

# EAST BETHEL TOWN HALL MEETING

November 20, 2024

The East Bethel City Council met on November 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. for a Town Hall meeting at City Hall.

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

ALSO PRESENT:           Matt Look, City Administrator  
                                  Rodney Sanow, Fire Chief  
                                  Aaron Berg, Community Development Director  
                                  Nate Ayshford, Public Works Manager  
                                  Mike Jeziorski, Deputy City Administrator/Finance Director  
                                  Carrie Frost, Administrative Coordinator  
                                  Lieutenant Derrick Peterson, Anoka County Sheriff's Office

## 1.0 – Call to Order

The November 20, 2024, Town Hall meeting was called to order by Mayor Lewis at 6:00 p.m.

## Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## 2.0 – Informal Session in the Senior Center with Council, Guests, and Staff – East Bethel Senior Center

## 3.0 – General Question and Answer Session – City Council Chambers

Peggy Scott stated that the legislative session is beginning January 14, 2025. Ms. Scott stated that with the division in the House of Representatives, they are still determining how the division of power will work.

Suzanne Erkel asked about the increase in tax statements and suggested the City place the resolution steps in the newsletter so residents have more information.

Mary Wells asked Mayor Lewis if he had ideas for property owners who live on lakes that pay the highest property taxes. She stated she is a proponent of organized garbage hauling, and hoped there would be some open-mindedness on the Council to consider this and thought this would be an area for tax savings. She stated that living on a cul-de-sac, the number of trucks that come up and down the roads is ridiculous. She stated that she was shocked about the salary that was paid for the new City Administrator.

Lewis stated that he has a Citywide perspective and the specific ideas he would have included not hiring people who are not needed and not giving them big raises. He stated that they must run the government efficiently, not like a home budget or business.

Brian Bezanson stated that Lewis should do more investigation on Thomas Paine and where he ended up and how everything worked out for him.

DeRoche asked what Look knows about the regional park the County wants to put in at the east end. He stated that the taxes will really go up then likely.

Look stated that there was an effort to purchase land over there to expand the park, but the effort failed and he has not heard anything further on that topic since. He stated that a lot of the funding

for the County parks comes from the Met Council, and they run a 'tight ship' over there in regard to dollars.

Lewis stated that a big driver for the City level has been the Anoka County Sheriff's Department.

Look noted that the Council has been advocating for increasing commercial development along Highway 65. He stated that a new business park area has been passed, where, eventually, there will be commercial/industrial development going in there.

Lewis indicated that there was a study done of the dollars generated in property taxes from residential vs commercial. He stated the fact of the matter is that residential properties are losers from a municipal government point of view, as they demand more in services than they provide in taxes, whereas commercial properties are the opposite.

Lewis stated that when he ran for City Council, the tagline on his sign was "Freedom" because he heard from people that the City was overbearing in terms of zoning enforcement. He stated that their approach has been that zoning enforcement is driven by the complaint process of the adjacent property owners because they are most likely to be impacted.

Lewis stated that if the people who are adjacent to the property do not have a problem with the proposal, then why should the City have a problem with it as long as it does not impact public health and safety.

Suzanne Erkel reminded that the Christmas Tree lighting is taking place on December 6, 2024. She stated there will be Santa, face painting, cookies, hot chocolate, and more.

Look stated the Truth in Taxation meeting is scheduled for the December 9, 2024, City Council meeting.

Miller stated that they have a new County Assessor and he is willing to sit down and talk to residents and he knows his stuff.

Mary Wells asked how much election fraud was found at the County level.

Lewis stated that the post-election review was already completed. He stated that the fraud would be found before it got to the machines.

Look stated that he had heard that there were a couple of discrepancies but not many.

Brian Bezanson stated that he does not think any of them have been election judges before. All the Council members stated that they never had been. Bezanson stated that it would really open their eyes up.

#### 4.0 – Adjourn

**DeRoche stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Mundle 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.**

Town Hall Meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*