INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026 – 6:00 P.M. – 8150 BARBARA AVENUE

1. CALL TO ORDER:
The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in regular session on Monday, March 23, 2026, in person. Acting Mayor Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. ROLL CALL:
Present In-Person: Council Members: Gliva, Murphy, Scales, and T'Kach
Absent: Mayor Dietrich
Staff In Attendance: Interim City Administrator Ellen Hiniker, City Clerk Rebecca Kiernan, City Attorney Bridget Nason, Community Development Director Jason Ziemer, Parks & Recreation Director Adam Lares, Planning Manager Kevin Shay, Senior Planner Ben Schneider, and City Engineer Paul Merchlewicz.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion to approve the Agenda as published by Gliva; seconded by Scales.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

4. PRESENTATIONS: None

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- **A.** Approval of March 9, 2026, City Council Special Meeting
- **B.** Approval of Minutes of the March 9, 2026, City Council Meeting
- **C.** Approval of Disbursements, **Resolution 2026-043**
- **D.** Personnel Actions
- **E.** Resolution for the Removal and Replacement of Municipal State Aid Street Designations, **Resolution 2026-044**
- **F.** Approval of Storm Water Facilities Maintenance Agreement for 10125 Rich Valley Blvd
- **G.** Resolution Approving a Wetland Replacement Plan for Nord 61°, **Resolution 2026-045**
- **H.** Approval of Equipment Use Agreement with Creative Color Graphic and Print Studio
- **I.** Resolution Authorizing Preparation of a Final Grant Agreement with the Metropolitan Council for the 2024 Inflow & Infiltration Reduction Grant Program. **Resolution 2026-046**
- **J.** Resolution Approving the 2026 Tree Replacement Plan, **Resolution 2026-047**
- **K.** Approve Memorandum of Understanding with Inver Grove Heights (ISD 199) Public School District for Sheltering and Mass Care Facility Utilization at the Veterans Memorial Community Center
- **L.** Approval of R-22 Refrigerant Purchase for Veteran Memorial Community Center Ice Arena

Motion to approve Items A – L, omitting J by T'Kach; seconded by Gliva.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

A resident requested that the City work with the Environmental Advisory Committee to establish tree canopy and planting targets, assess existing tree cover, and identify species diversity. The resident also asked whether the City provides ongoing maintenance after planting to improve tree survival and inquired about plans to update the 2003 policy to reflect current conditions in 2026.

Parks and Recreation Director Lares explained that the tree replacement plan is intended to support tree canopy within public spaces, including parks and stormwater areas, based on evaluations conducted by the City Forester and Park Superintendent identifying hazardous, diseased, or needed replacements. The policy is tied to development agreements requiring one for one tree replacement, with unmet obligations contributing to a tree replacement fund that may be used for planting, though only up to 50%, leaving an estimated balance of approximately $400,000 after current actions. The fund is only replenished when developers cannot meet replacement requirements, and the policy is not a comprehensive tree canopy policy but is focused on replacing trees lost due to development across City properties. The City does not currently maintain a full tree canopy inventory but could explore a feasibility study or audit if directed by the Council, with such an effort involving additional cost.

Council Member Murphy asked whether the policy dated from 2003 should be updated to reflect the City's current size and conditions.

Director Lares clarified that the tree replacement policy is not a citywide canopy policy but is specific to development, serving as a tool to replace trees lost during development through a one for one approach or contributions to the replacement fund. The policy would not typically require revision unless there is interest in adjusting developer contributions. A broader tree canopy policy, including targets for coverage or species diversity, would be a separate effort requiring inventory and analysis of existing conditions compared to regional or national metrics. The replacement fund may also be used to address tree loss from storms or disease, and hazardous trees are proactively identified and removed. Additional tree planting is supported through the operating budget and a nursery at Salem Hills Park.

