

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 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, April 13, 2026, 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, Scales, T’Kach, and Gliva (remote)

Staff In Attendance: Interim City Administrator Hiniker, City Clerk Kiernan, City Attorney Nason, Public Works Director Connolly, Community Development Director Ziemer, Parks & Recreation Director Lares, Finance Director Hove, IT Manager Gade, Human Resources Manager Norwig, City Engineer Merchlewicz, and Assistant City Engineer Ray

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve agenda as presented by Scales; seconded by T’Kach.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**4. PRESENTATIONS: None**

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A.** Approval of Minutes of the February 2, 2026, City Council Special Meeting
- B.** Approval of Minutes of the March 3, 2026, City Council Work Session
- C.** Approval of Minutes of the March 23, 2026, City Council Meeting
- D.** Approval of Disbursements **Resolution 2026-052**
- E.** Personnel Actions
- F.** Resolutions Awarding Contract and Approving Budget for 2026 Pavement Management Initiative **Resolutions 2026-053, 054, 055, 056, 057, 058, 059, 060, & 061**
- G.** Adoption of a Building Permit and Plan Review Refund Policy
- H.** Resolution Approving Lawful Charitable Gambling Premises Permit at Drkula’s Bowl **Resolution 2026-062**
- I.** Resolution Approving Final Plans and Specifications and Authorizing Advertisement for Bids for Upper 55<sup>th</sup> Street and Blackberry Path **Resolution 2026-063**
- J.** Resolution Awarding an Engineering Contract for City Project No. 2025-11 - Cahill Avenue Traffic Study **Resolution 2026-064**
- K.** Resolutions Awarding the Contract and Approving the Budget for 2026 Sewer Cleaning and Televising (City Project No. 2026-06) **Resolution 2026-065 & 066**
- L.** Monopole Lease Agreement for 5030 Babcock Trail - AT&T
- M.** Approval of Joint Powers Agreement with DNR for Aquatic Plant Management at Simley Lake and Lions Lake
- N.** Resolution to approve 2026 Information Technology Budget Amendment -VMWare License Renewal **Resolution 2026-067**
- O.** Award Contract for Classic-Compensation Study
- P.** Request Council authorization to create a new Human Resources Coordination Position
- Q.** Request Council authorization to convert the Accounts Receivable Technician position for .66 FTE to 1.00 FTE

- R. Request authorization to reclassify the City Hall & Police Department Custodian II to a City Facilities Maintenance Worker position
- S. Resolution approving Utility Permit Revisions with UP Rail for City Project No. 2016-17 - 117<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction **Resolution 2026-068**

**Motion to approve Item A - S omitting F by Murphy, seconded by Scales.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Council Member T’Kach stated that there were questions from members of the public regarding the process following the last public hearing and how the project advances to final design. She asked staff to provide an overview of the current process, including where the project stands moving forward, how identified concerns are being addressed, and which items may not be feasible to accommodate due to engineering or other constraints.

City Engineer Merchlewicz stated that following the feasibility and public hearings, the project advanced into the design phase, with staff coordinating additional outreach to residents around the fall to address site-specific concerns. Meetings were held with affected property owners and through follow-up communication, staff worked through design adjustments, including items such as driveway impacts and localized conditions, particularly within the BlackBerry South area and along Audrey Avenue and 58th Street.

He noted that these discussions informed the final design, which was largely completed toward the end of the year. The project then proceeded through bid package preparation and was authorized by Council to be advertised. Bids were received recently and came in approximately \$3 million to \$4 million below estimates, and the project is now being presented for award.

Council Member T’Kach stated that it appears staff has completed the process, conducted the necessary due diligence, and worked with residents to an extent feasible within the scope of the project.

Engineer Merchlewicz stated that based on feedback received and field observations, staff believes the final plan set is complete and accurately reflects the improvements needed to address the issues in the project area.

Council Member T’Kach asked whether a pre-construction open house will be held for the project and whether it would be intended for project area residents or open to the general public.

Engineer Merchlewicz stated that if Council awards the project, staff will proceed with a pre-construction meeting with the contractor to establish scheduling, timelines, and coordination, including subcontractor work and impacts by project area.

He noted that a pre-construction open house has been tentatively scheduled for the April 23rd at the VMCC, contingent upon Council awarding the project, and explained that it would be a three-hour session organized into three groups by project area, similar to the feasibility open house, with a brief presentation followed by an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and receive additional information.

**Motion to approve Item F by T’Kach, seconded Scales.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None**A. Approval of Massage Therapist Licenses**

City Clerk Kiernan stated that two massage therapist license applications are being presented for Council consideration and approval. She noted that Najay Sparkman will be employed at OyeSpa LLC, and Sareena Yang will operate her own business at Synergy Chiropractic. She recommended that Council hold the public hearing and approve both massage therapist licenses.

**Mayor Dietrich opened the public hearing. There were no public comments.**

**Motion to Close the public hearing by Scales, seconded by T’Kach.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**Motion to approve new massage therapists, Najay Sparkman at OyeSpa LLC and Sareena Yang at Synergy Chiropractic by Murphy, seconded by T’Kach**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**B. Public Hearings and Resolutions Ordering Projects for 2027 Pavement Management Initiative, City Project Nos. 2027-09D, 2027-09E, and 2027-09F**

Assistant City Engineer Ray presented the 2027 Pavement Management Initiative Public Improvement Hearings, outlining the 2027 Street Rehabilitation Projects, including 2027-09D Barbara Avenue Area from 75th Street to 80th Street, 2027-09E Boyd Avenue and 75th Street Area from 70th Street to 80th Street, and 2027-09F Blaine Avenue from College Trail to 80th Street.

Council Actions for tonight include receiving and accepting the Feasibility Report for the 2027 PMI and conducting Public Hearings for City Project Nos. 2027-09D Barbara Avenue Area, 2027-09E Boyd Avenue and 75th Street Area, and 2027-09F Blaine Avenue.

The Feasibility Report purpose is defined as a decision-making tool that assesses and evaluates existing conditions and issues contributing to the need for improvement, identifies rehabilitation needs and technical feasibility, determines how issues are corrected and whether improvements can be physically built, and provides a high-level review rather than detailed final design, with final plans prepared if improvement is ordered to proceed by City Council following the Public Hearing. The report also estimates costs, evaluates how improvements will be paid for, assesses both public and private benefits, and informs decision makers in accordance with State Statute 429, advising the City Council on whether proposed improvements are necessary, cost-effective, and feasible, and whether to proceed based on the information provided.

