

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

April 14, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on April 14, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. for the regular City Council meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ardie Anderson Suzanne Erkel Brian Mundle
 Tim Miller Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Eric Larson, City Attorney

1.0 Call to Order

The April 14, 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

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt tonight's 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.**

4.0 Presentations and Public Hearings

4.0 A Public Hearing: Resolution 2025-21, EDA Appointments

Larson stated that he recommends having the public hearing tonight and continuing it on until the first meeting in May, at which point they can close the public hearing and adopt the enabling resolution.

Erkel asked why it could not be April 28, 2025, until the first meeting in May. Larson stated that there has to be a 14-day notice, and the notice will not be able to get out until April 25, 2025.

Look stated that the current EDA board has 7 members, 2 Councilmembers, and 5 appointed residents with varying terms. Look stated that the transition to having the EDA composed of the 5 Councilmembers could take place in the future, but the current members would run the remainder of their term, and when they were up for renewal, a Councilmember would be appointed instead.

Anderson opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Anderson read aloud a letter received from Brian Bezanson, a member of the EDA, which stated that he is offended that the citizen EDA membership is being terminated and thinks that the decision, and not letting the EDA know about this change, is not an open and transparent government.

Rita Biljan, stated that if there are citizens who want to be on the Authorities or Council, they shouldn't be precluded from doing that

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to suspend and continue the public hearing until the May 12, 2025, City Council meeting. 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.**

Mundle asked why they are doing this.

Erkel stated that she was on the EDA for over a year, and it seemed to be ineffective and cost the City more money.

Look stated that there were only 3 meetings scheduled in the previous year because he would only schedule meetings when there was something important that needed to be discussed. Look stated that it could be very interesting to start a Business Advisory Council where they have prominent business members in the community who have good ideas on how to improve things in the City.

Miller stated that there was no public forum before the current Council members were councilmembers, over two years ago, and the three minutes that the residents now get in the public forum have given them more than the EDA has.

Mundle stated that the public forum is a very different avenue for addressing the Council and expressing ideas.

5.0 Public Forum

Sarah McLoughlin stated that the known drug house, which is her neighbor, has been inhabited by people other than the owner while he has been incarcerated, and they have completely ruined her neighborhood. Ms. McLoughlin stated that at the September 9 and 23, 2025, City Council meetings, the City stated that they would figure out what could be done, and now it has been 6 months, and nothing has been done.

Look stated that since the September City Council meetings, they have had a staff meeting, and until they are breaking laws, law enforcement cannot move in.

Ms. Loughlin stated that the owner has not been allowed back to his house in the last 8 months for fear of reincarceration, and the people living there now were not allowed to live there by the owner. Ms. Loughlin stated that she and her husband received a threat from a woman who is staying there, and they do not feel safe in their own neighborhood or the nearby park, due to the drug addicts who meet in the parking lot.

Mundle recommended that Ms. McLoughlin set up a time to meet with the City Administrator to present all this new information and discuss details.

6.0 Consent Agenda

Item A: Approve Bill List

Item B: Approve Meeting Minutes March 24, 2025 City Council Meeting

Item C: Approve Hire of Seasonal Maintenance Public Works Employees

Item D: Accept the Resignation of a Paid On-Call Fire Fighter

Item E: Approve Flooring Replacement at Fire Station 1

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve Consent Agenda as presented. 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.

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

7.0 A Planning Commission

7.0 A.1 Site Plan and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a second building at 18750 Ulysses St. NE

Zeke Peters stated the City received an application for a Site Plan and Conditional Use permit for a second building on one lot, located at 18750 Ulysses St NE. The parcel is guided Light Industrial and zoned I- Light Industrial. Peters noted that the applicant provided revised plans to address the ordinance requirement regarding screening.

Peters stated that the Site Plan and Conditional Use Permit for a second building on one lot requests meet the standards in the Code and is generally consistent with the concept plan previously reviewed by the City.

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-xx, approving the request for site plan and conditional use permit for the construction of a second building for a lot located at 18750 Ulysses Street NE. Erkel stated I'll second. Anderson asked any discussion?

Erkel asked what would be going on in the building. Curt Strandlund stated that the building is intended to be a lease space for other tenants.

To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson 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

8.0 A.1 Draft Ordinance Amendment – Barndominiums

Peters stated the main question for discussion is whether the Council wants to require Short Wall Foundation for barndominiums or if they want to allow post frame with post in ground and post frame with concrete pier foundations as well.

