

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, April 1, 2024 - 6:00 P.M. - 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in regular session on Monday, April 1, 2024, in person. Mayor Dietrich called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present In-Person: Mayor Dietrich, Council Members: Murphy, Gliva, T’Kach and Scales.

Staff Present: Administrator Kris Wilson, City Attorney McCauley Nason, Chief Chiodo, City Engineer Merchlewicz, Public Works Director Connolly, Parks and Recreation Director Lares, and Deputy City Clerk Malott.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve Charitable Gambling Permit for U of M Ducks Unlimited - Bingo and Raffle by T’Kach, second by Gliva.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Upcoming Dakota County 80th Street Roadway and Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

City Engineer Merchlewicz introduced Bryce LeBrun presenting this item for Dakota County Transportation Department. This project was identified by the Dakota County Pedestrian Crossing Safety Assessment done in 2021 and 2022. The goal of this assessment was to develop countywide guidelines. 80th Street E and Barbara Avenue near the Veterans Memorial Community Center was included in the initial review. The recommendation at the time was to take no action in lieu of a lane reduction.

Project limits are from Babcock Avenue to just past Boyd Avenue on State Aid Highway. Previously there was a lane reduction in front of the high school and middle school. Dakota County did receive a grant from the state for \$250,000 for improvements including pedestrian ramp/school driveway reconfigurations. There will be an improved pedestrian crossing at Barbara Avenue and some signal revisions and a reduction from 4 lanes to 3 lanes. Currently it is over 100 feet to cross as a pedestrian. The lane reduction will lower it under 100 and make it safer for pedestrian crossing.

School area improvements will include replacing ramps, reducing distances across streets, and straightening out ramps. We want to avoid having students walk out on to 80th.

Project Time Line:

Data Collection/Analysis & Preliminary Plans/Estimate	November 2023 to April 2024
Stakeholder Surveys & Engagement Meetings	March 2024 to September 2024
Open House #1	March 28, 2024
60% Plans/Estimate	July 2024

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Open House #2	September 2024
90% Plans/Estimate	September 2024
Final Plans/Estimate and Bidding	November 2024
Construction	Spring to Fall 2025

The first open house there were a few dozen people in attendance including Commissioners and Council Members. There was positive feedback given.

Mayor Dietrich asked if any feedback stood out to LeBrun from the Open House.

LeBrun said most feedback was positive. It made sense to them, and they've been hoping for safety improvements for pedestrians. There were a few questions as to why we would narrow a perfectly good road. After reviewing the intent and results in other areas, they understood.

Mayor Dietrich said she has heard from residents about parking on Boyd Avenue and if this is being addressed and if resident's driveways were being impacted.

LeBrun said it was addressing school driveways, there should not be impact to residential driveways or parking.

Mayor Dietrich asked where residents can find the information.

LeBrun said it is available on Dakotacounty.us and type in 80th improvements and it will be one of the top results. The Open House information will be going up shortly. LeBrun's contact information is also available there.

Council Member Murphy asked to clarify if when 80th was widened if it was based on a traffic study, and if reducing lanes to 3 is based on a new traffic study or safety.

LeBrun said the widening would have been for projected growth that never materialized. A future study will be coming to look at westward. The narrowing was identified for safety initially and there was a broad look at the volume. There were intersection counts and through traffic reviews that align with the reduction.

Council Member Murphy asked if reducing from 4 lanes to 3 will reduce the speed limit.

LeBrun has seen statewide that when narrowing the roads, speed seems to reduce to closer to the posted speed limit.

Council Member T'Kach agreed the Open House was very successful. She asked if it was possible to put an electrical sign on 80th to say if the library is open or closed.

LeBrun said he would pass the question along.

B. Police Department Updates on 2024 Community Safety Survey, Staffing and Traffic Enforcement

Chief Chiodo presented the results on the Community Safety Survey. There were 529 people that completed the survey. 495 respondents live in the city, 50 work in the city, 10 that visit regularly and 8 others that have family in the city. The main age group is 36 to over 56 years of age. Highlights from the

survey include 71% believe the city is safe/extremely safe. 70% are satisfied with police/community engagement. 68% believed our officers are approachable and 88% believe officers will treat them fairly. 40% had contact with an officer in 2023. 35% believed there is adequate staffing and 37% believe the staffing is too low.

