

**City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – July 18, 2017
Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Uzpen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers Artig-Swomley, Kuny and Lindner were present. Others in attendance: Ben Johnson, Planning Commission Chair, Justin Gese, City Engineer. Citizens: sign in sheet not available.

July 18, 2017, Agenda

A motion was made by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, seconded by Councilmember Lindner to approve the agenda for July 18, 2017, motion passed. Agenda approved.

Minutes

Councilmember Artig-Swomley made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Lindner to approve the minutes for June 20, 2017, motion passed. Minutes approved.

Committee Reports

Ben Johnson, Planning Commission chair stated there was no quorum present for the July 5, 2017, Planning Commission meeting.

Old Business

Newsletter ideas –Profile on new planning commission member Leonard Cacioppo, Dan Marier retirement from Planning Commission, data on recycling, buffers in city zones and how they came to be, VLAWMO buffers, information soliciting volunteers for the planning commission and city council. Next edition will be for August/September.

New Business

Councilmember Artig-Swomley on Leadership

Councilmember Artig-Swomley gave an overview concerning leadership going forward for the City of Gem Lake. The past council meeting was particularly difficult on the council, with several members wishing to resign and two councilmembers received threatening letters. Of the 47 calls she received, only one person wanted to serve in a leadership capacity for the city. Thank you, Len Cacioppo for volunteering to be on the planning commission. How did the council find themselves in this situation? Rumors were started and spread to citizens even before information was received on the proposal. Some of the rumors heard, “this is Mayor Bob’s park, the field isn’t really wet, the buffer was created for the Mayor, Justin Short is in on this.” This became very personal and if that was the goal, mission accomplished. What could we have done about this? Some citizens’ who attended the planning commission or city council meeting hadn’t been to one meeting in 10 years, whereas the council has meet over 400 times in that 10 year period. What was attempted to communicate to the citizens via the planning commission and the City Council was that if the city purchased the land, the city would be able to control the density of this property. The city had at the time three developers and still has three developers interesting in developing the land. Citizens need to keep in mind whatever happens with the land on County Road E will affect large land tracts in the City of Gem Lake, the Hoeschler’s and Kunin’s property, the golf course. Citizens also are reminded that the City has to answer to the Met Council for growth and development in the city. Another item that came up was the buffer on the land, where did

that originate from? That was put in place by Putnam Planning and Design in a project for the City of Gem Lake's business district in 2007.

The personal attacks on the Mayor were uncalled for. Mayor Bob since taking office has done an amazing job with the city financials, spearheading the water project for the business district which in turn helps the business district with growth and development, saving the city over \$85,000 in the first year he was elected by replacement of the City Clerk. In 2018 the city will save over \$30,000 by negotiating new law enforcement protection with the City of White Bear Lake. Councilmember Kuny, Lindner and Artig-Swomley thanked the Mayor for his dedication and service. Ms. Artig-Swomley went on to say that of the 47 calls she received in regards to the property purchase, 25% of citizens were in favor of the proposal. She wondered if those citizens were at the meeting but were too intimidated to speak as such.

Citizens needs to keep in mind that 42 cities in Minnesota have no mayor and 100 cities have a compromised city council. No one wants to be on the council or be the Mayor. And in Gem Lake, who would want to step up in a leadership role after what happened at the Planning Commission meeting and the City Council meeting? Councilmember Kuny stated that she was afraid for her family and her family's safety.

Councilmember Artig-Swomley then spoke further on the leadership crisis and about the toll this has taken on the current city leaders. What to do? Keep recruiting volunteers to do things that need to be done, make citizens aware of what current leaders have done, just on the new land use ordinance alone, Councilmember Linder, Paul Emeott, Commissioner Johnson and a host of others have spent over 500 hours of their own time working on the new land use ordinance. Although it seems counterproductive, current leadership needs to stop volunteering so much of their own time, councilmembers currently have saved the city over \$40,000 by volunteering to write much of the comprehensive plan and many other projects too numerous to mention. We need more volunteers to step up to take on these tasks.