The 2027 PMI Project Background indicates the initiative was initiated by City Council through the Pavement Management Initiative (PMI), with Council adopting the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan for 2025-2029 on November 12, 2024, ordering feasibility reports on July 28, 2025, and City staff preparing the report, with the Improvement Hearing on March 9, 2026. Public outreach included project webpage and NotifyMe updates, postcards mailed to all project area residents in August 2025, a targeted letter on December 23, 2025 for the 75th Street reconstruction area to gather input, public noticing including published notices on March 22 and 29, 2026, mailed notices on March 12, 2026, and a Public Open House on March 24, 2026 that included project overview, assessments, and questions and answers with City staff.

Project summaries for 2027-09D Barbara Avenue Area (75<sup>th</sup> Street to 80<sup>th</sup> Street) include full-depth reclamation of existing asphalt pavement and underlying base material with spot curb and gutter replacements, Storm Sewer structure repair, select replacement and adjustment, Sanitary Sewer structure repair, spot repair and adjustments, gate valve adjustments and select gate valve box replacements and select hydrant replacements, full replacement of the bituminous trail with a new concrete sidewalk and ADA improvements on Barbara Avenue, and full trail replacement with ADA improvements to the bituminous trail on 75th Street.

Project 2027-09E Boyd Avenue and 75th Street Area (70<sup>th</sup> Street to 80<sup>th</sup> Street) includes full-depth reclamation of the existing asphalt pavement and underlying base material with spot curb and gutter replacements. Full roadway reconstruction of 75th Street East of Boyd Avenue with the addition of Storm Sewer and curb and gutter, Storm and Sanitary Sewer repairs and adjustments, and gate valve and select gate valve box replacement and hydrant replacements.

Project 2027-09F Blaine Avenue (College Trail to 80<sup>th</sup> Street) includes full-depth reclamation of existing asphalt pavement and underlying base material with spot curb and gutter replacements, Storm Sewer structure repair and adjustment, and full replacement with ADA improvements to the bituminous trail along Blaine Avenue.

Estimated project costs total \$14,869,058, with \$10,699,900 in street improvements, \$2,540,488 in Storm Sewer improvements, \$548,447 in sidewalk and trail improvements, \$528,785 in water improvements, and \$551,437 in Sanitary Sewer improvements, distributed across the three projects. Funding sources include Pavement Management Local Street Fund (\$5,434,139), Municipal State Aid funds (\$597,209), Storm Water Capital Fund (\$1,284,448), Water Capital Fund (\$528,785), Sewer Capital Fund (\$551,437), Improvement Agreements (\$744,644), and Special Assessments (\$5,689,386).

The project schedule includes Council initiating the project and ordering the feasibility study on July 28, 2025, scheduling the Public Hearing on March 9, 2026, conducting a feasibility open house on March 24, 2026, holding the Public Hearing on April 13, 2026 where Council receives the report, orders the project, and authorizes preparation of final plans, followed by final design from May 2026 through January 2027, Council approval of plans on January 25, 2027, bid opening on March 2, 2027, authorization of construction on March 8, 2027, construction open house in April 2027, construction occurring spring through fall 2027, and assessment hearings scheduled for September and October 2027.

The Assessment Policy Overview outlines Street and Storm assessment rates, including 100% for new improvements, 80% for mill and overlay, 55% for partial reconstruction or full-depth reclamation, 35% for reconstruction, and not applicable for crack seals, seal coats, and patching, with assessment terms ranging from 1 year for amounts under \$1,000 to 15 years for amounts of \$10,000 or more.

The Pavement Management Citizen Task Force goals include improving the City's entire pavement system, extending pavement life using cost-effective methods, focusing less on premium individual projects, aligning infrastructure needs with pavement rehabilitation through asset management, identifying projects through the Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) process, providing 18-24 months advance notice.

The Feasibility Report recommendation states that City Project Nos. 2027-09D, 2027-09E, and 2027-09F are feasible, necessary, cost effective, and would benefit properties in the project area, with staff recommending acceptance of the report. Council action requested includes adopting a resolution accepting the Feasibility Report, requiring a 3/5 vote.

**Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-069 accepting Feasibility Report for the 2027 PMI by Scales, seconded by T'Kach.****Ayes: 5****Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Project 2027-09D Full Depth Reclamation encompasses streets located within the Barbara Avenue Area between 75th Street and 80th Street. Neighborhood streets were constructed between 1982-1989, and 75th Street was constructed in 1991. A mill and overlay (1.5") was performed in 2006 on all streets, followed by a sealcoat on 75th Street in 2009 and a neighborhood sealcoat in 2017. The pavement structure is 4"-5" thick, with an aggregate base varying from 6" to 12" (9" average). Existing pavement is in fair to poor conditions, with potholes, surface stripping, and extensive pavement cracking. Spot curb repair is proposed throughout the project area. Reconstruction of the bituminous trail is proposed along Barbara Avenue from 80th Street to 75th Street to a concrete sidewalk with ADA improvements. A full bituminous trail replacement is proposed along 75th Street from Babcock Trail to the Highway 52 bridge, and the project will include a revised north/south trail crossing west of TH 52.

Sanitary Sewer consists of 1980s VCP and PVC Sanitary Sewer in good condition, with some structure repair, spot repair, and adjustments. Water includes a 1980s DIP Watermain in good condition, with gate valve adjustments, select gate valve box replacements, and select hydrant replacements. Storm Sewer consists of 1980s RCP Storm Sewer in good to fair condition, with some structure repair, select replacement, and adjustment.

The Assessment Map includes a mix of property types, consisting of 104 single-family homes, 12 twin homes, 12 townhomes, 6 apartments, 3 duplexes, and 2 City properties, for a total of 139 properties.

The Project Cost and Funding Sources for Full-Depth Reclamation include Street improvements with an assessment of \$1,066,506 and a City portion of \$1,457,050, for a total of \$2,523,556, funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Storm Sewer improvements include an assessment of \$261,796 and a City portion of \$292,056, totaling \$553,825, funded through Stormwater Capital (Fund 531). Sidewalk and Trail improvements include an assessment of \$182,396 and a City portion of \$203,500, totaling \$385,896, also funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Sanitary Sewer improvements have no assessment and a City portion of \$85,986 is funded through Sewer Capital (Fund 521). Watermain improvements have no assessment and a City portion of \$91,377 funded through Water Capital (Fund 511). In total, assessments equal \$1,510,698, the City portion equals \$2,129,969, and the combined total project cost is \$3,640,640. The assessed rate is 55% of total street, sidewalk, trail, and storm cost for full-depth reclamation projects, while trail and extra roadway width (oversize) on 75th Street are paid 100% by the City. The Preliminary Assessment is based on a feasibility rate and assessment basis that includes a charge of \$10,237 per unit for single family residential properties, while non-single-family properties are assessed at a rate of \$90.01 per adjusted front foot. Assessment terms and interest will be determined at the assessment hearing per City policy.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether the proposed concrete sidewalk replacing the existing trail would be included in the City's snow removal program or if adjacent residents would be responsible for clearing it.

