

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2022–6:30 P.M.
City Hall Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Independence City Council was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mayor Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Johnson and Councilors McCoy, Betts, Grotting, and Spencer.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF: City Administrator Kaltsas. City Admin Asst Simon, and

VISITORS: (See Sign-In Sheet.)

4. ****Consent Agenda****

All items listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by Council and will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

- a. Approval of City Council Minutes from the October 4, 2022, Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable (Batch # 1; Checks Numbered 21536-2139, Batch # 2; Checks Numbered 21540-21567).
- c. Building Permit Summary – Quarter 3 (for information only).
- d. Approval to not waive the monetary limits on Tort Liability established by MN Statues, to the extent of the limits of liability coverage obtained from the LMCIT.

Motion by McCoy, second by Betts to approve the Consent Agenda. Ayes: Johnson, McCoy, Betts, Grotting, and Spencer. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 5.0

5. SET AGENDA – ANYONE NOT ON THE AGENDA CAN BE PLACED UNDER OPEN/MISC.

6. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES BY COUNCIL AND STAFF

Grotting attended the following meetings:

- Visiting properties

Spencer attended the following meetings:

- Fire Dept Open House

McCoy attended the following meetings:

- MP Fire Dept Open House
- Fire Commission Meeting
- Orono School Board Candidate Meeting

Betts attended the following meetings:

- Fire Commission Meeting
- MP Fire Dept Open House
- Police mtg (cancelled) - Staff Meeting

Johnson attended the following meetings:

- Orono School Board Candidate Meeting
- Visitation for Sharon Cook
- Wesley Bendickson funeral
- MP Fire Dept Open House
- League of MN Cities 8 webinars
- MP Fire Dept Meeting
- Wright HN Co-op dinner,
- MP Chamber of Commerce,
- Energy and Environmental Natural Resources Zoom,
- Senator Limmer event – Loretto
- MN Prayer Breakfast virtually
- American Experiment – Waconia, Tulsi Gabbard, Hawaii speaker

7. Jon Dailing/Windsong Farm Golf Club (Applicant) and David Meyer (Owner) are requesting the following action for the property generally located at and adjacent to 8590 County Road 92 N (PID No.s 32-118- 24-23-0001, 32-118-24-22-0003, 32-118-24-22-0002, 32-118-24-13-0002, 32- 118-24-12-0003 and 32-118-24-12-0004) in the City of Independence, MN:

- a. **RESOLUTION NO. 22-1018-01** – Considering approval of a conditional use permit amendment to allow the development of a new 18- hole golf course and associated site improvements on the subject properties.

Kaltsas recapped packet pages 19-49. Conversion from AG to potential golf course to allow it to exist as a private golf course. Converting land on N side of 6 to a new 18-hole golf course. Zone AG and guided by public semipublic. It is a place holder zoning. We are leaving it as an AG property and considering this Conditional Use Permit/CUP amendment. The City approved North side to be developed as a practice facility and driving range in the past. Prior to that was overflow parking and tunnel under Co Rd 6. The Applicant wasn't interested in driving range plan but wanted to develop a new 18-hole golf course. In review of that the EAW kicked in requirement. AG converted to golf course triggered the EAW along with the acreage amount. A final resolution is required but we are waiting on some more info. There is no further environmental review required and with lack of comments relating to environmental impact, there is a negative declaration. Applicant is wanting to expand golf course with new 18-hole course on the North side

of their property, amending the CUP to expand the existing one. This is a second private course and utilized by membership in place or expansion of it. It includes a 1,400 sq ft seasonal starter house with 400 sq ft bathroom facility in the middle of the course. Those are the only 2 built buildings on North side. Additionally, they'd be expanding parking new driveway off Co Rd 6. We looked at parking and CUP and impacts. It would look and feel very similar to South side of Co Rd 6 with berming to screen from Co Rd 6 on both sides. We will have 3 adjacent golf courses with Pioneer golf course. There are 2 horse farms on the N and one on the E that it would abut. Demand for parking, natural resources, drainage, impacts. There is an extensive mitigation permit plan for a wetland, under ½ acre of 46 acres total. They are cutting and filling approximately 100 acres, moving 170 cu yds devoting 65 acres of turf grass which is typical. 92 new parking spaces being created. Our ratios of 5-6 spaces per hole (106 This would equate to 106 parking spaces required for the North course. The applicant has 137 parking spaces on the South side of Co Rd 6. The total number of parking spaces on both the North and South sides is proposed to be 237 spaces. The total number would exceed the general standard of approximately 212. This is reasonable as it will service a lot of their existing members. Similar to the South side, curb and gutter coming into the spaces. PC recommended bituminous paving this is permanent parking, not temporary. Parking lot proposed illuminated that would not spill out light outside of property boundaries. Watershed of the stormwater management plan needs to be approved. Our approval is subject to them finalizing it. The City received a couple verbal comments, none written. The PC recommendation to approve subject to the list of conditions and City approval. EAW comments are provided. We will make negative declaration through formal resolution.

