1. **Call to order**

Mayor Spano called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Jake Spano, Tim Brausen, Rachel Harris, Larry Kraft, Anne Mavity, Nadia Mohamed, and Margaret Rog.

Councilmembers absent: None.

Staff present: City Manager (Mr. Harmening), City Attorney (Mr. Mattick), Deputy City Manager/Human Resources Director (Ms. Deno), Senior Planner (Ms. Monson), Communications Manager (Ms. Smith), Senior Management Analyst (Ms. Solano).

Guests: Mr. Kost, SEH Consultants.

1a. **Pledge of allegiance**

1b. **Roll call**

2. **Presentations**

2a. **Recognition of 2019 police officer of the year**

This item will be held at a later date.

2b. **Recognition of donations**

National Association of Web Professionals has donated up to $1,500 for IT manager Jason Huber to attend the 2020 national board retreat.

Endeavor Business Media has donated up to $1,200 for expenses for Director of Operations Cindy Walsh to attend the 2020 Parks and Recreation Conference in AZ.

3. **Approval of minutes**

3a. **Study session minutes of Jan. 27, 2020**

Councilmember Kraft noted page 4, should read, “.... the interested but concerned group of bikers...” and farther down “...effectively not being widened here with the parking bays.” He added on page 7 “...noting the commercial paper changes in Koch Industries, and asked if we consider our investments as related to our strategic priorities.”
Councilmember Harris noted on page 5, it should read “...she stated she would like to see separated bike lanes going forward and noted in general she supports this project with some tweaks.”

*It was moved by Councilmember Brausen, seconded by Councilmember Mavity, to approve the Jan. 27, 2020 study session minutes as amended.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

3b. **City council meeting minutes of Feb. 3, 2020**

Councilmember Rog noted on page 6, 3rd paragraph, it should read, “...She noted pavement management projects in St. Louis Park are not accessed to property owners in the area, but paid for by the entire community, which is different from other cities.”

*It was moved by Councilmember Brausen, seconded by Councilmember Harris, to approve the Feb. 3, 2020 city council meeting minutes as amended.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

3c. **Study session minutes of Feb. 10, 2020**

*It was moved by Councilmember Harris, seconded by Councilmember Mavity, to approve the Feb. 10, 2020 study session minutes as presented.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

4. **Approval of agenda and items on consent calendar**

4a. Designate GMH Asphalt Corporation the lowest responsible bidder and authorize execution of a contract with the firm in the amount of $4,530,726.89 for the 2020 Pavement Management Project No. 4020-1000.

4b. Moved to 8d.

4c. Approve the stipulation for award between the city, state of Minnesota and B&D Property Holdings.

4d. Adopt **Resolution No. 20-060** approving final plans, specifications, and authorizing ad for bids (4020-1500).

4e. Adopt **Resolution No. 20-061** approving acceptance of a monetary donation from the National Association of Government Web Professionals in an amount not to exceed $1,500 for all related expenses for Jason Huber, Information Technology Manager, to attend the 2020 National Association of Government Web Professionals National Board Retreat in Little Rock, Arkansas.

4f. Adopt **Resolution No. 20-062** approving acceptance of a monetary donation from Endeavor Business Media Company in an amount not to exceed $1,200 for all related expenses for Cindy Walsh, Director of Operations and Recreation, to attend the 2020 Parks & Recreation Summit in Scottsdale, Arizona on April 22-25, 2020.
4g. Adopt Resolution No. 20-063 approving St. Louis Park Lions Club’s request for placing temporary signs in the public right-of-way.

4h. Adopt Resolution No. 20-064 approving the final plans and specifications and authorizing bidding documents for Monterey Drive improvements (Phase 1 – Project no. 4020-1101).

Councilmember Mavity requested to add to the agenda, the resolution declaring a city emergency, which will be item 8c on the agenda.

Councilmember Rog requested that item 4b be removed from the consent agenda. This item will become 8d on the agenda.

*It was moved by Councilmember Brausen, seconded by Councilmember Mavity, to approve the agenda and items listed on the consent calendar as amended to move consent calendar item 4b to the regular agenda as item 8d; and to add the proclamation declaring a city emergency to the regular agenda as item 8c; and to waive reading of all resolutions and ordinances.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

5. Boards and commissions – none

6. Public hearings – none

7. Requests, petitions, and communications from the public – none

8. Resolutions, ordinances, motions and discussion items

8a. Texa-Tonka small area plan

Ms. Monson noted the small area plan done at Texa-Tonka last year, with SEH consultants.

Mr. Kost from SEH presented and noted the executive summary in the staff report. He stated there was much public engagement in the process.