Director Connolly stated that sidewalks in residential areas are typically the responsibility of adjacent property owners for snow removal. He noted that while the existing trail has been plowed in the

past, the replacement with a 5- to 6-foot-wide concrete sidewalk would shift snow removal responsibility to the adjacent property owners.

**Mayor Dietrich opened the public hearing for Project 2027-09D, Barbara Avenue Area.**

David Donnelly, 7666 Barbara Court, stated that he recently learned through the assessment process that his home is classified as a duplex, despite purchasing it in 2010 as a single-family residence after being required to remove the interior separation. He explained that the property has been used as a single-family home for 16 years, but the County continues to classify it as a duplex due to the presence of two kitchens, resulting in higher charges. He expressed concern about fairness, noting that his household is being charged at a higher rate than other single-family homes even though only one family occupies the property.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether he is currently working with the County Assessor to change the property classification and what direction he had been given.

Mr. Donnelly stated that the County is reviewing the situation but indicated a change is unlikely due to the presence of two kitchens, which would require costly modifications to remove. He noted that the lower-level kitchen is not actively used and explained that the home has functioned as a single-family residence for 16 years, with no separation between living spaces and no additional occupants during that time.

Unnamed resident stated that she attended a prior roadway meeting where the use of recycled materials, such as reclaimed asphalt or gravel, was discussed at an approximate rate of 25%. She questioned why these materials would be reused in a new roadway if they were not suitable for the existing road and asked for clarification from Council or staff.

Unnamed resident asked for clarification regarding the new sidewalk, noting that his property along Barbara has one of the longest stretches. He inquired whether he would be responsible for snow removal and whether the sidewalk would be located close to the street or set back, expressing concern that plowing operations could significantly increase the amount of snow deposited on the sidewalk that he would need to clear.

Mayor Dietrich stated that at the feasibility report stage, the project is not yet at a level of detailed design but indicated she would seek clarification to provide an answer.

Alex Bruns raised concerns about maintaining an oversized roadway on 75th Street despite the City's efforts to narrow streets elsewhere, questioning the long-term maintenance and cost implications compared to streets like 80th Street, and also questioned assessment equity, noting that multifamily properties appear to pay less per unit than single-family homes, particularly near 80th Street and Barbara Avenue, while further raising concerns about sidewalk maintenance responsibilities in areas where the City owns frontage and whether expectations are applied consistently, including considerations related to ADA compliance.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether there were specific questions staff should respond to regarding the concerns raised about the 75th Street roadway design, comparison to 80th Street, ADA compliance, and sidewalk snow removal responsibilities, or if the comments were intended as general observations.

Mr. Bruns stated that his comments included specific questions and requested responses to the three points he raised.

Engineer Ray stated that the situation regarding the duplex classification largely comes down to City policy. He explained that for single-family properties, assessments are typically applied on a per-unit basis, while multifamily properties may be assessed differently, such as by adjusted frontage. He noted that the City relies on County data to determine property classification and indicated that, due to the unique circumstances of this case, he would defer further explanation to Public Works Director Connolly.

Director Connolly stated that the situation is unique and explained that the City bases assessments on County property classifications, as the County is responsible for maintaining those records. He noted that property owners can work through the County's process to seek reclassification, and that the preliminary assessment being considered is not final and can be adjusted at the time of the assessment hearing. He added that Council retains discretion to make exceptions to the assessment policy if desired, but emphasized the importance of consistency, while also noting staff can assist the property owner in working with the County if needed.

Council Member Murphy stated that he appreciated the comments provided and encouraged the resident to reach out to his County Commissioner if he had not already done so. He also noted that he would appreciate a reminder on the matter in the future if additional Council consideration were needed.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the project design has advanced enough to determine the sidewalk location and whether staff could address concerns about snow being pushed onto the sidewalk if it is placed closer to the roadway.

Engineer Ray stated that sidewalk placement will be determined during final design, with a consistent offset from the curb established along the corridor. He noted that minor adjustments may be made in certain areas to minimize impacts, while maintaining standard sidewalk design requirements.

Mayor Dietrich asked staff to address the concern regarding the perceived oversized roadway on 75th Street in comparison to 80th Street.

Engineer Ray stated that 80th Street, which is owned and maintained by the County, was recently narrowed through a conversion project, while 75th Street remains approximately 44 feet wide. He explained that a cost-benefit analysis was conducted for narrowing similar roadway sections and found that it was not cost-effective, noting that maintenance impacts would be minimal and the current design represents the most efficient use of public funds over the long term.

Council Member T'Kach asked for clarification on whether narrowing 75th Street through striping, like the approach used on 80th Street, could provide cost or maintenance benefits by concentrating traffic and potentially reducing long-term wear and tear.

Engineer Ray stated that the City does not currently stripe roads of this type, noting that implementing striping on 75th Street would result in additional costs. He indicated that while the concept could be explored further, including a cost-benefit analysis related to pavement wear and traffic patterns, it is not part of the City's standard practice for these types of roadways.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether narrowing 75th Street east of Highway 52, even if not planned, could help slow traffic and provide a benefit to nearby residential properties.

Engineer Ray stated that a roadway narrowing analysis was completed for 75th Street east of Highway 52 as part of the feasibility report. He acknowledged there can be benefits to narrowing, such as reduced speeds and improved pedestrian safety, but noted that the recommendation

focuses on the most cost-effective approach, particularly since existing curb and infrastructure are in good condition. He explained that, while beneficial, narrowing was not identified as the preferred approach for this project based on overall cost and feasibility considerations.

Council Member Murphy referenced a resident's question regarding the use of 25% recycled material and asked staff to provide clarification.

Engineer Ray explained that the project involves full depth reclamation, which includes grinding up the existing pavement and reusing it as part of the aggregate base. He stated that while the existing bituminous pavement and underlying materials are in poor condition, the reclamation process restores the base by adding new aggregate to meet City and MnDOT specifications. He clarified that the 25% reference relates to allowable cement material in the aggregate mix and emphasized that the final product must meet Class 5 aggregate standards, resulting in no difference in performance compared to using entirely new material.