Betts – You said seasonal buildings. Do they close that up in the Winter?

Jon- They will be like our existing bathrooms, waterlines drained and shut off.

McCoy – It is being identified as 18 Golf Walk; I think we should work with applicant for emergency calls to identify what side of the road. It would be nice to have some identifier to get responders to the right place quicker. They're all on the same phone system.

Johnson – Is there any water in Fox Lake?

Jon – Yes there still is.

Johnson – How often do the apartments get used?

Jon – It is used almost every single day. For meetings during the summer, on average they're used 4-5 nights a week.

Johnson – This golf course is slightly easier than the other one?

Jon – Yes. There isn't much water you are hitting the ball over. 3-4 par 3's. The green complexes can still be tricky but for all ages and skill level. Ever since Covid, golf became very popular. Now you need to set a T time.

Johnson – We do not need to rezone since it is under the AG zoning.

Motion by Grotting, second by McCoy to approve RESOLUTION NO. 22-1018-01 –to amend the conditional use permit for the Windsong Farms Golf Club located at 18 Golf Walk. Ayes: Johnson, McCoy, Betts, Spencer, and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 5:0

8. Consideration of an amendment to Chapter II, Section 210.01 to align municipal elections with local, state and national election schedules.

a. **ORDINANCE NO. 2022-07** – Approving an amendment to Chapter II, Section 210.01 of the Independence City Code.

Kaltsas - We have had this discussion a couple times on election cycle, we noted that the City is one of the few in the area that does an odd year election. We have fairly low voter turnout on odd years and quite a bit of resources used. School districts have been pulling out of odd years as well, so should we realign with them? Data going back shows that we have a 20% voter turnout vs. 80% voter turnout. So thousands of residents are not voting on local issues but are on statewide issues. Cost savings, staff resource savings, getting the most voters out are all being considered. Even year elections bring out significantly more voters. Independence has an 80% vote rate, which is very high. Local elections are 20% or less. We aren't capturing the voice of the people and that's why we are talking about it.

Johnson – In some of those higher years, it was a school levy bond referendum that brought out voters.

Kaltsas – Mound Westonka is the only one that still has odd years, and they would just host their own if needed. All other districts are in even years now. Independence has 2,815 resident voters, and we consistently get in the 500's range for odd year elections, but in the even year elections, we get 2,200 voter turnout range. Cost issue of \$10-15k every election, requirements, staff time, trainings. There's never a good time to make a change and it will always impact election cycle, but we are in a non-election year so it wouldn't impact much.

Johnson – When you have odd year elections and there is no other election besides City elections, do the same rules apply as a normal election?

Kaltsas – Yes, the same rules apply.

McCoy – Does the cost include staff time?

Kaltsas – Physical dollars are tracked, \$5,000 are budgeted for election judges' time. Staff cost is not. But we spend weeks of staff time on trying to put on an election, trainings online, people at the window, ballots, etc. Time is hard to separate, staff multi-task. Requirements are more and more robust. We deal with it but with school districts changing and having low voter turnouts, questioning if we should align and additionally save some money.

Betts – I think this is logical and have been wanting to see this happen for a few years now.

Motion by Betts, second by Spencer to accept Ordinance No. 2022-07.

Johnson opened the Public Hearing.

Thompson shared concerns about the Orono school district issue with extending an extra year.

Johnson – That's what would happen too. Adding an extra year.

McCoy – For our next election cycle instead of 4-year terms, I'd rather do two 3-year terms than extend my term one year. We can't cut it short this year since it's too late, but I'd rather run for a 3-year term than extend myself a year. It'll take us longer to get there, but I do fully support have even year elections.

Spencer – It would effectively extend everyone by 1 year. The only other way you can do it is to wait until next year and vote for cutting terms to 3 years for the next 2 elections.

Kaltsas – You are going to have to offset somebody.

McCoy – We all get extended or cut to 3 years.

Spencer – If we didn't do it this year, we'd do it next year. We can't do it this year because it's too late. You could shorten your term next year.

McCoy – No, we expire. (Discussed cycle dates that were tricky.)

Spencer – Cutting terms running for a 3 yr term, now you see why most do it the other way to extend and we would need to be running 2 3-yr off year elections or extending everyone by one year. Now you see why most do it this way.

Betts – We save more money by doing it this way.

McCoy- Optics. I know.

Spencer – If we had political climate where we were filling the hall at all the Council meetings, I would worry about it more. Orono had contentious school board meetings. But this seems to be different. I don't know if the \$142 month. (laughter) The maybe it's self-dealing. It's very complicated to do it the other way.

