

Council Connection



Upcoming meetings:

- Heritage Preservation Board, 7 p.m. June 12
- Park Board, 7 p.m. June 12
- Planning Commission, 7 p.m. June 13
- Energy & Environment Commission, 7 p.m. June 14
- City Council, 7 p.m. June 19

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We'd like to hear from you ...

If you have any comments, call Communications & Technology Services Director Jennifer Bennerotte at 952-833-9520. The text of this publication will be available online at www.EdinaMN.gov.



A summary of the June 5 Edina City Council meeting

Council discusses infrastructure financing, franchise fee

At a work session prior to its regular meeting, the Council discussed infrastructure financing and the possible creation of a new source of revenue to fund such things as sidewalks and trails.

The Council discussed the City's special assessment policy for funding street improvement projects. Under the current policy, the costs of most street reconstruction projects are assessed to area property owners. The City pays for related utility improvements.

After reviewing several options and scenarios, most City Council members indicated support for modifying the terms of the assessment. For example, the City might offer a lesser interest rate or extend the payback period for larger assessments from 10 to 15 years. Council members also seemed interested in the City paying for any sidewalks installed as part of a project.

Council members also discussed establishing a new franchise fee. Earlier this year, City Manager Scott Neal introduced the idea of this new revenue source to fund improvements to the City's network of sidewalks, trails and other non-motorized transportation infrastructure. A 1 percent franchise fee paid by Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy, the City's two regulated private utilities, would generate more than \$900,000 per year.

Council members showed support for a franchise fee and suggested additional uses for the revenue, such as new street lighting. Staff was directed to determine what the City's annual need might be for additional infrastructure improvements so that when the Council considers the matter again in the future they will be able to better determine what the

franchise fee should be to cover those expenses.

Golf Dome to be rebuilt on Braemar Boulevard site

The Council voted to rebuild the Braemar Golf Dome on its current site.

In February, the Braemar Golf Dome caught fire and collapsed. The dome fabric, artificial turf and dome building sustained significant damage.

While the City was studying the feasibility of building a sports dome, its consultants were asked to determine if a sports dome and golf dome could be built together on land near the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility. Because of the environmental cleanup necessary on the site, the consultants found that it would not be financially feasible to relocate the two domes on the site.

Site improvement costs such as new concrete foundations and construction of a new admissions building would not be covered by insurance. For that reason, the Council decided to rebuild the Braemar Golf Dome on its current site on Braemar Boulevard.

The new Braemar Golf Dome is expected to be operational for the 2012-2013 winter season.

Council hires consultant to study Art Center operations

The Council hired Sutton & Associates to study the operations of the Edina Art Center.

In December 2011, staff mailed a Request for Proposal (RFP) to 30 consultants to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Edina Art Center. Only two consultants submitted proposals in the response to the RFP. In March, the Council rejected the two proposals and directed staff to work with the Art Center Board and its Working Group to refine and narrow the

scope of the original RFP, negotiate with the two consultants and request them to resubmit new proposals. Just one consultant, Sutton & Associates, chose to resubmit a new proposal.

The Art Center Board Working Group and staff recommended the Council accept Sutton & Associate's proposal for the study, which will include an analysis of operations, marketing, advertising, benchmarking and legal components. The study will cost \$21,000.

Sutton & Associates will begin work immediately and should complete its work in August. Once complete, the City Council and Art Center Board will hold a joint work session during which the consultant's findings and recommendations will be presented.

Developer proposes housing for Southdale Center

The Council reviewed a developer's concept for housing at Southdale Center.

StuartCo. is proposing to develop the southeast corner of the Southdale Center site with upscale, market rate 10- and 6-story apartment buildings and a 3-story townhouse building. The proposal would include 232 units with parking underneath the structures. Primary access would be off 69th Street and from the Southdale frontage road.

StuartCo. presented its sketch plan for the project to the City Council. Council members gave their opinions on the project and expressed their interest in enhancing pedestrian connections in the area.

If StuartCo. decides to move forward with the project, officials will request rezoning or a conditional use permit with variances.