

**SHOREVIEW CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING  
MINUTES  
March 11, 2013**

**ATTENDEES:**

City Council: Mayor Martin; Councilmembers Johnson, Quigley and Wickstrom

Councilmember Withhart was absent.

Staff: Terry Schwerm, City Manager  
Jeanne Haapala, Finance Director  
Fred Espe, Asst. Finance Director

Ramsey County Library System Paula Mielke, Library Board Chair  
Blake Huffman, Ramsey County Commissioner  
Susan Nemitz, Library Director  
Eilenne Boder, Shoreview Library  
Bill Michel, Maplewood Library Manager

Lakeshore Players Joan Elwell, Executive Director  
Dean Elwell

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**REVIEW OF SHOREVIEW LIBRARY EXPANSION PLANS**

**Presentation by Library Board Director Sue Nemitz**

In Minnesota, under state statute, library boards are empowered as a separate entity from counties and cities. A seven-member library board manages day-to-day operations for the Ramsey County Library System. The Ramsey County Commissioners control the levy.

The Board represents the seven districts for suburban Ramsey County. The seven libraries serve 224,000 residents with a budget of approximately \$1.8 million each year. Primary sources of funding in addition to the levy are fines and fees.

In 2008, a master plan was done to consider ways the facilities could work together systematically. Shoreview, Maplewood and Roseville were identified to become regional libraries. The Plan considered turning over two floors of the Shoreview Library to library use

by moving administrative offices out. A second consideration would be to add to the public service space with an upper level addition. It has been determined that it would be most cost effective to keep the administration in the basement.

The Shoreview facility was built in 1999 and has HVAC and infrastructure issues. There are also issues with a small drop-off dock, electrical acoustics and sight lines. Circulation of materials has increased 208% since 1999. Since the building was built, public computers have been added to library service. The children and teenage sections are small but very popular. Approximately 40% of total circulation is for children, and that section has less than 15% of the space. The teenage section needs to be separated from the children's section. Use of computers is best managed in a large open space. Cords are everywhere. There are only a few small group study spaces. Work flow in the building is not efficient. The book drop is in the back and does not meet fire code. Book processing requires handling the books twice--picking them up from a concrete floor and then processing.

The feasibility study included a community survey that was taken last winter. Issues identified are changing demographics with an aging population, the need for children's and teen programs, family programming, technology learning and putting in a restaurant/coffee shop. The recommendations call for authorization of \$9.9 million to renovate and expand the library. The current 28,000 square feet would be remodeled, and about 10,000 square feet would be a new addition. Construction would begin August, 2015.

The entryway would be extended further in front to include a book drop, which would reduce parking. That is not a problem with one-hour parking. The space used for a book drop now would allow purchase of a book sorting machine. More space would be made available in the basement for technical systems. Consideration is also being given to purchasing the residential property to the south that would allow construction of a new building with a multi-use partner.

A request has been made to the County Board of Commissioners for \$9.9 million for the Shoreview Library. A separate request has been made to Ramsey County to purchase the houses south of the library site. There is no interest in using condemnation proceedings, but acquiring these properties is the growth opportunity for the library in the future. The goal is to improve the library's visibility from Highway 96.

Commissioner Huffman encouraged the Library Board to anticipate what could happen if the two properties were purchased. A new library could be built. The existing library would not be torn down, but the large size would achieve efficiency and visibility. How the County spends \$10 million must be considered thoughtfully. That amount of money could build a new building to the south that would have improved visibility from Highway 96.

Ms. Mielke noted that the current plan is not contingent upon purchase of the land. However, for that amount of money and the visibility that could be achieved from Highway 96, it is worth looking into the land purchase.

Mayor Martin noted that the City donated the land for the existing site of the library. The Master Plan for the Commons area calls for acquiring the two properties to the south for a possible civic performing arts center. She would be interested in looking at such a possibility.

Councilmember Quigley stated that purchase of the properties to the south would allow for the expansion of various forms of educational opportunities.