Director Connolly added that the reclaimed material is not reused in the new asphalt surface. He explained that the existing pavement is ground and repurposed as Class 5 aggregate base, while the new asphalt pavement placed on top is entirely new. He noted that this approach is cost-effective, reduces the need for hauling and excavation, and helps maintain access during construction in neighborhood areas.

Council Member T'Kach referenced discussion from the open house and asked whether, given the reported 6 to 12 inches of material, the composition becomes too cement-like at the lower depth and whether that could limit drainage and contribute to existing issues.

Engineer Ray stated that the standard for reclaimed aggregate base is typically a minimum of eight inches for residential roads, with depths of approximately 10 to 12 inches used in certain conditions. He noted that the material will meet required specifications and will not create drainage issues, as it is designed to allow proper drainage and perform similarly to new aggregate base.

Director Connolly addressed a question raised earlier by a resident regarding why multifamily properties may appear less expensive on a per-unit basis compared to single-family homes. He explained that the City's assessment policy uses an adjusted front footage method for multifamily properties, typically at a higher rate to account for expected roadway use. However, when those costs are distributed across multiple units, the per-unit cost may be lower. He added that while some multifamily properties may pay less per unit, the overall frontage-based assessment is generally higher than a comparable single-family property.

**Motion to close the 2027-09D Public Hearing for Barbara Avenue Area by Murphy, seconded by Scales.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-070 ordering improvement and authorizing preparation of plans and specifications for City Project 2027-09D for Barbara Avenue Area by Scales, seconded by T'Kach.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Project 2027-09E Full Depth Reclamation encompasses streets located within the Boyd Avenue and 75th Street Area between 70th Street and 80th Street. Streets were constructed between 1968-1993, with roads built prior to 1981 were milled and overlaid between 2004-2007, and all roads were

seal coated between 2007 and 2010. The pavement structure is 4"-5" thick, with an aggregate base that varies from 4-12" throughout the project area, averaging 7" thick. Existing pavement is in fair to poor conditions, with potholes, surface stripping, and extensive pavement cracking, and spot curb replacement is proposed throughout the project area.

Sanitary Sewer consists of 1968-1993 Sanitary Sewer (VCP and PVC) in good to fair condition, with some structure repair, spot repair, replacement, and adjustments. Water includes 1968-1993 Watermain (DIP and PCCP) in good condition, with gate valve adjustments, select gate valve box replacements, and select hydrant replacements. Storm Sewer consists of 1968-1993 Storm Sewer (RCP, CMP, and HDPE) in good to fair condition, with some structure repair, select replacement, and adjustment.

75th Street (East of Boyd) was constructed in 1976-1977, with a broad area patch completed in 2013 as a City repair that was non-assessed. Existing pavement is in poor condition, with extensive cracking and pavement degradation, and an urban section with the addition of curb and gutter recommended. Sanitary Sewer consists of a 1976 VCP Sanitary Sewer in good condition, with some structure repair, spot repair, and adjustments. Water includes a 1976 DIP Watermain in good condition, with some structure repair, spot repair, and adjustments. Storm Sewer includes a 1976 RCP Storm Sewer located in the boulevard, along with a ditch with driveway culverts, and a full replacement of the existing Storm Sewer with new Storm Sewer is proposed.

The Assessment Map includes FDR property types consisting of 309 single-family homes, 207 townhomes, 163 condominiums, 18 twin homes, 1 apartment, 1 duplex, and 5 public/institutional properties, as well as reconstruction property types consisting of 11 single-family homes and 1 public/institutional property, for a total of 716 properties.

The Project Cost and Funding Sources for Full Depth Reclamation includes Street improvements with an assessment of \$3,190,733 and a City portion of \$3,264,090, for a total of \$6,454,823, funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Storm Sewer improvements include an assessment of \$686,188 and a City portion of \$573,714, totaling \$1,259,902, funded through Stormwater Capital (Fund 531). Sidewalk and Trail improvements include an assessment of \$26,653 and a City portion of \$22,285, totaling \$48,938, also funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Sanitary Sewer improvements have no assessment and a City portion of \$457,672, totaling \$457,672, funded through Sewer Capital (Fund 521). Watermain improvements have no assessment and a City portion of \$400,514, totaling \$400,514, funded through Water Capital (Fund 511). In total, assessments equal \$3,903,575, the City portion equals \$4,718,274, and the combined total project cost is \$8,621,849. The assessed rate is 55% of the total street, sidewalk, trail, and storm cost for full-depth reclamation projects, with the rate based on adjusted front foot for common interest property applicable to each condominium and townhome association. The Preliminary Assessment is based on a feasibility rate and assessment basis that includes a charge of \$8,301 per unit for single family residential properties, \$696 to \$5,546 per unit for townhomes and condominiums, and \$72.90 per adjusted front foot for non-single-family properties. Assessment terms and interest will be determined at the assessment hearing per City policy.

The Project Cost and Funding for Full Reconstruction include Street improvements with an assessment of \$124,419 and a City portion of \$479,460, for a total of \$602,049, funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Storm Sewer improvements include an assessment of \$49,309 and a City portion of \$190,016, totaling \$239,325, funded through Stormwater Capital (Fund 531). Sidewalk and Trail improvements include an assessment of \$0 and a City portion of \$0, totaling \$0, also funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Sanitary Sewer improvements have no assessment and a City portion of \$7,779, totaling

\$7,779, funded through Sewer Capital (Fund 521). Watermain improvements have no assessment and a City portion of \$36,894, totaling \$36,894, funded through Water Capital (Fund 511). In total, assessments equal \$173,728, the City portion equals \$714,149, and the combined total project cost is \$887,887. The assessed rate is 35% of the total street and storm cost for full reconstruction projects. A Special Benefit Analysis is proposed to be completed for the benefiting properties. The Preliminary Assessment is based on a feasibility rate and assessment basis that includes a charge of \$15,793 per unit for single family residential properties. Assessment terms and interest will be determined at the assessment hearing per City policy.

Council Member T'Kach asked for clarification on the \$15,793 figure and requested that staff identify on the map which streets and properties were included in the full reconstruction area.

Engineer Ray explained that the reconstruction area is along 75th Street east of Boyd Avenue and identified the specific segment on the map. He noted that approximately 15 properties abut the project, with some access taken from Boyd Avenue, resulting in certain frontage costs being assumed by the City.

Council Member T'Kach asked for an overview of the cost-benefit analysis process related to assessments.

Engineer Ray described that the process follows State Statute, allowing local governments to assess properties based on the benefit received from improvements, such as street and stormwater work, and that assessments are tied to the increase in property value resulting from the project.

