

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES
EXCELSIOR CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, November 4, 2013

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Gaylord called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

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

Also Present: Interim City Manager Johnson, City Planner Richards, and Public Works Superintendent Wisdorf

2. Agenda Approval

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

3. Retail and Restaurant Mix

Caron said Excelsior has a small downtown and business community that has experienced a lot of growth over the past 10 years. Most business communities have a design of what they want their business community to look like. How can a community figure out if the retail/restaurant mix is the correct mix? The City doesn't want to control business, but there is also a limited ability to expand. If there ends up being too many restaurants, this creates a problem for the business community. Richards said that this is difficult to determine; there is not a magical formula that can be used to make that determination.

Caron said that she had had wanted to put a restaurant in the old Knapp building, but now she is reconsidering this because so many new restaurants have opened up. If there are property owners that are concerned with the number of restaurants, maybe the Council needs to look at this.

Caron said that members of the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Chamber Board are looking at what kinds of businesses to attract and to find businesses for the open spaces. The discussion on restaurant/retail mix has come up and she thought this was something that the Council should talk about.

Richards said it is hard to control the restaurant/retail mix through zoning. The City can handle this by building controls through the liquor licensing. If the City sees prime spaces being filled up with restaurants or a lot of longterm businesses going out and restaurants going in, this might be an indicator that there may be too many restaurants. He noted that staff gets a lot of calls about restaurants, but many decide not to go that route when they hear about the parking impact fee.

Mayor Gaylord asked if the City has an inventory of the restaurant/retail that is in the City right now. Richards said there are some lists from earlier years, but those are outdated.

3. Retail and Restaurant Mix – (Continued)

Mayor Gaylord said that maybe the parking impact fee will regulate this. Richards said that is definitely a possibility, especially on Water Street.

Beattie asked if the 352 Third Street site has enough parking on site for all of the different businesses. Richards said yes.

Fulkerson said she is hearing a lot of comments from residents that the City has too many restaurants/bars.

Richards said if there are a number of restaurants that are open for lunch and dinner that helps support the retail.

Miller said there is a lot of risk for the City if it becomes heavily dependent on a specific industry, especially restaurant. Miller asked if the City has changed the parking impact fee amount. Richards said the Council reduced the parking impact fee from \$1,500 to \$1,200.

The Council asked how many liquor licenses the City has available. Johnson said that the City has 12 on-sale liquor licenses. The City has 6 licenses that are currently issued and 4 licenses that are pending for businesses that the City knows are coming into Excelsior.

Bob Bolles, 229 George Street, said that the Finance Advisory Commission put together a spreadsheet showing all of the businesses.

Beattie said there must be at least a 4-to-1 ratio between retail and restaurants with liquor licensees.

Mayor Gaylord said that the City should put together a current inventory of all of the businesses. Mayor Gaylord said that if there is an inventory from previous years, it should give the City a good indicator.

Richards said there are studies that have been done for economic development but not restaurants versus retail mix. The Planning Commission is very close to completing their work on formula businesses. The Planning Commission definitely did not want to see formula businesses on Water Street.

Beattie said that this is a good topic for discussion, especially after the discussions regarding the brewery at the last Council meeting.

Bob Bolles, 229 George Street, said that on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, the parking in the City is at peak or close to peak.

Caron said maybe the City should also look at seating when they look at the restaurants.

3. Retail and Restaurant Mix – (Continued)

Beattie asked about the parking requirements for restaurants. Richards said the City requires 1 parking space per 4 seats. The City Code also has a provision to require 1 parking space per 40 square feet of space. Maybe the City should use square footage versus seating when calculating the parking.

Miller said if the City regulates restaurants through liquor licensing, the Council will need to have the justification as to why the City wouldn't allow another restaurant to have a liquor license.

Beattie said one thing that the City does not do is regulate the amount of food that needs to be served by a restaurant that has a liquor license.

The Council directed staff to put together an inventory of the businesses in Excelsior and compare it to earlier inventories that are available. The Council also asked staff to put together information on the restaurants with liquor licenses with regard to parking, hours of operation, etc.

Caron suggested that the Council look at the number of liquor licenses on an annual basis when they review the license fees each year to determine whether the number of licenses should be changed.

4. Parking Permits

The Council discussed fees for parking permits. Johnson stated that the City uses the money from the meters to offset the costs for maintaining the park. When the parking permits are used at the meters, the City doesn't earn revenue from those meters and the money to maintain the park comes from the tax levy.

Mayor Gaylord and Beattie thought that the fee should be increased. Fulkerson said she would not support an increase; she thought the fees should stay the same.

Johnson said that the Council did not need to decide the fee tonight. The second reading of the general parking ordinance was on the Council's regular agenda for a second reading tonight. The Council would need to decide whether to allow the parking meters to be used at the meters. If the Council couldn't make that decision tonight, the Council should continue the second reading of the ordinance to the December 2, 2013 Council meeting.

5. Update on Fundraiser for Children's Surgery International

Johnson reported that, in March, the City Council approved a proposal from Riley Nelson, a junior at Minnetonka High School, to do airbrush caricatures in The Commons during the spring and summer of 2013. Riley planned to give all proceeds from the airbrush caricatures to the Children's Surgery International. When the City Council approved the request, the Council requested documentation from Riley on how much he was able to donate to Children's Surgery International.

5. Update on Fundraiser for Children's Surgery International - (Continued)

Riley was able to donate a total of \$2,011.00 to the Children's Surgery International for the caricatures he did this year at The Commons.

The Council directed staff to contact Riley to see if he would attend the November 18, 2013 Council meeting so the City could present him with a certificate of appreciation.

6. Adjournment

Beattie moved, Fulkerson seconded, to adjourn at 6:51 p.m. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Johnson
Interim City Manager