The top 3 concerns for 2024 are:

Narcotics - 53% moderately - very serious

Traffic Safety - 46% moderately - very serious

Domestic Violence/Assault/Youth Delinquency - 41% moderately - very seriously

Drug related calls for 2023:

- Over Doses
 - 45 Suspected
 - 16 Naloxone uses
 - 6 fatal
- 33 calls to 911 for suspected narcotics
 - 15 marijuana related
 - 4 other drugs
 - 7 found drug paraphernalia
 - 7 unfounded

There are 3 officers that are 3 Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) in the city and two that are able to train other officers to become DREs. They differentiate between drug influence and medical or mental disorders. These officers undergo an extensive training to be certified. They complete an academic training on 7 different drugs that are commonly abused. They also travel to Philadelphia and conduct a number real life drug identification processes with volunteers while being supervised by a certifier.

Our Strategic Response group does proactive investigations as well as follow-up investigations. They provide adult drug education and awareness and support our 911 responders. They collaborate with multiple task forces. Chief Chiodo attended the first drug task force board meeting and will continue to attend meetings going forward. We have an embedded social worker that can connect people with non-law enforcement resources. With the Opioid settlement funds, we have put towards the education of youth, and we are working on getting an officer trained for DARE.

The second area of concern was traffic safety. In 2023 there were 161 DWI's, 1,077 traffic citations were issued and 341 accidents with 0 fatalities. As far as traffic enforcement, we are addressing this in multiple ways.

- Education
- Speed Signs
- Traffic Details
 - Community driven
 - Multi-agency collaborations/Towards Zero Deaths (TZD)
 - Self-initiated
- DWI/Traffic Officer - Grant funded
- Trainings/Certifications
 - Child Passenger Safety Training
 - Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST)
 - Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE)
 - Drug Recognition Evaluator (DRE)
- Seat Belt Initiatives
- Citizens Academy

Mayor Dietrich said that the Citizen's Academy is a great experience and recommends it.

- Street Racing Task Force
- Traffic Control Committee

The last area of major concern was Violence Against Persons. We have 4 full-time investigators staffed 24/7. We also have a part time sexual assault advocate located at the PD and a partnership with 360 Communities on domestic and sexual violence. There are also County Crisis Response Workers and embedded social workers who are able to follow up with non-law enforcement resources. We are hoping for a crime analyst that would be able to assist with violent crimes.

Council Member T'Kach asked if it was possible to use previous drug offenders for education as opposed to officers and if it would be possible for this to be used in school education.

Chief Chiodo said that would come more from County resources. During Citizens Academy they do visit the Dakota County Jail and have an inmate talk about their experience. Schools do have the option to do that, however, to be certified by the DARE program it needs to be an officer.

Council Member T'Kach asked if there was additional training if the current drugs of choice change.

Chief Chiodo said they train on 7 different drugs and have to recertify every year. If another drug were to become an issue, it would be added into the training.

Council Member T'Kach asked if there was the same data for DWIs as there is for distracted driving.

Chief Chiodo said she would reach out to the Sheriff and see if there was someone with the County that has that information.

Council Member Gliva asked how we compare to our surrounding communities when it comes to the number of DWIs and if she thinks it's higher because we have someone dedicated to it.

Chief Chiodo said even prior to having a DWI officer, we had a high number of DWIs. It's likely comparable to our neighboring communities.

Staffing Updates:

In 2023 they were authorized for 47 officers. This remains the same for 2024 and there are currently 2 openings. They are being very selective for who they hire. Between 2023 and 2024 there were 4 separations.

- 1 left the profession completely
- 1 moved out of Minnesota in 2024
- 1 passed away
- 1 did not complete Field Training (traditional hire)

There have been 4 lateral hires. There are 280 police departments and sheriff's departments hiring. Here we use these recruitment tools. We have a recruitment team that will go to skills programs at local colleges. Almost everyone in skills has already secured employment with another police department. We have a Cadet Program that takes local youth with an interest in law enforcement after high school graduation and offer part time employment as they go to school. We offer front loaded benefit time for lateral entries, so they do not have to lose time off. We also offer therapy for our officers and have a higher entry pay for lateral moves to remain competitive.

Mayor T'Kach asked if there were any trends on the survey that stood out.

Chief Chiodo said there was nothing surprising. Residents are not afraid to reach out to herself, officers, Council or the Mayor. The concern about narcotics was a little surprising but it is more likely something people see compared to experience themselves.

Mayor Dietrich is impressed with Chief Chiodo's leadership and being able to maintain the staffing levels.

C. City Administrator Updates

Administrator Wilson presented updates. During the next City Council Meeting on April 8, there are multiple Development-Related Agenda Items.