Director Connolly explained that when preliminary assessments appear high, the City may conduct a special benefit analysis using an independent appraiser to determine a reasonable benefit value. He noted that assessments are capped at that benefit and that this analysis typically occurs after feasibility and during design, prior to the assessment hearing.

### **Mayor Dietrich opened the public hearing for 2027-09E, Boyd Avenue & 75<sup>th</sup> Street Area**

Bill McLean, 7935 Boyd Avenue, stated that he supports the project but expressed concern that 75th Street appears to be assessed differently than the rest of the project and emphasized the need for fair cost distribution. He noted the project is overdue due to limited maintenance, asked whether construction will include proper techniques such as engineered saw cuts and tight tolerances around manholes to prevent future issues, and stated that full depth reclamation is an appropriate and effective approach.

Dave Ubl, 2910 75<sup>th</sup> Street East, asked whether the short stretch of 75th Street between Boyd Avenue and the ravine could be reconstructed while maintaining the existing ditch for stormwater rather than installing curb and gutter, noting potential benefits for runoff absorption. He also expressed concern about driveway approaches, citing varying designs on Boyd Avenue, and asked whether property owners would have input on achieving smoother transitions from the street to driveways.

### **Motion to close the 2027-09E Public Hearing for Boyd Avenue & 75<sup>th</sup> Street Area by T'Kach, seconded by Scales.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Mayor Dietrich asked for confirmation that assessments for the full depth reclamation portion are separate from other project areas and not shared across neighborhoods.

Engineer Ray confirmed that reconstruction and full depth reclamation costs are calculated independently and assessed only to the benefiting properties, explaining that while the work is grouped into one project for efficiency, each segment is evaluated and assessed separately.

Mayor Dietrich referenced a resident's question about engineered saw cuts and manhole alignment and asked staff to provide clarification.

Engineer Ray explained that engineered saw cuts are not used because they can increase water infiltration into the pavement structure, which accelerates deterioration from below; instead, the City relies on standard pavement practices and ongoing maintenance such as crack sealing to manage natural cracking.

Mayor Dietrich asked staff to explain the rationale for installing curb and gutter rather than maintaining the existing ditch system.

Engineer Ray explained that the existing ditch is shallow and, while ditches can be appropriate in more rural areas, they are less effective in urban settings like this. Water currently infiltrates through the ditch into the roadway base, which contributes to pavement degradation, as moisture beneath the pavement weakens the structure. Despite past maintenance efforts, the road has deteriorated quickly, leading to the proposed installation of curb, gutter, and storm sewer to direct water away from the pavement and prevent further damage. While this approach involves higher upfront costs, it is expected to reduce long-term maintenance expenses and improve overall durability. Proper stormwater infrastructure is also necessary to collect and convey runoff, as failing to do so can result in pooling issues, like challenges experienced in other projects where curb and gutter were installed without adequate storm sewer.

Mayor Dietrich asked staff to explain how driveway angles are determined and whether that would be addressed during a later phase of the project.

Engineer Ray stated that with full reconstruction, each driveway will have some level of replacement at the roadway connection, typically replaced in kind using similar materials such as bituminous or concrete. He explained that the design will aim to match the existing roadway profile as closely as possible while incorporating curb and gutter improvements, noting that adjustments may occur due to changes such as ditch filling and curb installation, but efforts will be made to minimize impacts and maintain driveway approaches that are as similar as possible to existing conditions.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether, in the next phase, residents would be notified and have the option to keep or modify the portion of their driveway that meets the roadway.

Engineer Ray stated that driveway replacements are completed in kind and that while some impacts are unavoidable due to reconstruction, including ditch filling and culvert removal, the intent during final design is to minimize impacts and keep driveway approaches as similar as possible to existing conditions.

**Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-071 ordering improvement and authorizing preparation of plans and specifications for City Project 2027-09E for Boyd Avenue & 75<sup>th</sup> Street Area by T'Kach, seconded by Gliva.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Project 2027-09F Full Depth Reclamation encompasses streets located along Blaine Avenue between College Trail and 80th Street. Streets include Blaine Avenue constructed in 1997 and seal coated in 2017, with a pavement structure that is 6"-7" thick and an aggregate base that is 7" thick

on average. Reconstruction of the bituminous trail along Blaine Avenue and ADA improvements are proposed. Utilities include no Water or Sanitary Sewer in the roadway. Storm Sewer consists of RCP and HDPE Storm Sewer installed in 1997, with the HDPE Storm Sewer needing replacement and the RCP Storm Sewer in good to fair condition, along with some structure repair, replacement, and adjustment.

The Assessment Map includes property types consisting of 6 public/institutional properties, including 5 Inver Hills Community College and 1 Inver Glen Library, as well as 1 apartment.

The Project Cost and Funding Sources for Full Depth Reclamation improvements include Street improvements with an assessment of \$575,540 and a City portion of \$542,102, for a total of \$1,117,642, funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Storm Sewer improvements include an assessment of \$251,010 and a City portion of \$236,427, totaling \$487,437, funded through Stormwater Capital (Fund 531). Sidewalk and Trail improvements include an assessment of \$58,506 and a City portion of \$55,108, totaling \$113,614, also funded through Pavement Management - Local Streets (Fund 440). Sanitary Sewer improvements have no assessment and no City portion, totaling \$0, funded through Sewer Capital (Fund 521). Watermain improvements have no assessment and no City portion, totaling \$0, funded through Water Capital (Fund 511). In total, assessments equal \$885,056, the City portion equals \$833,637, and the combined total project cost is \$1,718,692. The assessed rate is 55% of the total street, sidewalk, trail, and storm cost for full-depth reclamation projects. The Preliminary Assessment is based on a feasibility rate and assessment basis that includes a charge of \$10,051 per acre for non-single-family properties, with assessment terms and interest determined at the assessment hearing per City policy. Assessments for Inver Hills Community College requires an Improvement and Assessment Agreement as it is State of MN property.

Council Member Gliva asked whether Inver Hills Community College would have no assessment associated with the project.

Engineer Ray explained that the City would technically assess Inver Hills Community College; however, payment would be handled through an improvement agreement. He noted that under State Statute, the college is not obligated to pay a standard assessment, but through the agreement, it would contribute to project costs, which were previously combined with other assessment figures for reporting purposes.

Mayor Dietrich asked for clarification on how the assessment for the community college would function if it were not obligated to pay under State Statute.

Director Connolly explained that under the Chapter 429 assessment process, the City is authorized to assess all benefiting properties, including State, Federal, County, and private properties. However, a separate State Statute means that State-owned entities, such as the community college, are not obligated to pay those assessments directly because they are not required to budget for them.

