



MINUTES CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

May 27, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Lakeville City Hall, Marion Conference Room

1. Call to order, moment of silence and flag pledge

Mayor Hellier called the meeting to order at 06:00 P.M.

Members Present: Mayor Hellier, Council Members Bermel, Lee, Volk, Wolter

Staff Present: Justin Miller, City Administrator; Julie Stahl, Finance Director; Joe Masiarchin, Parks & Recreation Director; Susan Johnson; Parks; [Tree staff] Allyn Kuennen, Assistant City Administrator; Ann Orlofsky, City Clerk; Tina Goodroad, Community Development Director

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Discussion Items

a. Recreation and Heritage Center Strategic Plan Overview

Parks and Recreation Director Joe Masiarchin and Recreation Manager Susan Johnson presented the Recreation and Heritage Center Strategic Plan Overview. The plan was developed through a two-day strategic planning workshop facilitated by Aurora Consulting, involving staff from Parks Administration, Recreation, Parks, the Heritage Center, and members of the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Committee (PRNRC).

The strategic planning process focused on evaluating the departments' current operations, identifying barriers to success, and outlining future goals and implementation timelines. Key challenges discussed included branding gaps, limited facility space, maxed-out staff resources, and the need to adapt to a growing and changing population, particularly in the context of shifting generational demographics and increased cultural diversity. The group recognized substantial growth and the need for a clearer organizational identity.

Four strategic directives were identified:

1. Exploring new funding opportunities
2. Reviewing current facility use and planning for future needs
3. Optimizing programming to meet evolving community expectations
4. Assessing staff responsibilities and expanding volunteer involvement

During the presentation, the City Council inquired about partnerships with local programming competitors and maximizing open spaces in the community. The discussion also touched on how programming changes, like the popularity of pickleball, impact service models. Staff emphasized the importance of adapting to serve multiple generations and highlighted efforts to engage younger residents while also exploring partnerships across all three local school districts.

b. Discuss potential amendments to Tree Preservation Ordinance

Community Development Director Tina Goodroad, along with City Forester Zach Johnson and Grace Benson, presented proposed amendments to Lakeville's Tree Preservation Ordinance. The initiative aims to strengthen tree preservation and reforestation efforts, particularly as future developments are expected to occur increasingly on wooded properties. The current ordinance lacks clear requirements for preservation or replacement. The proposed revisions establish removal thresholds (50% for residential and 70% for commercial/industrial), define tree classifications (e.g., common, conifer, hardwood, deciduous, and heritage trees), and set detailed replacement standards based on the type and size of trees removed. Heritage trees have a 0% removal threshold, and preserving them can reduce replacement obligations.

A key addition to the ordinance is the "look back" provision, which is designed to prevent pre-emptive tree clearing before a development application. Under this rule, if more than two acres of tree canopy are cleared within two years prior to submitting a development application, the site will still be subject to tree replacement requirements based on the removed canopy area. This ensures that preservation efforts cannot be avoided through early clearing and reinforces accountability in site development.

The draft ordinance was reviewed in a joint work session with the Planning Commission and Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Committee in February, where members supported enhancements like citywide applicability and cash-in-lieu options for replacement. Feedback from developers has been generally positive. Financial case studies of projects like Caslano and The Preserve were used to show potential cost impacts at various removal thresholds, depending on the project scope.

The City Council was in favor of the proposed incentives to help preserve the trees and directed staff to finalize the draft ordinance with an adjustment of a 40% threshold for residential and return with refined recommendations incorporating all collected feedback.

c. 1st Quarter 2025 Financial Report

Finance Director Julie Stahl presented the First Quarter 2025 Financial Report. Revenues and expenditures across the General, Communications, Liquor, and Utility Funds are generally tracking within budget. Building permit activity remains strong, and parks and recreation revenues are up. Liquor sales are down 5.6% from 2024, reflecting retail market trends, but expenses remain low. Utility revenues increased due to rate adjustments and customer growth.

Council asked how reductions in federal funding to the County might impact local services. Staff and noted that Dakota County will begin charging for previously free services. Staff were asked to monitor these changes going forward. Overall, the City remains in a stable financial position.

4. Items for Future Discussion

Council member Wolter requested a future discussion on the regulations of chickens. Mayor Hellier requested a discussion on trash hauling in the city.

5. Committee/ City Administrator Updates

Bermel: Attended the Dakota 911 Board of Directors meeting.

Volk: Attended a Downtown Business Association Meeting.

Lee: Attended the recent ALF Ambulance Board meeting.

City Administrator Justin Miller added that next month, the City Council will have an interactive tabletop exercise/discussion.

6. Adjourn

Motion was made by Bermel , seconded by Lee, to adjourn at 7:36 P.M.

Voice vote was taken on the motion. Ayes - Hellier, Bermel, Lee, Volk, Wolter

Respectfully Submitted,

Taylor Snider, Assistant to the City Administrator

Luke M. Heller, Mayor