

Council Connection



Upcoming meetings:

- HRA & City Council, 7 p.m. Jan. 4
- Public Art Committee, 4 p.m. Jan. 6
- Heritage Preservation Board, 7 p.m. Jan. 11
- Park Board, 7 p.m. Jan. 11
- Energy & Environment Commission, 7 p.m. Jan. 13

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We'd like to hear from you ...

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



A summary of the Dec. 21 Edina City Council & HRA meeting

Council approves 2011 budget

One of the City Council's last pieces of business for 2010 was adoption of the 2011 City budget.

The approved 2011 budget includes a 1.15 percent increase in the City's property tax levies, increasing the 2011 General Fund budget to nearly \$28.7 million -- up about \$725,000 from 2010. The approved budget includes funding to continue current service levels, add new vehicles and equipment and make capital improvements for City facilities around the community. No new jobs will be created in 2011.

The 2011 budget includes sufficient funding for a 1 percent cost-of-living-adjustment for all regular employees. The Council did not amend the proposed 2011 budget to include funding for collective bargaining agreements that settle contracts above 1 percent.

An arbitrator recently decided that the City must give police officers a 3 percent pay increase for 2010 and another 3 percent increase for 2011. Four of the City's unions have not settled contracts for 2010 or 2011. The City is working to resume contract discussions with those four bargaining units.

The City will need to cover employee compensation costs that exceed the approved 2011 budgeted levels within the bottom line of the approved 2011 City budget.

Council approves redevelopment in Centennial Lakes Plaza

The Council approved a redevelopment in Centennial Lakes Plaza.

Mid-America Real Estate plans to tear down Storables and Thomasville Furniture and rebuild a new 36,346-square-foot Whole Foods supermarket at 7401 France Ave. S. The property is 6.4 acres in size and is adjacent to a two-level parking deck.

The Council approved a final development plan for the project. Demolition could begin this winter, with construction of the new store following.

The Council also approved a final development plan and final rezoning for an addition to the Southdale YMCA. The YMCA plans to build a 15,300-square-foot addition to its facility at 7355 York Ave. S. The expansion would add a new leisure pool, fitness center and studio.

Council amends zoning ordinance

The Council approved an ordinance amendment that allows for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

The purpose of a PUD is to provide en-

hanced City control over development through comprehensive procedures and standards allowing more flexibility in a development than would be possible under a conventional zoning district. The site plan review procedures include encouragement to developers to hold neighborhood meetings and submit sketch plans to the Planning Director to share the concepts with the Commission and Council prior to filing applications.

To prevent "massing" or the construction of homes out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood, the Council also approved an amendment concerning non-conforming building and additions to or replacement of homes. Under the proposed ordinance, a new home to be built with a first-floor elevation that is one foot or more above the old home's must be necessitated for one of three reasons:

1. The first-floor elevation must be increased to elevate the lowest habitable level of the dwelling to an elevation two feet above the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood plain elevation.
2. The first-floor elevation must be increased to reasonably protect the home from groundwater protrusion.
3. The first-floor elevation must be increased to meet State or City codes or other statutory requirements.

City to embark on small area planning process

The Council decided to retain ownership of the old Public Works site on Eden Avenue while a planning process for the greater area continues.

Earlier this year, a Community Advisory Team (CAT) led a process to determine the future of the Public Works site and the area surrounding it. Since the process was designed to engage the community, the CAT included residents, representatives of City boards and commissions, area business and property owners and a school district representative. The group met several times during April and developed seven guiding principles for the area:

1. Leverage publicly owned parcels and civic presence to create a vibrant and connected district that serves as a catalyst for high-quality, integrated public and private development.
2. Enhance the district's economic viability as a neighborhood center with regional connections, recognizing that meeting the needs of both residents and businesses will make the district a good place to do business.
3. Turn perceived barriers into opportunities. Consider layering development over supporting infrastructure

and taking advantage of natural topography of the area.

4. Design for the present and the future by pursuing logical increments of change using key elements as stepping stones to a more vibrant, walkable, functional, attractive and life-filled place.
5. Organize parking as an effective resource for the district by linking community parking to public and private destinations while also providing parking that is convenient for businesses and customers.
6. Improve movement within and access to the district for people of all ages by facilitating multiple modes of transportation and preserve future transit opportunities provided by the rail corridor.
7. Create an identity and unique sense of place that incorporates natural spaces into a high quality and sustainable development reflecting Edina's innovative development heritage.

The Council accepted and approved the CAT's report and adopted the guiding principles. They also agreed to embark on a small area planning process for the area, retaining ownership of the City's property in the area until after the study is complete. A Livable Communities Demonstration Account grant will defray the costs of the study.

Council allows ATVs, snowmobiles on City property for maintenance

The Council approved an ordinance amendment giving the Park & Recreation Director and City Manager authority to grant use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles on City property.

In early December, the coach of the Edina High School Nordic ski team requested permission to use a snowmobile to groom a trail on City-owned property adjacent to the school and Creek Valley Elementary School campus. Under the previous local law, permission could not be granted.

Under the amended ordinance, the Park & Recreation Director or City Manager may grant permission to operate ATVs or snowmobiles on City property, but not for recreational purposes. ATVs and snowmobiles must be used for maintenance or utility purposes only. The amendment would also allow staff to use ATVs or snowmobiles to remove deer from remote wooded areas, allow for search-and-rescue training and a variety of natural resource maintenance tasks. School district personnel may also grant permission for such use on property owned by the school district.