Council Member Murphy confirmed that Item J is specifically focused on replacing trees lost due to development and asked whether residents with broader input on tree planning should direct their comments to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Director Lares clarified that the tree replacement fund is not limited to a single development year but consists of contributions collected over time, allowing the City to replace trees as needs arise across public spaces. The fund serves as a tool to address tree loss in a timely manner. He also explained that tree replacements include a two-year warranty through contracted vendors, which covers watering, mulching, and maintenance, with a guarantee that any trees that do not survive will be replaced, helping ensure long term success beyond initial planting.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether it would be beneficial to take a broader look at the City's tree resources, including educating the public on existing tree species across both public and private lands to support ecological balance. She suggested exploring whether the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission or Environmental Commission could review practices in other cities related to tree ordinances and consider ways to enhance tree canopy on private property, including providing guidance and information to residents in areas with limited tree coverage.

Director Lares stated that understanding the City's tree canopy across both public and private land would be valuable but would require significant resources, staffing, or the use of a consulting firm. Initial efforts would likely focus on public properties, as assessing private land presents additional challenges. Current management is shared between Parks and Public Works, with the Park Superintendent also serving as the City Forester, and without a dedicated natural resources division like some neighboring communities. Advancing this effort would require additional capacity and direction from the Environmental Commission, PRAC, and Council.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether this type of effort could be considered as part of the 2027 budget, noting it may not be feasible within the current budget but could begin as a discussion for future planning, particularly as other cities have made progress in this area.

Director Lares stated that reviewing practices from other communities is feasible but would depend on organizational structure, resource allocation, and the level of commitment to managing natural resources. Establishing a baseline would be a necessary first step, and any advancement would be part of a broader prioritization discussion if directed by the Council.

Motion to approve Item J by Gliva; seconded by Scales.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Approval of a New Massage Therapist

Clerk Kiernan stated that Amanda Keating has applied for a massage therapist license to be employed at a OyeSpa LLC located at 7741 Amana Trail. The application was submitted with the required fee and supporting documentation. A background investigation completed by the Police Department found no basis for denial of the license. Staff recommended holding the public hearing and approving the massage therapist license for Amanda Keating.

Acting Mayor Murphy opened the public hearing. There were no public comments.

Motion to close the public hearing by Scales; seconded by T'Kach.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Motion to approve Massage Therapist License for Amanda Kaeding, OyeSpa LLC by Gliva; seconded by Scales.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

7. REGULAR BUSINESS:

A. Ordinance Amending 2026 City Fee Schedule, **Ordinance 1525**

City Clerk Kiernan outlined the 2026 Fee Schedule additions within Parks & Recreation and Parks Usage, including pickleball court rental for all courts at a frequency of per day with 2026 Resident fees of $500 and 2026 Non-Resident fees of $520.

Within the Veteran's Memorial Community Center, 10x pass Adult per person is $90 for residents and $108 for non-residents, and 10x pass Youth per person is $63 for residents and $81 for non-residents. Indoor Playground Fees include infants under 12 months with daily admission free for both resident and non-resident, admission youth ages 1 to 11 playground only daily at $7 for residents and $9 for non-residents, 10x punch pass at $63 for residents and $81 for non-residents, accompanying guest ages 12+ daily free for both, youth VMCC member daily $5 for both, youth VMCC member 10x punch pass $45 for both, youth playground plus VMCC daily admission at $10 for residents and $14 for non-residents, and socks add on cost playground each at $2 for both. Pool rental includes the diving well per hour at $100 for residents and $110 for non-residents.

The 2026 Fee Schedule Change under Building & Development Fees identified building permits for a pool permit, specifically in-ground swimming pools under Code Section 3-4-1 with a 2026 fee of $300.

Staff recommends waiving the three-reading rule and approving the Ordinance as presented as this is a housekeeping item.

Motion to suspend rules and approve final reading of Ordinance 1525 amending the 2026 City Fee Schedule by Scales; seconded by Gliva.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

B. Ordinance Amending Title 4, Chapter 9 Body Art Establishments, **Ordinance 1526**

City Clerk Kiernan presented an Ordinance amending Title 4, Chapter 9 Body Art Establishments and provided background information noting that in 2011 the Minnesota Department of Health implemented statewide licensing requirements for both body art establishments and technicians. In 2014 the City Council limited the number of Body Art Establishments to 2 for the entire City, and in 2026 staff have been made aware of more than 2 establishments operating within the City.

