

# EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

February 10, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on February 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. for the regular City Council meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT:           Ardie Anderson           Suzanne Erkel           Tim Miller  
  Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT:               Matt Look, City Administrator  
   Eric Larson, City Attorney  
   Kendra Lindahl, Interim City Planner/Community Development Director

## 1.0 Call to Order

The February 10, 2025, City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 7:00 p.m.

## 2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## 3.0 Adopt Agenda

**Smith stated I'll make a motion to adopt tonight's agenda with an addition of Appointment of EDA Members under "Other". Miller stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

## 4.0 Presentations and Public Hearings

None.

## 5.0 Public Forum

None.

## 6.0 Consent Agenda

Item A: Approve Bill List

Item B: ~~Approve Meeting Minutes January 27, 2025 City Council Meeting~~

Item C: ~~Approve the Hire of City Planner~~

Item D: Approve the Advertisement for Public Works Seasonal Employees

Item E: 2025 SafeAssure Contract Renewal

Erkel requested to pull Item C. Smith requested to pull Item B.

**Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Consent Agenda as amended. Smith stated I'll second.**

Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

### 6.0 B Approve Meeting Minutes January 27, 2025 City Council Meeting

Smith stated that the minutes lack complete accuracy, and he will get information to Look to correct them.

**Smith stated I'll make a motion to table Item B of the Consent Agenda. Erkel stated I'll second.**

Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

### 6.0 C Approve the Hire of City Planner

1 Erkel stated that she is very excited about the new City Planner. Erkel also asked where that puts  
2 Landform now that there has been a City Planner hired. Look stated that they will utilize Landform to  
3 train her and then they can use Landform on an as-needed basis to assist or help out.

4 Erkel asked how long it should take to train the new City Planner. Lindahl stated that she thinks it will  
5 be a transition period of about 3-6 months, and they will be here to support her and teach her.

6 Erkel stated that it seems extravagant to have hired someone without any experience at a \$29/hour  
7 pay rate and that it does not seem like a good expenditure of their money. Look stated that the  
8 market is very tight out there, and they are very fortunate to have found someone who also has  
9 knowledge of the area.

10 Look stated that the schools do not seem to be turning out students who desire to be city planners at  
11 a rate at which they are needed, so it makes the people who are good and have a willingness to learn  
12 hot commodities.

13 Erkel asked if they have gotten any applications for the Community Development Director. Look  
14 stated that they have received 2 applications, and they are still working on filtering through those.

15 Erkel asked if they would be working 20 hours/week. Lindahl stated that it depends on how many  
16 applications they receive, and time will decrease as she picks things up.

17 **Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Item C of the Consent Agenda. Miller stated I'll second.**

18 Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any  
19 opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

## 20 **7.0 New Business. Commission, Association, and Task Force Reports**

21 No reports given

## 22 **8.0 Department Reports**

### 23 **8.0 A Community Development**

#### 24 **8.0 A.1 Barndominiums: City Code Revision**

25 Lindahl presented information regarding considering an Ordinance amendment to address  
26 "barndominiums" in East Bethel and stated that the City will need to create a definition that clearly  
27 defines the use.

28 Smith asked for clarification that the City does not allow steel siding. Lindahl stated that they do not  
29 allow it on single-family homes.

30 Lindahl asked the Council for direction regarding what is a barndominium, whether there should be a  
31 limit to the size of the accessory square footage, whether there should be architectural standards  
32 that are different than the traditional residential single-family home standards, and whether there  
33 are any concerns about them being primarily used for business operations.

34 Look stated that they struggle sometimes with home occupations that are not licensed. Look stated  
35 that he personally likes home occupations, but they are required to be licensed in this City.

36 Anderson asked if in the Code it says that if you have an attached garage, it cannot be bigger than the  
37 house itself. Lindahl stated that they have a minimum garage size but not a maximum.

38 Erkel asked if people would have an additional residence in addition to the barndominium or if this  
39 would be their primary residence and garage. Lindahl stated that this is like a single-family residence  
40 that adds on a much larger two-car garage.

1 Look stated that size and location would be considerations, but in the rural residential it may be a  
2 great fit out there.

3 Miller stated that the original notes on this discussion were for rural residential and/or ag with 2.5-3+  
4 acres. Erkel stated even 1.5+ acres could be used to allow for people who have just shy of 2 acres.

5 Smith stated that they were looking at this too to try and make it more affordable versus stick build  
6 and open up opportunities for residents to come here.

7 Lindahl stated that 2 acres is the minimum lot size in the rural residential and ag districts. Lindahl  
8 stated it would be nice to clean up a couple of inconsistencies in the accessory space.

9 Lindahl added that they do not currently have a maximum garage space for an attached garage and  
10 asked if that is something they would like to have.

11 Erkel stated that she does not mind the steel siding, she just does not want it to look like steel siding  
12 and should resemble a private dwelling rather than a pole barn.

13 Miller stated that with the advancements in what they have for steel siding, it is pretty heavy-duty  
14 stuff that does not need to be painted and is a lot better than putting something like vinyl. Miller  
15 added that it is more affordable for residents and will last longer.

16 Lindahl asked if the Council would like her to bring some information back to present before having a  
17 public hearing. Erkel asked if they could get it before the packet gets sent out so they can review it  
18 before the meeting.

19 Look stated that no decision is needed tonight, they are just looking for feedback.

20 Lindahl gave a brief summary of what was discussed, including general support for establishing  
21 standards for barndominiums, looking at minimum standards for higher quality steel siding, not a lot  
22 of concerns with size but will be compared to other accessory structures in the Ordinance.