He noted that to address this, the City enters into a separate agreement with the agency, like a JPA, in which the assessed value is established, and the entity agrees to pay based on the benefit received. Payment terms can vary, including aligning with standard assessment periods or an alternative schedule agreed upon by both parties. Coordination between staff, Council, and the agency is necessary to determine appropriate terms and ensure payment is secured.

He further explained that if the agency were unwilling to participate, the City and Council would need to evaluate whether to proceed with the project, particularly given that the community college

represents a significant portion of the benefit. He added that ongoing discussions with the college indicate recognition of the project's need and potential cooperation, including considerations related to future property use and development, and emphasized that while the assessment is still calculated per policy, a separate agreement ensures it is ultimately paid within a reasonable timeframe.

Engineer Ray stated that the City has used this same approach on previous roadway improvement projects when working with entities not obligated to pay standard assessments.

Council Member Murphy noted that if the community college agrees there is a need for the project, which is the primary hurdle, and if agreement is reached, the process can move forward; however, if not, additional decisions need to be considered.

Director Connolly stated that the key question is whether the community college recognizes the benefit of the project, noting that the roadway serves as a primary access point and supports significant traffic, indicating a clear need for improvement. He explained that the City has completed feasibility-level due diligence to outline anticipated costs and reasonableness, and that discussions with the college will continue through the design phase, with an agreement typically finalized closer to contract award. He added that this process allows time to coordinate additional needs the college may have, such as utility improvements tied to potential property use or development, and to incorporate those into the agreement. He noted that, unlike State entities, County properties do not have the same statutory protections and can be assessed directly, emphasizing that assessments must align with the benefit received.

### **Mayor Dietrich opened the public hearing for 2027-09F, Blaine Avenue Area.**

Jim Smeby, Friends of the Inver Grove Library, asked whether the library will maintain full access at all times, noting that there is only a single roadway providing entry to the site.

Alex Bruns asked for clarification on whether sidewalks are included in the project as part of the road reconstruction.

Director Connolly confirmed that the project includes replacement of an existing trail.

Mr. Bruns asked whether the trail replacement is driven by ADA compliance, noting that the existing trail in front of the library and other areas is currently not ADA compliant. Also inquired whether the improvements would affect the City's plowing responsibilities versus those of adjacent property owners, including the library, college, or nearby apartment complexes. Additionally, questioned the use of a per-acre assessment method rather than a per-footage basis, as used in other projects such as Barbara Avenue, and expressed concern regarding inconsistencies in how similar projects are being assessed.

Unnamed resident asked for clarification on assessment amounts, noting prior estimates ranged from approximately \$15,000 to around \$10,430 and closer to \$9,900, and questioned why there are differences between projects, including the increase observed in the Barber Avenue project.

### **Motion to close the 2027-09F Public Hearing for Blaine Avenue by Scales, seconded by T'Kach.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the library would maintain full access during the project phase.

Engineer Ray confirmed that full access to the library will be maintained.

Mayor Dietrich asked about ADA compliance related to the proposed sidewalk improvements.

Engineer Ray explained that no new sidewalk is proposed, but the existing trail along Blaine Avenue will remain and be improved, including repaving and ADA upgrades to pedestrian ramps and crossings.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the project would impact plowing responsibilities.

Engineer Ray stated that since the facility will remain a trail, plowing and maintenance policies will remain consistent between the County and City.

Mayor Dietrich asked about differences between per-acre and per-square-foot assessment methods.

Engineer Ray explained that assessment estimates are refined over time, noting that initial mailed estimates differed slightly from those presented at the open house and current figures, which reflect updated project costs and contractor bids.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether changes in scope during refinement can impact overall pricing.

Engineer Ray confirmed that as the feasibility report is refined, project scope and costs are continuously evaluated, and the most current and accurate figures are included in the latest report.

Mayor Dietrich encouraged residents to contact the Public Works Department or City officials directly with any additional questions.

**Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-072 Ordering improvement and authorizing preparation of plans and specifications for City Project 2027-09F for Blaine Avenue by Murphy, seconded by Scales.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried 5-0**

**7. REGULAR BUSINESS:**

- A.** Council selection of candidates for the City Administrator position and discussion on process for day of interviews.

Liza Donabauer from DDA Human Resources, Inc. stated that she was pleased to be present to guide the Council through the next step in the process of selecting the next City Administrator and thanked the group for the opportunity. She provided background that the City authorized DDA Human Resources to begin advertising the position on February 24, with the posting closing on March 24, resulting in 59 applications from individuals who submitted resumes and cover letters expressing interest in the role.

The applications were carefully reviewed, with resumes and cover letters screened not only for minimum qualifications but also for alignment with the desired attributes, projects, and initiatives outlined in the position profile. From this process, 12 semifinalists were selected, though two later withdrew, one after accepting a position with another organization and the other determining they were not ready to proceed, leaving a total of 10 semifinalists.

She explained that the semifinalists were asked to complete video interviews, a work personality index assessment evaluating strengths and potential growth areas, and an information disclosure

questionnaire. All private, nonpublic information gathered through this process was forwarded to the Council in advance to allow time for review prior to the meeting.

Following the selection of finalists, the Council will discuss preferred interview day activities as well as whether travel reimbursement for candidates is appropriate. She reminded the Council that all candidate information is considered private, nonpublic, and emphasized that no identifying details such as names, locations, or places of employment should be discussed. Each candidate has been assigned a number for reference during deliberations.

She distributed paper ballots, noting that a selection had already been received from Council Member Gliva and would be shared along with the other ballots once collected. She explained that the ballots would be used to identify three to four top candidates that Council Members are interested in meeting for in person interviews.

Ms. Donabauer stated that she had five ballots in front of her and proceeded to review them. She read the first ballot as votes for candidates 7, 9, and 6, followed by the second ballot with votes for 1, 7, 5, and 6. The third ballot included votes for 2, 4, 7, and 8, the fourth ballot included votes for 7 and 9, and the final ballot also included votes for 7 and 9.

She summarized the results as follows: Candidate 1 received 1 vote, Candidate 2 received 1 vote, Candidate 3 received 0 votes, Candidate 4 received 1 vote, Candidate 5 received 1 vote, Candidate 6 received 2 votes, Candidate 7 received 5 votes, Candidate 8 received 1 vote, Candidate 9 received 3 votes, and Candidate 10 received 0 votes. She noted that the top vote recipients were candidates 6, 7, and 9.

She then asked whether the Council felt comfortable inviting three finalists for interviews. She added that there is always the possibility that a finalist could withdraw prior to the interview stage for various reasons and, with that in mind, asked whether the Council would be comfortable proceeding with only two finalists if necessary. She noted that the remaining candidates each received zero or one vote and stated that this context may help guide discussion, particularly if there is a candidate the Council feels strongly about including in the interview pool.