Discussion included Council advising staff to maintain local regulation and amend Chapter 9 to update the allowable number of licensed establishments to a level that more accurately reflects the City's current size, demand, and regulatory needs. Upon conducting research, staff is proposing to change City code to allow for up to 6 establishments within the City.

Staff recommends waiving the three-reading rule, and approving the Ordinance presented.

Follow up noted that the next two items on the agenda are regarding the change to this Ordinance, if approved in one reading, as there is a new establishment looking to obtain a City license

Council Member Gliva asked how many licensed massage therapists are currently operating in the City.

Clerk Kiernan stated there are currently 4 licensed massage therapists in the City.

Council Member Scales asked how other cities compare based on population.

Clerk Kiernan stated that most cities do not limit or license massage therapists, noting that larger cities do not license them at all. She added that South Saint Paul and West Saint Paul issue licenses but do not impose a cap.

Council Member T'Kach stated hesitation to waive the third reading if the limit of six remains and suggested removing the cap, noting that other cities do not impose limits and that market demand would naturally regulate the number of businesses.

Acting Mayor Murphy expressed support for maintaining the limit of six, noting a preference for free markets but cautioning against the City becoming a destination for certain businesses if other cities impose restrictions.

Council Member Gliva and Council Member Scales both indicated support for maintaining the limit of six.

Motion to suspend rules and approve final reading of Ordinance 1526 Amending Title 4, Chapter 9 Body Art Establishments by Murphy; seconded by Gliva.
Ayes: 4

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

C. Resolution Approving a Conditional Use Permit for Body Art Establishment for 1848 50th Street East, **Resolution 2026-048**

Senior Planner Schneider presented a Conditional Use Permit request for 1848 50th Street East to operate a body art establishment.

The property is zoned I-1, Limited Industry and guided LI, Light Industrial, and is a multi-tenant building. The request is for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a body art establishment. Evaluation of the request noted that buffer requirements are met, licensing requirements will be met, and general CUP standards are met.

General CUP Standards include that the use is consistent with the goals, policies and plans of the City Comprehensive Plan, consistent with Zoning Code, would not be materially injurious to existing or planned properties or improvements in the vicinity, does not have an undue adverse impact on existing or planned City facilities, is generally compatible with existing and future uses of surrounding properties, the property is appropriate for the use considering natural and physical features, does not have an undue adverse impact on public health, safety, or welfare, and does not have an undue adverse impact on the environment. Staff finds all these criteria are met.

The Planning Commission voted 8-0 to recommend approval. The recommended action is a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit request to operate a body art establishment at 1848 50th Street East with the condition that the applicant must obtain all required licenses from the City and the Minnesota Department of Health.

Council Member Scales asked whether the state or City license is obtained first.

Planner Schneider confirmed that the City license is obtained first.

Property Owner Steve Bulach, 1848 50th Street East, stated the space is ready for occupancy on April 1 and that Madison Taylor is the applicant. He noted the process has taken longer than expected and that the third reading requirement would delay occupancy until late April or early May, resulting in lost rent and added costs for the applicant. He requested consideration to allow the business to proceed sooner.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-048 Conditional Use Permit for Body Art Establishment located at 1848 50th Street East by T'Kach; seconded by Scales.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

D. New Body Art Establishment License – Minnesota Official Ink

Clerk Kiernan stated that the City received an application from Madison Taylor for a new body art license for Minnesota Official, Inc., located at 1848 50th Street East. The application was reviewed by staff, found to be complete and qualified, and a background investigation by the Police Department found no basis for denial. Staff recommended approval of the new body art license.

Motion to approve a new body art establishment license for Minnesota Official Ink by Scales; seconded by Gliva.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

E. Approval of a Scope of Work and Work Order, Authorizing the Drafting of Schematic Civil and Engineering Plan Designs Related to the Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame Development.

