

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

June 23, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on June 23, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. for the regular City Council Work meeting at City Hall.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Jacob Saufley, City Attorney

1.0 – Complaints Submitted

Look noted that they want to have a process for vetting complaints to determine if they are valid or not, and so that the complaints are considered and not just filed.

Look noted that they received two complaints; one naming Mayor Anderson and one naming City Administrator Look.

Look noted that the first complaint was submitted on June 9, 2025, naming Look, and he discussed the nature of the complaint, withholding information. Look presented all the different information that he discussed at the June 9, 2025, meeting and stated that he presented everything they have on the matter and nothing was withheld.

Erkel asked if someone from the City tells the owner that they need another IUP to cover animal control, so it is not stacking. Look stated that City Code does not specify if it is animal control horse or not; it just states a number of horses. Look noted that the 6-horse IUP expired because it was not renewed, and the 2-horse IUP is the only current IUP.

Mundle asked what other information the applicant who made the complaint was saying that was not provided. Look presented the complaint again and said that he is unsure.

Mundle asked what information was left out and can that be provided. Look stated that if the applicant who made the complaint had other information, it probably would have come forward.

Anderson stated that the complaint is vague, and it should have been clearer what information was withheld.

Mundle asked that any information that was withheld be provided to the City. Look stated that the applicant who made the complaint can bring any information they have, but the City does not have any further information.

Anderson stated that he does not see anything misleading about the information provided by Look. Anderson stated that he thinks this should be dismissed.

Mundle suggested keeping this open until the next meeting to give the applicant the chance to present further information.

Saufley stated that it is too late to issue a reconsideration on the IUP. Saufley noted that a future IUP would be based on a new application and would be independent of the history of the prior application.

Mundle asked what happens if they dismiss the complaint or table it. Saufley stated that if it is dismissed, the applicant would have to file a new complaint.

Erkel stated that she would like to see the specific information discussed in the complaint that was supposedly withheld.

The Council agreed to table this complaint to see if any new information comes forward.

Look noted that the second complaint was also submitted on June 9, 2025, naming Anderson and discussed the nature of the complaint, failure to adhere to *Robert's Rules of Order*. Look presented and discussed *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Anderson stated that *Robert's Rules of Order* are guidelines, but the City's rules supersede those rules.

Mundle stated that he thinks this complaint is also vague, and he would like to know what actions the Mayor took that violated *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Look stated that they look at what was written and see if the complaint is legitimate, and if it is not, it is dismissed.

Erkel stated that she got public feedback that their problem was that some people got more time to speak than others at the Public Forum. Look noted that the complaint is regarding running a meeting.

Mundle stated that they could dismiss it, but encourage the applicant who made the complaint to resubmit with specified information.

Saufley stated that he is reluctant to set a pattern of leaving things open until they are conclusively closed.

Mundle asked if the applicant has the opportunity to submit another complaint if this is dismissed. Saufley stated that the complainant always has the ability to lodge a complaint.

The Council reached a consensus to dismiss this complaint.

2.0 – Public Forum Rules

Look presented the rules of conduct that are practiced in East Bethel regarding Public Forum. Look noted that they want to review the rules and see if there are any additions or subtractions that should be made.

Look asked if there are any changes that should be made. Miller stated that rule #3, regarding the 3-minute time limit, is not being enforced. Anderson stated that he will set a timer and warn the speaker when they have 30 seconds remaining.

3.0 – Whispering Aspen Discussion

Mundle stated that he will be abstaining from this discussion and stepped down from the Council dais.

Look noted that this is brought back to bring some kind of finality to it, to avoid it getting postponed further.

Look stated that the contract omits some information and is clear with other information. Look noted that two letters were sent out to BDM Construction, one concerning the road deficiency amount and one concerning the operating cost of the facility.

Look noted that the letter came to an amount of \$450 per month for rent to cover all the expenses.

Look noted that their two options are legal, which will be more expensive, or an agreement to cover some of the operating costs.

Anderson stated that they have a number of issues, the roads, rental, etc., and each needs to be tackled individually. Anderson also asked if this would break the contract. Look noted that the contract does not speak to commentary maintenance.

Look stated that as of this year, BDM Construction paid their property taxes, but had not been paying for the other years since this contract was created.

Look noted that there are a lot of different options and hopes that people can settle on the path of least resistance so they can move forward.

Anderson asked if they have brought this to the League. Look stated that they have not, because the League is generally a defensive scenario.

Saufley stated that he can look into it and understands that the League typically handles more traditional tort liability claims, but that does not mean that they won't cover a contractual liability claim.

Erkel stated that she met with Mundle Sr., and he thinks that he is doing everything right. Erkel stated that they need to figure out the interest owed to Mundle Sr.

Miller stated that he does not think that taxpayer dollars should have ever been used to pay utilities for this site for 21 years. Miller stated that the City is losing money, and it is unheard of for a development to be going on for 21 years.

Miller stated that the taxpayers deserve better than this. Miller stated that a business that has been given free rent for 21 years and has not paid utilities is going to fight legally, which is unheard of.

Smith stated that he agrees with everything that Miller stated.

Miller stated that he would like to find something that is fair; they are not trying to attack BDM, they are just trying to prevent things from happening to City funds.

Miller stated that it is not abstaining to okay bills to be paid for their own family business. Miller stated that they have to be fair and honor older City commitments that have been made.

Miller stated that this is not an attack; it is preventative. Anderson suggested that they sit down with BDM one last time to see if they can hash things out to get to a happy medium. Miller stated that he has no problem with that.

Mundle Sr. stated that if they are going to do that, then he would like Anderson and Erkel to be the two Council people present at the discussion.

Erkel proposed that it be a closed session type of event, and they need all opinions to hear what they have to say. Saufley stated this does not fall within the category of closed meetings for the purpose of a negotiation for purchase or sale or real estate and whether or not it meets the requirements for the litigation exception for pending or threatened litigation is a judgment call that we can look into further.

Look stated that he will research who can be present at that meeting.

4.0 – Crime-Free Community Ordinance

Look stated that they have a nuisance ordinance, but a crime-free ordinance would give the City more teeth to be able to handle problematic properties. Look asked if they wanted to go down the road to create this kind of ordinance.

Look noted that there are risks to ordinances like this, that it could produce lawsuits or legal challenges. Look noted that these cases are limited in scope, and the need may not be here quite yet.

Look noted that they are a complaint-based City.

Erkel stated that she does not want to impede the freedom of the residents, so the ordinance would have to be very specific.

Anderson asked if they could see Coon Rapids' Crime-Free Ordinance and talk to them about how often they use it and discuss further from there.

Smith stated that professionals need to handle these issues because there are certain laws and rules in place. Anderson stated that he agrees, but this was brought up to move it along further.

Look noted that they can get reach out to Coon Rapids and get their take on the ordinance and he can also dig into the League's work on this and go from there.

5.0 – Adjourn

Work Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.