McCoy – I totally support moving to even year elections.

Betts- We are wasting money.

Spencer – It'll be pretty quiet with school district questions this year.

Johnson – We have a motion... I would like to see this tabled until our next meeting to see if any residents would comment on it. I know it was noticed and I haven't received any comments.

Spencer – I would agree with tabling it. If we did it within this calendar year.

Kaltsas – There isn't a rush on it.

Tabling it overrides the motion.

Motion by Spencer, second by McCoy to table Ordinance 2022-07 –Ayes: Johnson, McCoy, Betts, Spencer, and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED TABLED. 5:0.

9. Park Development and Hennepin County Facilities Grant Discussion.

Kaltsas – This is regarding a Pioneer Park improvement. We've tried to partner with some organizations historically to help with costs. We have had a couple different plans to make improvements. Hennepin Cty came out late Sept. /early Oct with a deadline of Nov 1 to apply for some grants. We haven't been able to put together a plan with any organizations to partner on a grant, but Orono youth baseball has been pretty serious. A special meeting prior to Nov 1 to pass a resolution would be needed if we want to move forward. The master plan shows some ideas to get the most out of it. Soccer field multi-purpose layout, seasonal parking, grading/drainage work to make them good fields. You can use it for T-ball, football, ultimate Frisbee, flag football, soccer, etc. Cost estimate associated is \$300k. It is not dividable. This is a possible project. We had discussions with Orono softball – 2 softball fields on the East side- a little over a year ago, not a lot of financial support from them. A smaller percentage would use it. Estimate was \$350k not including irrigation, lighting, benches, etc. Lots of earth work will be needed. Lastly, 2 tennis courts- know that pickleball has taken over and lots of interest. Engineers did 2 courts with estimate of \$330k. Asphalt, fencing, screening, and striped to convert to either court. The HN Cty grant funds up to \$300k targeted at youth sports. Goal of leveraging funds – we have \$199k where we could match them. You get scored on % of matching. We want to get that park utilized. We wanted to see if there was any direction towards one project over the other.

Johnson – Loretto had good luck for some of this.

Kaltsas – I think we would have a good shot at a grant. They like to disperse funds to those who haven't asked much.

Betts – What is one of the number one fields that is always in use? Soccer?

Kaltsas – All of the sports are looking for fields all of the time. We are split a little between Delano and Orono. Soccer is still looking for space. I haven't discussed as much with Delano organizations.

Spencer – I have had considerable amount of maintenance involvement, and I would love to see the soccer fields developed. But without a partnership with strong local organization funding, it is going to turn into a maintenance tail with the City to maintain it all. If we had a Orono soccer organization as a partnership to help maintain the facility. I don't think we have time to put anything like that together before Nov. 1. It can be expensive to take care of. That short turnaround time that rules out 2 of the 3. That leaves you with the tennis courts and pickleball. There's not a lot of maintenance with an asphalt pad. I would not put in a baseball field without having a partnership first.

Betts – Likely the tennis and pickleball courts would get a lot of use out of residents.

Kaltsas – Orono Baseball called last week. We have developments coming in with park dedication once they build out. We can start with a project and then do another project if we can come up with a partnership for another one. We are just trying to get the park used.

Spencer – We would have to do it in phases

Johnson – When do we need to have it built?

Kaltsas – Spring. We'd have to be ready to build it next year. With tennis courts, it would be harder to have youth interest. But you can put a basketball hoop on a tennis court as well. We won't stop trying to partner within the community. Softball really wants a 4-field cloverleaf, but we can only do 2. Baseball wants more than 1 but we don't have the space unless we redesigned it to be mostly baseball.

McCoy – 7-8 people reached out about softball/baseball in recent months.

Kaltsas - If you wouldn't build baseball, you could get a 3rd field in for softball. But then the \$350 for 2 without the extras.

Betts – I think we should pursue pickleball/tennis.

Johnson – Is that ok and then call a special meeting?

Spencer – Reach out to Delano and Orono Tennis to see if they would be interested Delano only has 3 courts. Both coaches would probably be interested or would write a letter of support.

McCoy – J Palmer might be willing to give it a once over. There's no concession stand on here and it would be worth having the relook at this.

Grotting - Are you going after highest volume sports?

Kaltsas – Mound-Westonka is the largest youth soccer approached us and broke down our city's numbers.

Re: parks - We had a resident that had passed away on Lindgren Lane and others had asked if they could put in a memorial bench, picnic table, or tree?

Spencer – Since we don't know what we are going to do with that City land, so something that would be able to relocate (bench or table) would be best.

10. Open/Misc. -

11. Adjourn.

Motion by Spencer, second by McCoy to adjourn the meeting at 7:41pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Johnson / Recording Secretary