Community Development Director Ziemer presented civil and engineering plans for the Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame project.

The scope of work includes an initial traffic assessment and civil and engineering plans up to 30% design, with a cost of $388,855. Bolton & Menk was identified as the consultant, selected from the authorized municipal engineering consulting pool. Funding is proposed through a DEED Host Community grant, with a maximum grant funding available of $415,625, and commencement of work pending grant approval and contract execution.

A development recap noted the Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame as a $148 million project consisting of a 140,000 square foot facility including a Hall of Fame and museum, a 1,300-seat ice arena, performance venue, events center with ballrooms and meeting rooms, and a hockey-themed restaurant and taproom. The project is located at 65th Street and Argenta Boulevard; adjacent to
I-494. Previous action items include a Purchase Agreement approved on December 8, 2025, for $8,740,200, a location and community announcement on December 17, 2025, due diligence work authorized on January 26, 2026, for $63,300, and the introduction of State funding bills in the Senate on March 9, 2026, and in the House on March 12, 2026.

A legislative funding request was outlined totaling $25,000,000, including $5,000,000 in City General Obligation Bonds and $20,000,000 in cash appropriations for the MNHHOF. The request is identified as Senate File 4238 and House File 4239. The funding breakdown includes $43,000,000 from the Developer through private financing and equity, $66,000,000 from MNHHOF through corporate sponsorships, private donors and fundraising, $25,000,000 from the State through cash appropriations and general obligation bonds, and $14,000,000 from the City through cash, grants and debt levy.

Upcoming decision timelines include moving forward with schematic civil and engineering plans, consideration of a Pre-Development Agreement in April or May 2026, and confirmation that 50% of the $200,000 earnest money deposit has been paid and is non-refundable.

The recommended action is to approve the Work Order and Scope of Work at a cost of $388,855 and authorize Bolton & Menk to proceed with completing the proposed schematic civil and engineering plans and traffic assessment for the Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame Development, with commencement of work pending DEED grant approval and execution of the grant agreement.

T'Kach asked what would occur if the scope of work were not approved and whether action could be delayed until legislative funding is known. It was noted that delaying would result in the loss of the current DEED grant, and there was brief discussion about whether future DEED funding over the next two years could be used, though no clear alternative was identified.

Director Ziemer explained that the City must apply annually for DEED grant funding, which is awarded based on the merits of the proposed project. For 2026, the intent is to advance the design to approximately 30% and potentially expand to 50% to 70%, supported by approximately $337,000 in available funding. A similar amount is anticipated for FY 2027. He noted that these funds are intended to offset costs the City would otherwise incur out of pocket for this work.

Council Member Scales asked whether the Hockey Hall of Fame's fundraising efforts appear to be on track.

Director Ziemer responded that while they are hopeful fundraising is on track, a more definitive update is expected mid to late April, aligned with the timeline for legislative funding decisions.

Council Member Gliva asked about the status of DEED's review and approval process for the project.

Director Ziemer stated that the application has been submitted to the commissioner's office for approval, and the next step is execution of the grant agreement. He noted that prior Council action authorizes the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the agreement once received.

Council Member T'Kach stated the request is premature and not a current priority.

Council Member Murphy acknowledged concerns from Council and residents, noting there are many unknowns, but expressed support for the project as a positive benefit to the City.

Motion to Approve Scope of Work and Work Order, Authorizing the Drafting of Schematic Civil and Engineering Plan Designs Related to the Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame Development by Murphy; seconded by Scales.

Ayes: 3
Nays: 0 (T'Kach) Motion carried.

F. Resolution for Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Easement Vacation and Variance to create one new lot from the existing 2615 80th Street Property, **Resolution 2026-049, 2026-050, & 2026-051**

Planning Manager Shay presented requests for a Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Variance, and Easement Vacation for the property located at 2615 80th Street East.

The property is zoned R-1C, One-Family Residential and guided LDR, Low Density Residential, and contains an existing single-family home. The application requests are to create an additional single-family home. Evaluation of the request noted that the new lot meets requirements except for lot width, and no additional access is allowed on 80th Street.