Peters noted that the Council should discuss and provide direction to staff, so that the amendment can be scheduled for a Public Hearing at the Planning Commission and Council action at an upcoming meeting.

Mundle stated that he likes the short wall foundation but may be okay with a post-frame with a concrete pier if there has been structural engineering done on it.

Erkel stated that she would be okay with all 3 foundation types but thinks it should depend on what the use of the building will be and what the structural engineer recommends.

Smith stated that post frame with concrete pier would be fine.

Erkel asked if variances would be allowed for a resident trying build a barndominium that does not fit in the ordinance. Look stated that a variance would be required.

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

8.0 G.1 Approve Resolution 2025-20, amending the enabling EDA resolution

Continued to the May 12, 2025, City Council Meeting.

8.0 G.2 Approve Resolution 2025-21, declaring vacancies and appointing new commissioners

Continued to the May 12, 2025, City Council Meeting.

9.0 Other Items

9.0 A Staff Report

Look stated the security system has been fully implemented into their facilities.

Look stated that *Business View Magazine* did an article on East Bethel last year. They promoted some of the values that they have in the City, and won a Best Managed City Award in 2024.

9.0 B Council Reports

Smith stated that he received an email from Petra Fager, whom they approved an IUP for grazing sheep, stating that she paid the \$300 application fee, and then she also received another bill in the mail for \$1,367. Smith stated that for a resident to come to the City and ask questions, why should there be a double bill, especially when she was not aware of it.

Smith recommended that Petra Fager should not be responsible for paying the \$1,367.

Look stated that in this case, the City Code requires them to go through the process of an IUP, which had many hours and resources involved. Look stated that the Council can choose to absorb this cost.

Erkel stated I'll make a motion to limit the resident, Petra Fager, to only pay the \$300 IUP fee. 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.**

Smith invited the Fire Department personnel to their Town Hall Meeting on April 24, 2025.

Jerry Streich stated that the Fire Code is much more authoritative for health and safety and does not require a warrant.

Streich stated that there have been numerous grass fires in the area recently, but the crew has been doing an incredible job. Streich asked the community to be more diligent with their recreational fires, and if they feel like it is dry, then fires should not be started.

Streich also noted that even though some fires may be accidents, residents can be held responsible for fires that damage homes and other things.

Streich stated that it was Severe Weather Week last week, and the sirens act as a reminder to the community on what should be done if an emergency occurs.

Streich stated that they have been busy at the stations and inventorying all the radios and other assets. Streich noted that they also created a list for the new Fire Chief to use as a tool to improve other areas as needed.

Streich stated that he is working on branding and cleaning up the social media and any misinformation that is out there. Streich noted that he has been messaging people who have posted negative posts regarding the Fire Department and is working to get more positive information out there.

Streich stated that they have an Information Session at 6:30 p.m. on April 24, 2025, at Station 1. At the session, they will be sharing more information on what the Fire Department does and how to become a part of it.

Streich updated that the new Chief process is currently in order, and they will meet this week regarding the candidates and hope to have the new Chief in position by the middle of May.

Streich asked to reduce his hours and the cost because he is not needed at the Station as much as was anticipated, but he will still be around whenever needed.

Streich noted that they will host various Learn and Lunch events to teach numerous things around the station.

Smith thanked Streich for the way things seem to be going and for his hard work.

Erkel asked when the interviews would start. Look stated they will be getting started in the next few days, and they will follow the process from there.

Mundle stated that at the Sunrise River meeting, the budget got passed by all 4 cities, and the Joint Powers Agreement for the 10-year plan was rejected by 1 city, so there will be no change to that JPA for management vs. non-management cost.

Mundle noted that there will be a Booster Day meeting on April 16, 2025, at 6:30 and they are always looking for volunteers.

Erkel asked when the new Community Development Manager would begin coming to the meetings. Look updated that she will be presenting at the next meeting.

Erkel suggested putting East Bethel news in the newsletter that she received at the East Bethel Chamber meeting, rather than putting all the money into the newsletter that the City tries to put out quarterly. Anderson added that it covers the St. Francis school district area.

Miller stated that he attended the 911 opening near the Anoka County Sheriff's Department, and it was very impressive and well organized.

9.0 C Other

None.

10.0 Adjourn

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.