Ms. Nemitz discussed various partnerships that could develop with the purchase of the land to the south, such as with the City, expanded County services, performing arts, school district. It is expected that the County Board will consider funding sometime this summer with final approval by the end of the year. New construction is planned for August 2015. Whether remodeling or constructing a new building, it is anticipated that the library would be closed 14 months and reopen in September, 2016. It is too expensive to consider a temporary location.

Commissioner Huffman stated that purchase of the property to the south is not urgent, but the County Board is looking to gain the most for this amount of money.

### **Lakeshore Players Presentation by Joan Elwell**

The Lakeshore Players are not committed to staying in White Bear Lake. The group is a community theater in need of space. Lakeshore Players has been in its current location since the 1970s, and the building has repair issues. The biggest problem is accessibility. It is not ADA accessible, and there are a lot of stairs. Parking is limited.

The group has done considerable outreach with children's programs and taking shows to the Landmark Center in St. Paul. The season consists of seven productions--three plays, two musicals and two children's shows. Acting classes are available for pre-schoolers through 12th grade. Arts education is a big part of the program. The current database has 9,000 households; half are in Ramsey County. More than 300 are from Shoreview, and 48% are seniors.

A feasibility study was done last summer for a new building. The design is for a 14,000 square foot facility with large lobby. Approximately 100 seats would be added, and there would be rehearsal space. The vision is to have two separate seasons--the main stage season, and simultaneously ongoing children's shows.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that she could also see a performing arts center accommodating the band and Gallery 96 as well as other organizations. Whatever is built needs to fit into the Commons Master Plan.

Mayor Martin stated that if there is interest in a performing arts center, a vision is needed as to how that would work with the library.

Ms. Elwell stated that Lakeshore Players anticipates the cost of a new building at \$4 to \$4.5 million. A site and building plan is needed before money can be raised. The feasibility study indicates a lot of interest. She anticipates achieving funding for a new facility to be a 3- to 5-year process. The annual budget of Lakeshore Players is \$365,000 from grants and individual donations.

Ms. Nemitz stated that a partnership with the Lakeshore Players has not been discussed by the Library Board. A multi-use building has been discussed. The City would have to take the lead on a building for multi-generational uses.

Mayor Martin stated that the proposal has two parts. One is to embrace the concept of expansion and Shoreview being considered a regional library. The second would be purchase of the land and the potential for a new partner.

Councilmember Johnson stated that a new civic building would serve all ages. She is encouraged by the discussion and the necessity that the library has to expand. She would be in full support.

Commissioner Huffman stated that the County would purchase the first house. Mr. Schwerm noted that there have been discussions with the owner of the first property, but the owner of the second property has not been approached.

### **REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL GOAL SETTING REPORT**

Mr. Schwerm reviewed the four key goals and action steps identified by the Council at its goal-setting session and asked if the Council had anything to add or change. The four key goals are:

Financial Stability - continuously work to maintain and further improve long-term financial stability for the City.

Community Facilities - update and expand public facilities, parks, and trails to enhance the City's quality of life.

Economic Development - improve the environment for business expansion, redevelopment and neighborhoods through outreach efforts and selected financial participation. The key is to build on business retention and expansion. The Council will review the Economic Development (EDA) Work Plan at the next workshop.

Develop Shoreview as a “community for all ages” that provides housing choices, public amenities, services and resources for all residents regardless of age.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that an additional goal would be to organize an increase of opportunities for public transportation.

Mayor Martin agreed stating that transit for the region is very important. She referred Councilmembers to the Itasca Study Report, which shows how transit impacts employment.

Mr. Schwerm stated that the City is in the process of a website upgrade that will be used for social communication and media tools to tell Shoreview’s story--great school district, good parks and trails and other amenities. There is a proposal for an interactive website to show services available and how best to access them with a City link. The City can get 100 hours of time through CTV for video productions.

