was correct and it would address some areas that might need to be improved, but it would not be a “witch hunt.”

Miller stated he wanted to ensure the Fire Department was involved in this.

DeRoche asked what did the Chief think of this. Sanow responded that he agreed with Council that an assessment should be done, and encouraged Council to do so.

Mundle stated he wanted to see the proposal first before giving a firm commitment.

2.0 – Retail Sales in Light Industrial (not constructed on site)

Look stated someone had reached out to Berg asking if retail sales could be in a light industrial area.

Berg stated BMT Truck Lift had contacted him regarding the Code requirement that no more than 25 percent of a building in the light industrial district would be used for retail space. He indicated BMT Truck Lift wanted to sell sheds outside of the property, which the City’s Zoning Code did not allow. He noted they wanted to put the sheds in the right-away, which he informed them that the City did not own the right-away along Highway 65 and that it was owned by the State. He asked the Council if they wanted to entertain this idea, or if he would contact BMT Truck Lift and inform them this was not allowed.

Mundle stated he would not support this request. He indicated the Code was there for a reason and either the City follows it, or they ignore it. Look noted there was a process to change the Code if the Council wanted.

Mundle reiterated he would not support this.

Smith stated he was not against this. He noted businesses needed to flourish and if it helped this business, he might support it.

Lewis believed Council had not been given enough information to make a decision.

DeRoche stated they had to be careful just because somebody makes a request, does not mean the zoning should be changed or they would continually be changing it. He agreed the Council needed more information.

Lewis stated he did not have enough information to make an informed decision. He indicated his initial reaction was to try to keep some conformity with the Code as that was the purpose of the Code. He noted the sale of sheds was a completely different business than what BMT Truck Lift’s current business was.

Berg stated he needed to know what direction the Council was going if this was to be pursued. Lewis stated he needed more information, but if he wanted an answer right now, he was not interested. He expressed concern that this would start a “junkie” look.

Berg noted if he told them no, they could appeal it and the Council would hear it anyway, so if he could tell them that the Council was not in support that would make an easy answer.

Mundle responded based on the information given, he was not in support. DeRoche agreed.

Look stated the Council's consensus was that it would not be supported.

3.0 – Legislative Priorities

3.0A State Allocation for Hwy 65/Co Rd 22 Study Dollars

3.0B State Bonding Request

3.0C Federal Earmark

These topics were not discussed.

4.0 – Mobile Home Park Expansion & Utilities Connections

4.0A Wastewater Decommissioning

4.0B Verification and Certification of System

4.0C Non-Conforming Ordinance

These topics were not discussed.

5.0 – Business Registry vs. Business Licensing

Topic not discussed.

6.0 – Architectural Standards

Topic not discussed.

7.0 – Barndominiums

Topic not discussed.

8.0 – Rent Control Proposal

Topic not discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kathy Altman

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.