1. Resolution of Denial for a CUP (recreation center in IOP zoning district)
There have been a handful of questions from residents concerned the Council may go in a different direction. If the Council is interested in reconsidering it would need to be done at the next meeting. We would prefer to have it on the agenda.
2. Comp Plan Amendment from MDR to LMDR
This is on the West side of 55 and has been recommended by the Planning Commission but has caused concern in the surrounding neighborhood.
3. Rezoning westerly 10 acres at Argenta Hills to multi-family residential
4. Yellow Tree Development
Land Use Applications: Amending Preliminary PUD & Approve Final Request for Financial Assistance
They are proposing to build an apartment building on north edge of Peltier Development. The lot is platted and guided for an apartment building. There will be a request to take action on some land use applications. They are looking to have 240 apartment units compared to the initial 180. They are also requesting financial assistance with our NW area fees.

Mayor Dietrich if they will need to decide to provide financial assistance by April 8.

Administrator Wilson said it will be an Action item on April 8. The council is not under a deadline and could choose to continue it to future meeting. The developers are anxious to have an answer, but Council is not under a deadline.

Mayor Dietrich asked why the Resolution Denial for a CUP is being handled any differently than other items.

Administrator Wilson said it is not being handled any differently. There is a concern amongst neighbors that it was discussed in a Closed Session and will be reversed. Wilson would like to assure residents that nothing has changed, and it will go forward. Council Members do have the option to make the motion to reconsider. Staff is planning to put a resolution of denial on the Consent Agenda, but wanted to point out that there have been concerns regarding this item.

Council Member Murphy asked if the applicant is intending on speaking or bringing new information on April 8.

Administrator Wilson said the applicant has requested older traffic studies following the Council vote but does not have any information whether he is intending on speaking. There is no route through Staff to have this reconsidered. The only route is for a Council Member who voted in the affirmative to make a motion to reconsider.

Council Member Murphy said he saw additional information and asked Legal if there were any issues with the reasons for denial.

Attorney McCauley Nason said she saw no legal concerns.

Mayor Dietrich said typically there is a denial and an approval when going through the packet after a meeting and was concerned there was only an approval.

Administrator Wilson said if the Planning Commission is recommending approval, they will have a resolution for approval based on the reasons the Planning Commission was recommending approval. If Council denies, a denial is brought forward in the next meeting because we need to include the reasons for denial.

Council Member Scales agrees moving forward with either an approval or denial. We would put our reasons in the approval or denial.

Mayor Dietrich asked if it would be a regular item for the next meeting.

Administrator Wilson gave an example on item 2 which has not been before the Council. It was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission so on the agenda will be a Resolution to Approve. If after hearing all of the testimony and having your questions answered, the majority of the Council decides to deny the item, it will be on the next meeting's agenda with a Resolution for Denial on consent.

Council Member T'Kach asked if the items for Yellow Tree Development could be separated.

Administrator Wilson said they will be separate agenda items.

Administrator Wilson provided a legislative update. Both bills moved out of the Housing Committee in the Senate and the House. They've been waiting for them to be taken up in the State and Local government committee in each body. So far, they have not moved forward.

The "Missing Middle" Housing proposals seem less likely to advance. This seems to not be the primary focus. The section of the bill that allows multi-family housing in Commercial Districts is still a proponent of the bill. The original bill required significant heights of buildings be permitted. The current bill proposes a height of 45 feet which is not significantly higher than our requirement of 30 feet. There is no longer a restriction on multi-family housing near railroad tracks or airports and no need to designate a major transit stop.

The bills now define multi-family as residential buildings with 13 units or more or mixed -use buildings where at least half of the usable square footage is residential. It still limits cities to requiring just 1 parking space per unit plus meeting ADA requirements. It allows cities to deny if suitable infrastructure is not available.

The stand-alone ADU bill is still active. It requires cities to allow ADUs on any residential lot unless it can't be served by water and sewers services. ADUs can't be denied based on lot size or other parameters we currently have. Administrator Wilson will continue to monitor and provide updates.

Mayor Dietrich thanked Administrator Wilson for the work that has been done and collaborating with other cities.

Council Member Scales asked if the reason the bills have slowed down is because of pushback received.

Administrator Wilson said pushback has had an impact and it is hard to write a bill that does everything with no unintended consequences and be able to have the support of the majority. The issues will likely be back.

The last update provided by Administrator Wilson is about the Bridge Builder Coin Award. There were 5 nominations received. It is open for residents, people who contribute to Inver Grove Heights as well as Staff. The nominations will be forwarded to Council for review.

D. Closed Session Pursuant to Minn. Stat. Sec. 13D.05 subd. (3)(c)(3) (Consider Offer to Purchase Land)

Motion to move into closed session pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05 subd 3c3, to develop or consider an offer for the purchase of real property located at 1285 70th Street West Parcel #20-00600-78012 by T'Kach, second by Gliva.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Motion to move into open session by Gliva, second by Scales.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

4. ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn at 8:13p.m. by Scales, second by Gliva.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Sara Lyons.