Staff will work on the action steps for the identified goals and begin with looking at the Community Center expansion costs and making sure they are in the capital improvement program (CIP). The overall goal is to be a premier community in the metro area where people want to raise families. As much as possible will be done to communicate the Council’s goals.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that some goals are identified, but some come from needs. She would like to see needs that arise connected to the four goals from the Council’s goal-setting session.

Councilmember Johnson stated that everything must be transparent. Otherwise, the public is not following with the Council.

Mayor Martin stated that the four goals are the City’s core values, what is important, what decisions are based on.

It was the consensus of the Council for staff to communicate and review goals and accomplishments with the Council bi-annually.

### **DISCUSSION REGARDING FRANCHISE FEES**

Consideration is being given to establishing franchise fees on electric and gas utilities. The City’s franchise fees for these two initiatives would allow the opportunity to do this, which would be a source of new revenue for the City. The City is eligible to receive up to 5% of gross utility revenues. A flat fee per household and commercial entity would be implemented. A notice of 90 days must be given to Xcel Energy before adoption of an ordinance. An estimated \$825,000 per year in new revenue would be available to the City with 2.5% of gross revenues.

Projects creep up in cost from what is listed in the CIP. The outdoor water play area is something that could be done with this revenue, an estimated cost of \$500,000. It is being planned for 2016. Other projects that could be funded with this new revenue source include the Commons Master Plan, Community Center addition, and park and trail improvements.

There are three options for implementing a franchise fee system:

1. Dedicate franchise fees to the Street Renewal Fund. The City's current street renewal levy is \$850,000; a 2.5% franchise fee would generate approximately this amount.
2. Dedicate franchise fees to the existing Capital Improvement Fund.
3. Dedicate franchise fees to a new Community Investment Fund to be used on new projects that provide community wide benefit.

Ms. Haapala stated that it is important to set the fee at the level of funding needed. It is not a fee that would be changed each year.

Mr. Schwerm stated that a Community Investment Fund would build a balance to better serve the City in the future instead of the revenue just being used for new projects. Fees at 2.5% would mean a \$3.75 difference in utility bills.

It was the consensus of the Council to begin the notice process and contact Xcel Energy. The Council will continue to talk about the various options for this revenue.

Councilmember Wickstrom stated that she has always resisted taking this action because it is not deductible from income taxes. However, she understands the need to diversify revenue sources and will support it.

Councilmember Quigley stated that overall, this will enable the City to do more and keep the levy low. He cautioned that the use of this income needs to be framed and presented carefully identifying exactly what it is to be used for.

Councilmember Johnson stated that at \$3.75 per household per month, the benefits are tangible rather than being just another fee. She asked the reason the Council has waited this long to take advantage of this source of revenue. Mr. Schwerm explained that the City refrained from implementing franchise fees because of the struggling economy. The Council has done only modest tax increases for street renewal and the General Fixed Asset Revolving Fund. As the economy recovers, the timing is better.

It was the consensus of the Council to consider a franchise fee at 2.5%.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Einhausen Visit**

Both the Sister City Association and Einhausen have asked if any Councilmembers are planning to participate in the visit to Einhausen this year. Councilmember Wickstrom stated that she plans to go for one week.

### **Regional Council**

Mayor Martin stated that the Regional Council of Mayors is a network group. Members have been asked to take a position and send a letter of support for transit. If the Council is interested, a resolution can be passed and she will sign a letter on behalf of the Council.

It was the consensus of the Council to support such a letter and consider a resolution supporting a dedicated transit sales tax.

### **Deer**

Councilmember Wickstrom reported a request that the City expand the program for removal of deer for an additional one or two weekends. There a lot of deer in Roseville Central Park. Sharpshooters are not used because of the cost.

Mr. Schwerm stated that staff will discuss a more aggressive approach to deer management with Roseville and with the new County park staff when that person comes on board. It was noted that a more aggressive approach might mean the program will not be necessary every year.

### **Snow Removal**

Councilmember Johnson commended Public Works Director Mark Maloney and his staff for their response to all the snow that has had to be hauled.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.