

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
ANOKA COUNTY**

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION NOTES
JULY 14, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Work Session was called to order at 6:02 pm by Mayor Steve Feldman. at the Public Works/Police Facility, 4058 St. Francis Blvd.

Present were Mayor Steve Feldman, Council members Robert Bauer, Sarah Udvig, Kevin Robinson and. Joe Muehlbauer excused. Also present were City Administrator Joe Kohlmann, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Community Development Director Kate Thunstrom, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, Public Works Director Jason Windingstad, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt and Community Development Specialist Jodie Steffes.

2. Police Department Discussion

Police Chief Todd Schwieger discussed the need and value of the 12th officer that was added in 2018. When the St. Francis Schools chose to eliminate a School Resource officer position in 2019, the City Council gave direction for the police department to forward with the implementation of a Community Resource Officer. Officer Hearn was assigned to this position in September of 2019 is very proactive within the community and plays a large role in the department's community outreach programs. This position has provided value to the department, new community outreach programs, social media, and enforcing rental housing ordinance violations, and assisting Community Development in enforcing designated code violations. With the recent resignation of Officer Jody Black the department would like to be able to maintain 12 officers and the Community Resource Officer position. Therefore, be able to fill the open position.

After discussion, the council agreed to stay with 12 officers and move forward with filling the vacancy.

3. Bridge Street Discussion

City Administrator Joe Kohlmann stated when the City constructed a new wastewater plan that allowed for a considerable amount of increase urban growth within St. Francis. An Economic Development Study began in 2016. The St. Francis Forward Plan included a comprehensive analysis of the City's two major commercial corridors – Highway 47 and Bridge Street. Surveys and interviews were conducted with members of the community. Survey responses supported the significant investment the City has made into Bridge Street. A comprehensive building condition inventory was conducted in 2018 to inventory current conditions and future needs. Both the fire station and city hall recommended square footage be much large than it is today. One of the potential courses of action recommended by the St. Francis Forward Plan was for the City to invest in a new civic use on Bridge Street at the existing Fire Department building Site. This could potentially include a City Hall/Fire Station use for the site. I will turn it over to Kate (Thunstrom) to provide a

verbal overview on the department's experience and conversations on marketing the Bridge Street area.

Thunstrom provided maps along property. She first pointed out all City owned property along Bridge Street. Bridge Street continues to transition. The city has acquired blighted properties along Bridge Street. Both the Hardware Store and Rum River Inn have gone on the market. The Rum River Inn is on the historical registry. The cost to remodel the former Oakland building also has a large remodeling cost associated to it. Flo's Beauty Shop along with a rental property on the corner of Bridge and Ambassador Blvd. are owned by the same person and is for sale. There is interest but the remodeling cost of the current buildings for sale is large. If we moved to Bridge Street maybe it would jump-start the area.

Feldman agreed a new city hall and fire station on Bridge Street would give a jump-start to Bridge Street.

Robinson said there is a lot to digest. I think city hall could be on this site maybe not the fire station. What about the post office be a tenant. Thunstrom said maybe we also speak with Anoka County Library too. There will need to be lot line adjustments for the Hardware Store when it is sold.

Udvig said she too said there is a lot to take in. Is the area large enough for both city hall and a fire station. We just need to be financially responsible for our citizens.

Feldman said we have been putting a lot of money into the fire station and city hall is very tight. They could use more room.

Bauer agreed I think we need to expand but I think we need to have discussion with Anoka County Library, post office. We also need to find out what Anoka County is going to do with the intersection of Bridge and Ambassador Blvd.

Discussion was held on the intersection and will there be a roundabout there. Thunstrom stated if we do purchase that property and have a design it would need to go to Anoka County for their comments.

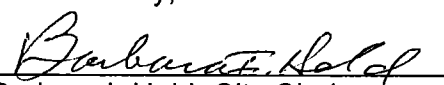
Council agreed maybe the city should explore the potential purchase of Flo's and the house on the corner of Bridge and Ambassador Blvd., four parcels. Potentially look at EDA funds and liquor funds for the purchase of the four parcels.

Feldman said he had a resident address him about an easement concern and MS4 fees.

4. **Adjournment**

Mayor Feldman adjourned the work session at 8:42 pm.

Submitted by,


Barbara I. Held, City Clerk