Mayor Dietrich stated that she was comfortable inviting three finalists and added that if the number were reduced to two, there may need to be further discussion on the process depending on the candidates.

Council Member T'Kach stated that she was comfortable with inviting three or four finalists but noted a lack of diversity among the top vote recipients and expressed interest in potentially including additional candidates from those who received single votes to broaden the pool.

Council Member Scales stated a preference for four finalists but acknowledged the difficulty in selecting from candidates who received only one vote. He indicated he was comfortable with three and emphasized the importance of selecting the strongest candidates based on the voting results.

Council Member Gliva stated that she was comfortable with inviting three finalists and agreed that those receiving the most votes reflected the strongest interest among the Council.

Mayor Dietrich stated that she was comfortable interviewing the top three candidates.

Ms. Donabauer stated that DDA would prepare a summary of the candidates and submit it to the City to be shared as deemed appropriate, noting that at that point the candidates' names and backgrounds would become public.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether members of the group had considered more than three or four top candidates, noting that there were additional candidates with strong experience who were not included in her top selections and asking if others had a similar perspective.

Council Member Scales stated that he narrowed his selections to four candidates and spent considerable time refining his list.

Ms. Donabauer confirmed that the candidates the Council wished to invite for interviews were candidates 6, 7, and 9.

Mayor Dietrich asked what the interview process would look like, including opportunities for Council, department head input, and stakeholder involvement within the community.

Ms. Donabauer explained that the final interview day is scheduled for May 5 and referenced materials previously shared outlining potential formats. She stated that the Council would meet with each finalist for approximately 45 minutes, totaling about three hours, and noted that additional activities could be incorporated based on Council preference.

She further explained that if the Council wished to include department heads, staff, or other stakeholders, those meetings could be scheduled separately prior to the final interviews. Stakeholders involved in the process would be provided an opportunity to submit written feedback through a structured worksheet that includes questions related to general impressions, candidate strengths that will fit with the City and partner organizations, and any additional comments relevant to the decision-making process.

Ms. Donabauer stated that she would collect this feedback and present it verbally following the final interviews. She emphasized that all comments would remain focused on the role and responsibilities and would not include private nonpublic information, after which the Council would proceed with discussion and deliberation.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether sample questions could be provided for stakeholders or department heads to help guide their participation in the interview process.

Ms. Donabauer confirmed that she would provide draft interview questions and gather feedback from the Council prior to the final interviews. She explained that an orientation would be held before the interviews to review the process and allow for any final adjustments to the questions. She added that similar guidance would be provided to stakeholders to ensure consistency, noting that all finalists would be asked the same set of questions.

Council Member T'Kach referenced a recent School District Superintendent hiring process, describing it as more robust and highlighting a public question and answer session that allowed community members to engage with finalists. She stated that the format provided additional insight into the candidates and asked whether a similar approach to stakeholder engagement could be considered, allowing finalists to participate in a more open community setting.

Ms. Donabauer stated that she takes direction from the Council regarding how they would like to structure the process and who they would like to invite for participation. She explained that there are multiple ways to approach stakeholder involvement, including opening it to the public or inviting specific groups such as committee members or chairs, and emphasized that the approach is ultimately up to the Council.

Council Member T'Kach stated that she would like to see department directors involved in the process, noting that they have a different working relationship with the City Administrator and could

provide valuable insight. She suggested forming an interview panel of department directors, with input from the interim City Administrator to determine appropriate representation and mentioned the value of including tours of City facilities. She expressed concern that 45 minutes may not be sufficient time for interviews given the importance of the decision.

Ms. Donabauer acknowledged that concern and explained that the interview process includes several additional components prior to the final interview day, including background checks, testing related to verbal reasoning and mathematical skills, and in-depth conversations with current and former supervisors. She noted that this information is compiled into summaries to provide a comprehensive view of each candidate, and that by the time of the final interview, the Council will already have a strong understanding of the finalists. She added that while the interview time may seem limited, it is supported by these additional evaluation steps and asked the Council to reach consensus on the structure of the interview day so that a final schedule and logistics can be prepared.

Mayor Dietrich asked how confidentiality would be maintained if stakeholders are involved in the process.

Ms. Donabauer explained that if department heads are included in a more formal interview setting, they would be provided with an interview packet and redacted resumes that remove private and nonpublic information. She noted that if the process is expanded to include other stakeholders, they would instead receive a summary of candidate information that the City will receive, ensuring only appropriate background information is shared.

Mayor Dietrich then asked the Council for input on whether external stakeholders, such as the CVB, Chamber, or other community partners, should be involved in the process.

Council Member Murphy stated that while stakeholder input would likely be limited, he believes it is appropriate to include them in a structured and smaller scale manner.

Council Member Gliva supported involving direct reports in a structured way, noting their day-to-day role, and expressed some interest in including select stakeholders while preferring smaller, more functional formats that provide useful feedback.

Council Member Scales stated that he shared similar thoughts and emphasized the importance of seeing how candidates interact with others, particularly the public. He expressed interest in a smaller, more controlled setting rather than a large public event, suggesting that involving a few commission members could provide an opportunity to observe communication style and engagement.

Council Member T'Kach further described the School District Superintendent hiring process, noting that it included a structured and invitation only format with selected community representatives, such as former officials and partner organizations. She explained that candidates participated in both informal interaction and a focused question and answer session, which provided meaningful insight into their communication style and approach to key issues.

Mayor Dietrich asked for guidance on how a similar approach could be structured locally, including opportunities for stakeholder interaction and candidate engagement.

Ms. Donabauer responded that a similar format could be developed and coordinated with staff, including determining which stakeholders to invite and how the event would be structured.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the full process could be completed within a single day.

Ms. Donabauer explained that the schedule could include stakeholder engagement in the morning, department director sessions midday, and Council interviews at the end of the day.

Council Member Murphy asked whether the Council would have the opportunity to review and approve the interview day agenda in advance.

Ms. Donabauer confirmed that DDA would prepare a draft agenda for Council review and approval prior to the interview day.

Council Member T'Kach suggested including a small number of community representatives, such as commission members, to reflect individuals who regularly interact with the role.

Ms. Donabauer then raised the topic of travel reimbursement, noting that one finalist would be traveling from a significant distance and asking whether reimbursement would be appropriate.

Council Member Scales stated that he supported travel reimbursement within reasonable limits.

Council Member Gliva agreed, indicating support for reimbursement at a reasonable rate.