We need to do some soul searching on how do we bring back our city together? She looked a number of cities web sites in addition to the League of Minnesota Cities and came up with a simple set of guidelines to address future meetings. The proposed guideline wording was taken from the League of Minnesota Cities, the cities of Watertown and Shoreview. These guidelines have been reviewed and approved by the City Attorney. Future meetings will adhere to these guidelines. The guidelines will be posted on line, posted on the city bulletin board in the vestibule and at city meetings until the end of 2017. Following 2017 they will be posted on line on the city's web site and posted in the city bulletin board. One change to the guidelines was made, changing the guidelines to read "council meetings, planning commission and public hearings."

Guideline for Gem Lake Meetings

Effective July 18, 2017, the City of Gem Lake proposed the adoption of guidelines for all city meetings. Guidelines will be posted on the web site, in the lobby of city hall and at the sign in sheet for all city meetings. The guidelines were modeled from the cities of Shoreview and Watertown and were reviewed and approved by the City attorney. Councilmember Lindner made a motion to accept the guidelines with one change, changing the title of the document to read all city meetings, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, motion passed. The City of Gem Lake guidelines were adopted.

Resolution 2017-08 – Replot of 19 Daniels Farm Road

11 Daniels Farm Road is purchasing .18 acres from 19 Daniels Farm Road. A motion was made by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, seconded by Councilmember Lindner to approve Resolution 2017-08, replot of 19 Daniels Farm Road, motion passed. Resolution approved.

Resolution 2017-09 – Leonard Cacioppo application to serve as a member of City of Gem Lake Planning Commission

Councilmember Artig-Swomley made a motion to approve Resolution 2017-09, Leonard Cacioppo application to serve as a member of City of Gem Lake Planning Commission for a five year term, 2017-2022, seconded by Councilmember Lindner. Motion passed. Leonard Cacioppo approved as member of the City of Gem Planning Commission for a five year term, 2017 – 2022.

Shawn Pehrson’s request to hook up his rental property to the sewer manhole instead of replacing the septic system

4140 Otter Lake was issued a citation for a failed septic system in November, 2016. The property owners have appeared in court and requested that the city allow them to hook up to the sewer manhole that feeds to homeowners on Scheuneman Road, Hillary Farms and Kahl Circle. The City of Gem Lake doesn’t have a reserve to fix the manhole if there are problems with this direct hook up, if there is an issue the City of Gem Lake will be financially responsible for repair. This property has been failing for over two plus years, other residents have had failing systems and have found financial means to pay for their repairs, the Department of Agriculture has funds that homeowners can apply for to repair their systems. A motion was made to approve the hook up of 4140 Otter Lake Road to the city manhole by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, seconded by Councilmember Lindner, all councilmember were opposed, and motion didn’t pass. City Attorney will send a letter to the prosecuting attorney with the council’s decision.

Claims for the month of July, 2017

A motion was made by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley to approve the claims for July, 2017. Motion passed. Claims approved.

Monthly Financial Reports

Approved. Mayor Uzpen reminded the council that it is the time of year for the 2018 budget. Noted that the City has received their funds and six months of reserves are on hand. Discussion took place about charitable gambling funds and possible charities. Mayor Uzpen will check with the high school about athletic donations, a suggestion for AED and Sharing and Caring hands. Will revisit at a future meeting.

Presentations from the Public

Mark Pryor, attorney for 4140 Otter Lake Road asked about the process for the failing septic. Council assured Mr. Pryor that the councilmembers have adequate information about the property to make their decision. Councilmember Artig-Swomley reminded residents to be vigilant about potential burglaries staking out properties. She had an encounter at her residence with a driver and passenger in a white van and felt they were “casing” her property.

Next Meetings

City of Gem Lake Workshop for Monday, August 14, 7:00 p.m. Next City Council meeting, Tuesday, August 15, 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Artig-Swomley, the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gloria Tessier