An easement vacation was included, noting the City has a purchase agreement for the street easement portion of Lot 12 and the easement is no longer needed as it will be dedicated as right of way.

Variance criteria were reviewed and found to be met, including harmony with the City Code and Comprehensive Plan, use of the property in a reasonable manner, circumstances unique to the property and not created by the landowner, no alteration to the essential character of the locality, and that the request does not rely on economic considerations alone.

The Planning Commission reviewed this item at its March 3 Planning Commission meeting and unanimously recommended approval of all four items.

The recommended action is to approve the Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Variance and Easement Vacation request to create one additional single-family lot with a reduced lot width at 2615 80th Street East, with the conditions listed in the resolutions.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether there is a plan to build more than one home on the lot or if it is intended to remain a single-family lot with a defined building pad.

Manager Shay stated that single-family use is permitted in the district, and while other permitted uses could be considered, the current intent is to build a single-family home. He noted that plans are not yet finalized and will be completed during the building permit process, including review of site layout, utilities, and access by the City's engineering and building departments to ensure code compliance.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether approval would prevent a future request to further subdivide the lot, such as splitting it into a half-acre parcel that still meets zoning requirements.

Planning Manager Shay stated that further subdivision would not be feasible due to limited access. He explained that the access from Boudreaux Court is already at the minimum, and without extending a public roadway to provide additional frontage, the lot could not be subdivided further.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-049 approving the preliminary plat and final plat for a two lot subdivision to be known as Krech's Landing, approve Resolution 2026-050 approving the vacation of a right of way easement dedicated on Lots 12 and 13, Block 2, Demma Addition, approve Resolution 2026-051 approving a variance to allow a reduced lot width of 41 feet where 85 feet is required for a newly created lot at 2615 80th Street by Scales; seconded by T'Kach.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Relative to tree removal in the Birchwood Ponds HOA, Council Member Murphy explained the March 23 deadline was set to include tree removal quantities in bid documents, keeping costs lower. He noted changes can still be made, with HOAs able to remove trees independently or request case by case consideration if maintenance plans are provided. He added that staff will work with HOAs, and final determinations will be made by the City.

Several residents from the Birchwood Ponds HOA expressed concerns about proposed tree removals, citing lack of clear communication, limited documentation on tree conditions, and uncertainty around the need for removal. They questioned the number of trees identified, noted many appear healthy, and requested more detailed information and collaboration with the City, including consideration of existing maintenance plans and alternatives to preserve trees.

Damon Roth – 8418 College Trail
Nick Raykov – 8360 Carew Court
Katrina Lassegard - 8377 Carew Court
Kathleen Tacke - 8588 Birch Boulevard
Steve Benke – 8453 Casey Court
Nanci Brown - 8531 Birch Boulevard
Brandon Bernardy – 8466 College Trail
Rob Thomas – 8597 Birch Court
Sue LeVahn – 8598 Birch Court
Linda Videen - 8605 Birch Court

Kelly Kayser, 1953 59th Court East, spoke regarding House File 3895 and Senate File 4123, expressing concern that the requirements may not align with the City and encouraging renewed focus on preserving local control through communication with state legislators. She noted Representative Mary Frances Clardy is not currently signed onto the bill and referenced strong public support for local control based on recent community feedback.

9. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Council Member T'Kach suggested the City consider a future tree inventory to assess value, acknowledged resident concerns, expressed confidence in staff's efforts, and emphasized the importance of clear communication.

Council Member Scales and Gliva encouraged residents to get involved by applying for openings on the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Environmental Commission, noting it as an opportunity to participate in and help shape the City's direction.

Council Member Murphy requested a copy of the City's agreement with Town Square Television and the related meeting minutes, as well as an update on short term rentals. He also raised concerns regarding House File 3895 and Senate File 4123, noting potential impacts on zoning, density, and local control, and encouraged residents to contact their legislators.

10. **<u>ADJOURN:</u>**

Motion to Adjourn at 7:14 p.m. by Scales, second by Gliva.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Tammy Greenlee