Mayor Dietrich suggested a per diem approach for lodging and travel expenses.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether a second round of interviews might be considered if needed.

Ms. Donabauer responded that if the Council is unable to reach a decision, the process could pause to consider a second interview or potentially expanding the candidate pool.

## **8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sara Scovil stated that she continues to have concerns regarding transparency and communication between the City and residents, noting that prior issues have not improved as expected. She indicated that residents are not receiving timely updates on projects or agenda items and that the website is difficult to use and not consistently updated, asking whether more reliable communication can be expected. She also raised concerns about short notice for meetings and requested at least one week's notice, adding that follow up information promised to residents was not provided. She concluded by urging the City to improve communication and engagement with residents across projects.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the remaining comments could be provided in writing so the Council could review the full input.

Ms. Scovil stated that she would provide additional comments in writing and referenced a concern she first raised two years prior regarding a zoning change placard being posted after the decision rather than in advance. She questioned the explanation that earlier posting would have cost more and expressed frustration over the lack of clarity on that issue.

Alex Bruns stated that while there is a recognized need to address limitations of the current Central Maintenance Facility, concerns remain regarding transparency and clarity around the project's scope and decision-making process. He noted that the facility has long been discussed but questioned whether the scope of work and long-term needs have been clearly defined, expressing concern that the information presented may be biased and not fully reflective of actual operational needs. He emphasized the importance of clearly identifying project goals, evaluating options, and ensuring transparent communication before moving forward.

Eric Scovil expressed frustration with how the City is spending taxpayer funds, citing large projects like the Central Maintenance Facility and the Hockey Hall of Fame moving forward without sufficient public input. He questioned the sustainability of these decisions while residents are asked to pay assessments, and urged the Council to make more responsible, long term financial decisions.

Unnamed resident stated that while growth in staffing and equipment over the past 40 years is acknowledged, the rate of increase is relatively modest when viewed annually and should not be considered surprising. The resident emphasized the need to carefully evaluate how the project is being approached and stated that the numbers should be more clearly presented and justified for residents.

Cassandra Rivera stated that immigration related issues remain ongoing in the community and expressed concern that families are still being impacted. She also raised concerns about a lack of transparency from the City, particularly regarding communication with residents and use of taxpayer funds. She emphasized the importance of greater community engagement from City leadership and called for increased diversity and representation in the City Administrator selection process to better reflect the community.

Tracy Killion stated that many communities are choosing to revert to the old Minnesota flag, expressing concern that the new design removes historical context from public view. She shared a personal connection to the State's history and emphasized the importance of the flag as a representation of Minnesota's heritage. She also raised concerns about the redesign process, citing limited representation and lack of direct public input, and noted that a petition with over 44,000 signatures supports returning to the old flag. She requested that the City consider reverting to the previous flag and place the matter on a future agenda for a vote.

## **9. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Mayor Dietrich stated that residents have expressed support for reinstating the 1983 Minnesota State flag, noting that it reflects the depth, character, and history of the State through its symbolism and honors Minnesota's agricultural roots, natural resources, and diverse population. While acknowledging that change can be inevitable, she noted that public reaction to the new flag has been largely negative, with many residents feeling a meaningful connection has been lost. She described the 1983 flag as recognizable, educational, and deeply rooted in tradition, stating that reinstating it would preserve a symbol that tells Minnesota's story with pride and clarity. The proposal was framed as an opportunity to celebrate the State's history, and she asked the Council to consider a future resolution to replace the current flag with the 1983 version and provide input on the matter.

Council Member Murphy stated that he has heard from several residents on the topic and supports bringing forward a discussion at the appropriate time, noting appreciation for residents raising the issue.

Council Member Gliva stated that she has also heard from residents and supports having a discussion on the matter.

Council Member Scales agreed and stated that he has no issue discussing the topic, noting that whether to move forward or not can be determined through that conversation.

Council Member T'Kach supported a brief discussion but stated she would prioritize other pending Council items first, noting several issues remain unaddressed, and expressed appreciation for the

public input. She also asked whether there are any legal or statutory limitations on the City changing its flag and stated she is not currently in favor of doing so.

Mayor Dietrich stated that there is majority support to move the item forward for discussion and directed that it be placed on a future agenda.

City Attorney Nason stated that there is no requirement in State Statute for the City to fly a specific version of the Minnesota State flag

Council Member Murphy stated that he received anonymous postcards expressing concern about his absence at a recent meeting and clarified that the gathering was not an officially sanctioned City Council meeting. He explained that City Code requires proper public notice when a majority of Council Members are present and indicated that this may not have been clearly communicated, which could have caused confusion. He added that he values resident feedback but aimed to provide clarity regarding the nature of the meeting.

Council Member Gliva stated that there has been increased community feedback regarding a potential data center project and noted that data centers are currently allowed in certain zoning districts, including B1, B2, general business, and industrial zones. She expressed interest in reviewing these zoning classifications to determine whether they remain appropriate for data centers and asked if the Council would support further discussion and research on the topic. The Council indicated agreement.

Council Member T'Kach stated that the zoning districts allowing data centers and the City's 2017 definition may be outdated, noting that modern data centers have different characteristics and potential risks. She suggested the Council consider a broader discussion and possibly a temporary moratorium to allow time for further review.

Council Member Gliva agreed, noting that her research indicated data centers today are significantly different from when they were originally added to the City Code.

Council Member Scales stated that he is open to discussing data centers but cautioned against considering a moratorium while an active application is under review, noting that it may not be allowed and should instead be discussed after the application process is complete.

Mayor Dietrich asked Attorney Nason whether she was prepared to provide guidance on the matter at that time.

Attorney Nason stated that she was not prepared to provide a detailed analysis but would follow up with additional information for the Council.

Council Member Scales stated that he wanted to ensure residents understand current limitations, noting that expectations should align with what is possible at this time.

He also expressed concern regarding a recent article about the Central Maintenance Facility, stating that it did not accurately reflect his understanding from the work session and caused confusion. He indicated disappointment with how the information was presented and suggested the need to clarify the project's status, potentially through a future presentation, and encouraged review of the meeting audio once available.

Council Member Murphy stated that the City is currently seeking applicants for commission appointments and encouraged residents to visit the City's website and consider applying to serve the community.

Council Member T’Kach stated for transparency that her recent communication clarified the Council has not voted to move forward with the Central Maintenance Facility in its current form. She noted that while some nuances may not have been fully reflected in prior materials, the project has not been approved to advance and additional discussion is still needed.

**10.ADJOURN:**

**Motion to Adjourn at 8:45 p.m. by Scales, seconded by T’Kach.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0          Motion carried.**

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Tammy Greenlee