



BLACKDUCK CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

MONDAY JULY 17TH, 2017 6:00PM

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: The City Council of the City of Blackduck met in a scheduled work session at the City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on July 17th, 2017.

Roll Call

Councilors present: Mayor Patch, Councilors Molnar, Sellon, and Kolb

Councilors Absent: none

Staff Present: City Administrator, Christina Regas, Police Chief Jace Grangruth, Fire Chief Brian Larson, Planning Commission Board members Bob Klug Sr. and Russell Kunkel

Others Present: Dave Hengel of Greater Bemidji Planning, and Steve Cochems and Jeff Oelke of Anderson Fabrics

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm the Pledge of Allegiance was not recited.

Topics covered in the work session were as follows:

1. OLD BUSINESS –

a. On-Street Parking request on Industrial Lane for Anderson Fabrics –

- i. Recap of previous meetings –** Regas recapped the July 5th 2017 council meeting motion to deny the on-street parking request for Anderson Fabrics to park on Industrial Lane. The vote was split and Mayor Patch requested the topic be tabled until the work session. Regas reported that the council has heard from public works, planning, and Anderson Fabrics but had not heard from emergency service department heads. Regas requested the Fire Chief and Police Chief to the work session to discuss the safety hazard of having both sides of Industrial Lane parked on. Mayor Patch requested each department report their findings. Prior to the report Fire Chief Larson requested a brief summary of the request from Cochems to bring him up to speed on the need for the on-street parking. The following are responses from the emergency services departments:

- 1. Fire -** Fire Chief Larson asked how many employees use the street to park. Cochems stated around 22-24. Larson asked if the employees could park further down the street near the fire hydrant. Cochems stated they could but then they would be entering in the rear entrance instead of the entrance they should be using. Larson addressed Cochems by stating his primary concern is safety. Larson would like to see a maintained fire lane. Larson stated he understands there are many employees at Andersons and wants a safe egress for emergencies. Larson stated that if there is a large fire at Anderson Fabrics there will be many resources coming from the whole county to attend that fire. Larson stated that Industrial Lane would end up being ground zero for all the service vehicles responding. Larson stated that when there are 22 cars parked on the road that will make a response to a fire very congested. Larson respectfully requested the east lane be a dedicated fire lane. Cochems stated that every year Anderson's has the fire department come and assist instruct the employees where to go and what to do in the event of a fire. Chief Larson stated that is really good as he needs to know that in the event of a fire. Mayor Patch asked if there would be



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any conflicts with the daycare in the event of something happening with the west side of the road parked with vehicles. Chief Larson reported the hydrant access is on the west side and they would use those and pull hoses to the fire. Larson stated that if both entrances to the daycare were not blocked then it should be fine. Councilor Kolb asked how long of a fire lane the department would need on the east side. Larson reported the department would request the entire east lane all the way to the hydrant. Larson stated that there are ways to work around it but having one area of egress that is not obstructed would be a good plan. Dave Hengel asked Larson how wide is a typical fire lane. Larson could not comment he could state that there is a certain width that must be maintained around the fire lane but could not comment on the number. Cochems stated that the interior lanes have enough room for the semi-trucks to get in and out and asked if that is enough. Larson replied that it isn't just the vehicles moving in and out it is the added number of people exiting the building. Larson stated that the primary objective is that the people can all get away. Councilor Kolb stated that he doesn't believe there are going to be people trying to run to the opposite side of the building during a fire to worry about their car.

2. Police – Chief Grangruth added that safety should be the City's number one concern. Grangruth stated that he is not a fire fighter but has been to many and he has watched people drive over hoses; people get hit by cars, etc. Grangruth stated it is his responsibility to make sure people are safe if he responds before the fire department. Grangruth stated he provides scene security. Cochems stated that having all the cars parked at the end parking lot the City has a larger problem getting cars out in an emergency. Chief Grangruth stated that having all the hoses cross the road will cause an issue and it is easier for one officer to control traffic in one parking lot than on a city street. Councilor Kolb stated that there is only one way in and out of the road so with that being the only access there should be no problem for one officer to control traffic. Grangruth doesn't want all the hose driven over. Grangruth is concerned for scene security and people not listening when people want to leave a scene.
3. Customer Service side – Cochems stated it is important to improve relationships between the City and Anderson Fabrics and work closer together.
4. Planning – Klug Sr. stated that after hearing from all the department heads and he can see a fire lane being an important reason for keeping parking off of the east lane. Klug stated that 3 minutes can save lives and time and having a dedicated fire lane will help. Klug also stated that as he has worked with the City for over 27 years he has always treated all parties equal, whether they are a business of 300 people or 3 people.
5. Dave Hengel – Hengel stated that economic development is very important to cities. Having a company in town with 345 people is very important for the city. Hengel asked the council to consider if there are ways to help the fire department and Anderson Fabrics. Hengel offered any help he can do to make the working relationship work.



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6. Mayor Patch – Patch stated that safety is a very important reason for eliminating some of the parking. Patch stated that the employees need to be safe for Anderson Fabrics.
7. Employee incentives – Grangruth asked Cochems if 22 people parking on the street is that important to park there. Cochems stated he fights for all his employees; he stated the parking issue would snowball after shift changes. Hengel stated that Anderson's could hire 80 more people if they could today and having a few extra incentives for the people gives them an opportunity to attract and keep more people.

