

City of Excelsior  
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES  
EXCELSIOR CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL WORK SESSION

September 21, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Gaylord called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Beattie, Miller, Caron, Carlson, and Mayor Gaylord

Absent: City Manager Luger

Also Present: City Planner Pat Smith, City Planner Scott Richards, and City Clerk Orlofsky

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Caron moved, Beattie seconded, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5/0.

3. JOINT MEETING WITH THE EXCELSIOR-LAKE MINNETONKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Laura Hotvet, Chamber Executive Director from the Excelsior – Lake Minnetonka Chamber Commerce opened the meeting with introductions of the Chamber and Council. Ms. Hotvet explained that the purpose of the Chamber calling this meeting was to try and coordinate with the City for the upcoming Open House on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Ms. Hotvet, discussed that parking was an issue that the Chamber wanted to discuss with the City. She stated that the retailers have pushed back on adding more parking meters, they are concerned there will be a negative impact on shopping.

City Planner Richards, added that the City had discussion on the parking meters and at this time they are only looking at replacing what currently exists.

Miller added that he would like to see the City look at adding more parking meters in the future as a way to help generate more revenue to help cover costs for public improvements.

Joe Schwartz, Chamber President, asked if the City has seen what sort of revenue that may bring in for the City.

City Planner Richards, added that the City has generated revenue numbers and that it proved to be beneficial for the City.

Mr. Schwartz added that one of the benefits of the parking meters is that they can be free for certain hours and seasons. Allowing relief for the downtown businesses when needed.

3. JOINT MEETING WITH THE EXCELSIOR-LAKE MINNETONKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
- Continued  
The Council agreed.

Aaron Thompson, Chamber Board Member, added that Grand Avenue is currently doing a pilot project with metering the streets and he asked that the City reach out to St. Paul and perhaps we can learn from them.

Miller, suggested that he hoped the City would start out on the fringe, as we add more meters.

Mr. Thompson replied that he hopes the City is careful as they add meters. If the free parking is only on Water Street, it will inundate the businesses with that problem.

Michael Sluis, Chamber Treasurer, added that the City also should be careful not to push people out into the residential neighborhoods to search for free parking.

Beattie explained that the City's resources are tapped and the City needs to look for other sources of revenue to help fund the public improvements; the added revenue from parking meters and the idea of the general sales tax are ways the City hopes to do that.

Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Wolfson, commented that they feel the Chamber membership is less concerned about the general sales tax, but that they would add that discussion to a future Board Meeting. Mr. Schwartz also added that the Chamber would not mind seeing a spike in parking fees during the high peak traffic.

Mayor Gaylord explained the hurdle with the sales tax is to get it approved from our local Senator and Representative and both are currently opposed to the tax, so it will take some convincing.

Beattie suggested that we should integrate the Senator and Representative into the Open House that we have. He feels it would be beneficial for them to hear from the businesses that they support the local sales tax.

Mr. Wolfson explained that The Chamber's resources are also tapped. The Chamber does not have a lot of opportunity to raise funds and they would like the opportunity to offer the tourism tax.

Caron said that she thought the Council would support the lodging tax, however; Excelsior does not currently have a hotel. Caron added that it would be an easier task than adding the local sales tax.

Ms. Hotvet asked if the City would consider the lodging tax. Council agreed they could support that.

Beattie added to Caron's comments that the current politics do not favor the local sales tax increase in the future. Beattie stated that it would make a big difference if the business community came forward and supported the local sales tax increase.

3. JOINT MEETING WITH THE EXCELSIOR-LAKE MINNETONKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
- Continued

Miller added that the City took the first step and got it approved by the last Election in 2014.

Beattie feels the addition of the general sales tax would really be the best way to generate more revenue to help the City with capital improvements.

Mr. Schwartz added that the Open House would be a favorable place to discuss the sales tax with the Senator and Representative.

The Council agreed and Caron added that we needed to start educating all the member businesses.

Caron suggested that the Chamber can explain the direct benefits to the member businesses, such as new flower pots, and streetscape improvements.

Miller added that it is also important to explain that the member businesses may still pay for these improvements as they come, but it will be cheaper if the price of those improvements are not in the form of the levy.

Mr. Schwartz, asked if there were any improvements that could be tested with the current budget.

Caron responded that the City has not currently tested that but that they would be adding some additional parking on Beehrle Avenue.

The Mayor added that he believed that some of the parking on Beehrle Avenue was reserved for bus parking.

Caron added that the City does not have a parking problem, they have a high demand for parking. She thought the City and businesses should be advertising "Come early and reserve your spot." Caron also feels that the City could do a better job signing where the current free parking is to help educate our visitors.

Planner Smith added that the Chamber really needs to take the time to educate the member businesses before the Open House occurs.

Caron suggested that if the Chamber does not feel that they have time to educate the member businesses that they should wait for another Open House to bring the sales tax forward to the Senator and Representative; as it will be critical to have the full support of the Chamber.

Miller asked that staff provide the Chamber with the information that was pulled together in support of the the sales tax increase.

Ms. Hotvet asked that a Council Member try to attend a Chamber Board meeting to present this information to the Board.

3. JOINT MEETING WITH THE EXCELSIOR-LAKE MINNETONKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
- Continued

Beattie suggested that the City and Chamber should plan for a future open house.

Caron added that if there is any information for the Council in regards to the Parking Plan that the Chamber should get that to the Council as soon as possible.

RYDER CUP

Ms. Hotvet explained that the PGA will not support a specific community event for the Ryder Cup. Each City will have to submit their destination/marketing plan for the Ryder Cup Events and the Chamber is putting together a plan for that.

The City Council complimented the Chamber on the organization of Apple Day, 2015. Caron thought that the parking and music was handled very well.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Carlson moved, Caron seconded, to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Orlofsky  
City Clerk