23 Miller just asked that it not stalled out for another year. Lindahl stated they would be back next  
24 month with a draft.

25 **8.0 B Engineer Report**

26 None.

27 **8.0 C City Attorney**

28 None.

29 **8.0 D Finance**

30 None.

31 **8.0 E Public Works**

32 None.

33 **8.0 F Fire Department**

34 None.

35 **8.0 G City Administrator Report**

36 **8.0 G.1 Comcast Right-of-Way Agreement**

37 Look stated that they needed to put together a Right-of-Way agreement due to Comcast providing  
38 service to Elevage in their right-of-way. Look presented the final agreement that was agreed to by  
39 Comcast, and the Attorneys gave their oversight.

1 Larson stated that East Bethel has a Cable Franchise type of governance that dates back to the 1970s.  
2 Larson stated that the State and local have been looking at how to realign their code, structures, and  
3 agreements for particular private utilities to use the public right-of-way.

4 Larson stated that this is not a cable franchise so a franchise agreement cannot be imposed upon  
5 them, but the City's right-of-way has a fee permit of \$300. Larson stated that a right-of-way  
6 agreement needs to be put together.

7 Larson stated that they took a right-of-way agreement from the City of Wayzata and took out  
8 anything that is going to be an easement, put a term limitation on it, added that they pay the City's  
9 legal and professional fees, a \$5,000 permit, fee plus \$5000 per year thereafter with 5% annual  
10 increase. Locations must work within the right-of-way and in conjunction with public utilities, and if  
11 relocation for Comcast facilities is needed, it will be a Comcast expense, and have adequate security.

12 Larson thinks they have an excellent right-of-way agreement that is a win-win for this development,  
13 the City, and Comcast and recommends approval.

14 Miller thanked Larson for the work they put into this agreement and it is clear they worked hard to  
15 put the City first.

16 **Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve the Comcast Right-of-Way Agreement. Miller stated I'll**  
17 **second.** Anderson asked any discussion?

18 Erkel asked if Comcast can only go in the area where Elevage is or if it will be expanded to where the  
19 businesses are. Larson stated that it is limited to the map with respect to the City's rights-of-way; if  
20 they are able to go across private property, that is fine, but they cannot use any other City's rights-of-  
21 way that are not included in the map.

22 Erkel asked why they chose Wayzata for the agreement. Larson stated that he asked Comcast for  
23 their best agreement, and they chose Wayzata.

24 Smith asked if there would be a separate new right-of-way for Viking Meadows. Larson stated that if  
25 they use Midco, it covers cable and internet, but if they use Comcast or another company, then they  
26 could see another right-of-way agreement for such use.

27 Larson stated that this is about looking at private utility use of their right-of-way and having control  
28 and making sure that there is a fair level playing field wanting to provide the most robust services to  
29 their residents.

30 Erkel asked how long the contract is for. Larson stated that it is for 8 years.

31 Larson stated that if there is not a notice within 90 days of termination from either party, it would  
32 renew for another year. Larson stated that the 5% annual increase would kick in until it is  
33 renegotiated or terminated.

34 Erkel asked if Comcast would be using fiber optic cables or what would be used. Larson stated that it  
35 is all below-ground cable and assumes that it is fiber optic.

36 Miller asked if the renewal for each year is \$5000 plus the 5%. Larson stated that is correct.

37 Anderson asked if, in the 3+ miles of right-of-way, anyone along there can tap into Comcast. Larson  
38 stated that they would have to work out their deal individually with Comcast to run the line from the  
39 right-of-way to their house.

40 To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes.  
41 **Motion passes unanimously.**

1 **9.0 – Other Items**

2 **9.0 A Staff Report**

3 Look updated that the legislature is in session, and they have 2 bills being drafted at the moment.

4 Look stated that he is being told that there is a ceiling to the amount of bonding that can take place  
5 this year, the ceiling is established based on future projections of taxes coming in and the capacity  
6 there is.

7 Look stated that they are saying it is about a \$700 million ceiling and of that the roads will be a main  
8 share of that, and other projects play second to roads.

9 Look stated that in regard to the clean water project on Sims and 65, clean water projects always play  
10 well with the State.

11 **9.0 B Council Reports**

12 Erkel stated that she attended the local officials meeting about a week ago, and Look's name came up  
13 regarding the State's unfunded mandates. Erkel stated that they discussed voting, the voting process,  
14 and where it is secure and not secure.

15 **9.0 C Other**

16 Look stated that at the work session earlier this evening, the 2 vacancies on the EDA and transitioning  
17 the EDA over to elected officials were discussed, and there was a consensus to transition membership  
18 over the elected officials. Look stated that there needs to be a motion for that transition and to  
19 declare vacancies for 2 positions on the EDA.

20 Erkel asked for clarification on the members of the EDA. Larson stated that he can work with the City  
21 Administrator to bring the action item steps to the Council as soon as possible.

22 Look stated that he believes there needs to be 2 vacancies declared at this point and then the process  
23 of transitioning can take place.

24 Larson stated that vacancies do not have to be declared as soon as they are vacant, so that can be  
25 deferred to another future meeting if desired.

26 **Smith stated I'll make a motion to direct staff and City Attorney to draft necessary documents and**  
27 **declare 2 vacancies on the EDA. Miller stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion? To the  
28 motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion**  
29 **passes unanimously.**

30 **10.0 Adjourn**

31 **Erkel stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Smith stated I'll second.** To the motion, all in favor say  
32 aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

33 Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

34 Submitted by:

35 Lilian Rokosz

36 *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*