Final Decision – Mayor Patch asked for any further input from the public and staff in attendance there was none. Cochems asked if the vote would need to happen next and the August City Council Meeting. Regas stated yes. Cochems thanked all in attendance for their time. Mayor Patch asked the department heads and planning for final comments. Mayor Patch read into the record an email from the Ambulance Manager, Molly Volhbrecht that the ambulance reviewed the parking on Industrial Lane and did not witness any issues getting their departments rigs down the road. Councilor Sellon stated that the ambulance may be able to get in there now but what if when there are fire trucks on the road too. Councilor Molnar stated that she doesn't believe the City can jeopardize 345 people over 20 parking spots. Councilor Sellon stated that although Cochems stated if the people parked in the parking lot there would be more congestion there Sellon would rather have congestion in the parking lot then on the street where it is harder to get on the street. Sellon believes it would be easier to get around without the cars there. Councilor Kolb brought up the point of the people that are parking on the street are older. Chief Larson asked if these people qualify for ADA. Larson stated if they do they get a front row parking spot on the east lot. Councilor Kolb stated it would be a farther distance for those people to walk to their department. Regas pointed out that regardless of who is parking there now in 5 years they won't be the same people. Regas stated the City shouldn't concern themselves with the type of people that park but just the point that there are people that are parking there. Mayor Patch called for a point of order. Councilor Molnar stated that the City should not be bringing the issues into the conversation of the age of the employees, how well or not they can walk, the council cannot judge whether walking is good for them or not and the council should only address the issue at hand and not bring in irrelevant issues. Molnar stated that the final decision should not need to have those employee issues as a very large factor to the decision. Councilor Sellon stated that if the City gives Anderson Fabrics this precedence then other business will request it too. Nothing further at this time.

- b. **Blackduck Road & Infrastructure Projects** – Regas reported to council that there is a construction meeting July 18th and she may know more on timeline of construction in town after. Regas stated that at this point there is no further to report of the process. Councilor Kolb asked how soon do residents get notified about water shut offs. Regas stated within an hour or two depending on where the shut off is located and the number of connections affected.
- c. **Capital Improvement Plan** – Regas had nothing new to report on the CIP from WSN.
 - i. **Local Sales Tax** – nothing further at this time.



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d. **Vacant Committee Seats –**

- i. City of Blackduck Council Seat – Regas will keep this on the agenda until it is full. Councilor Molnar stated the best way to get the word out is for it to keep coming from the current councilors.
- ii. Kitchigami Regional Library Board – nothing further at this time
- iii. Park & Trail board – Regas had nothing to report for the park & trail board position.

e. **Ordinance Revisions –**

- i. **2017-04 Chapter 7 Section 730 “ATV’s and Golf Carts”** – Regas reported that the revisions on Chapter 7 Section 730 is still being worked on. Nothing further at this time for council to review.

f. **Budget Meetings –**

- i. **Paperless Packets** – Regas has nothing further on this until budget review.
- ii. **Employee Wages Review (Position Steps)** – nothing at this time.
- iii. **Remodel of City Hall** – Regas submitted for review a draft of an interior layout for City Hall from an architect group. Regas requested feedback from council about renovations to City Hall and needing to give the first point of contact with the City a facelift. Councilor Sellon noted that if funding could be acquired to help pay for the renovations and it could include a community center for the youth then he is all for it. Councilor Kolb asked what the timeline would be. Regas reported she would like to see some work done in 2018 if possible. Councilor Sellon stated it would be good to get the public’s involvement in the remodel. Regas stated typically a committee would be formed.

2. **NEW BUSINESS –**

- a. **Upcoming Public Hearings for Planning Commission** – Regas provided two public hearing notices that the Council would need to consider approving on at the August meeting.

- i. Dennis Merritt – Regas submitted for review the documents for a variance permit request for a curb cut on 2nd Street SE to accommodate a wheel chair ramp. Regas brought the permit request to council for preliminary review before the planning meeting to ask questions. Regas reviewed points to consider when making a decision on the request such as Merritt parking on the street all the time and the issue with plowing snow, why he cannot park in the rear of his building, the need to have the ramp in the front of the building, etc.
- ii. Deanne Adams – Regas submitted for review the documents for a conditional use permit for 165 Pine Ave. Adams would like to use 165 Pine Ave for a mixed use business/rental income. Adams plan to renovate the structure use the front office space for a guide service business and rent out the 2 bedroom apartment in the rear. Regas provided the land use permit details of what Adams would be renovating. Councilor Kolb asked to consider the 50 feet noise ordinance potential issue with an apartment so close to the Pond. Regas stated she considered removing the old sign, and building a fence separating the structure and the Pond.

- b. **Revision of Resolution 2017-02 Annual Appointments** – Regas provided Resolution 2017-02 for revisions now that Councilor Stade has resigned and Councilor Sellon appointed. Revisions were discussed and final approval will come in front of council August 7th, 2017. Nothing further.



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- c. **Revolving Loan Fund Committee Recommendation** – Regas and Mayor Patch reviewed with council the recommendation of the RLF Committee and a current loan with a Blackduck business that is in default for unpaid property taxes. Regas reported the committee is recommending moving forward with a foreclosure by action and repossess the equipment. Regas answered detailed questions of the council regarding the background of the default. Nothing further at this time.
3. **ADJOURN** – Council adjourned their work session at 8:14pm.

Christina Regas, City Administrator

Rudy Patch, Mayor