Mr. Kost noted key themes including the number of vacancies in buildings, lack of landscaping, preference of 1-3 storied buildings, preference for locally owned and operated businesses including restaurants and cafes, mid-block crossings concerns, and a strong desire for streetscapes similar to other areas of St. Louis Park. Five in-person events were conducted, as well as surveys and pop-up events. He noted this information helped guide the vision statement of making this a vibrant area within the city.

Mr. Kost stated there was also an interest to preserve the mid-century modern architecture, street frontage and site design in character of the existing neighborhood. Due to the size of the area, volunteers would be encouraged to create some of the streetscape since a special service district is not feasible in the area. He also stated that
a traffic study and parking study was conducted, and parking was not an issue of concern.

Councilmember Harris stated the residents were very engaged in this process, adding one activity was a very informative walking tour. She asked Mr. Kost to explain some key takeaways from the walking tour.

Mr. Kost stated this was a shared experience of the area. The poor quality of the area was very evident and a recognition of the barriers, including overhead power lines that interfere with trees and the traffic issues, were also a concern. He noted that Minnetonka Boulevard is a county road, so folks did understand things could not be changed on the road, but there were changes that can happen with the buildings and design.

Councilmember Harris asked about equity issues as it relates to pedestrian traffic and getting to the commercial properties. Mr. Kost pointed out the intersections and crossing areas adding folks recognized they will need to be able to cross over safely to go to places of interest. He stated this conversation will need to continue with the county.

Councilmember Harris asked if there are recommendations for flashing crossing lights. Mr. Kost stated there was discussion but flashing crossing lights are not part of the design plan.

Councilmember Harris added Aquila Park is located at Xylon and Minnetonka and she hopes to continue the conversation about pedestrian crossing there especially, in light of the city’s comp plan.

Councilmember Mavity stated she is excited about the amount of engagement and it looks like a great plan. She understands the complexities about the county road crossing issues and added it would behoove the council to continue discussions with Hennepin County.

Councilmember Kraft stated this is an affordable housing and commercial area, is perfect for young families and empty nesters, and he appreciates working to make the area more viable. He stated he will support this plan, adding he would have liked to see a discussion about renewable energy, energy efficiency, and the amount of carbon reduction possible by reducing the number of car trips needed. He stated he would like to see solar on the designs and mock-ups. Ms. Monson stated this could be included in future plans.

Councilmember Mohamed stated she lives within walking distance of this area and asked in terms of affordable commercial, how can the city encourage more of this within the city. Ms. Monson stated staff is working on this, adding the area is zoned mixed use, so a portion of the ground floor commercial would need to be affordable or smaller micro units, and staff is continuing to think about creative ways to do this.
Councilmember Mohamed stated she loves the plan, noting there is a bus stop there and great opportunities.

Councilmember Brausen thanked staff on their community engagement and Councilmember Harris, as well as the public who were involved in the process. He noted this area has not been very vibrant for many years, so he is excited to see this plan, but private capital will be needed to make it happen. He will support this.

Councilmember Harris stated residents are very excited to renew vitality to this area and turning this around will make positive impacts. She asked if adopting this plan will require the developers to follow it as is. Ms. Monson stated the plan will be used as a guiding document to guide land use and design decisions.

Mayor Spano stated he participated in the engagement sessions and noted this corner does not reflect the neighborhood which is a vibrant and exciting place. He thanked staff for the way they handled the process, as well as Councilmember Harris’ involvement with the neighborhood.

Ms. Monson also thanked the work group members, who could not be present at the meeting this evening and noted the great mix of community members involved in the engagement process.

It was moved by Councilmember Harris, seconded by Councilmember Brausen, to accept the Texa-Tonka small area plan.

The motion passed 7-0.

8b. Dakota North Bikeway and Bridge – approve plan, specs and authorize ad for bid. Resolution No. 20-065.

Mr. Sullivan presented. He noted several highlights of the project, which was last discussed with the council on March 9. He stated the overall project cost is estimated at $9.2 million, with $2.9 million in federal funding, and the remaining funding from GO bonds at $6.2 million.

Councilmember Rog asked about soil boring samples and the higher costs than we expect. She asked how this can be done earlier in the process so as to anticipate costs earlier. Mr. Sullivan stated they work to find ways to lower these costs adding as the process continues, staff does have knowledge of the soil issues in various areas of the city. He stated staff could work harder on this in the future to hold costs down.

Councilmember Brausen stated he supports paying the increased costs on the project including additional art costs and the staircases. He stated these are 50-year infrastructure projects and residents and pedestrians are calling for it in his area. He added he is happy with the construction schedule and hopes to save some costs if it’s put out to bid in the fall. He stated it seems fair to spread costs over a longer timeframe.
and he is anxious to have this budget discussion down the road. He noted he will support this project.

Councilmember Kraft asked about the 6 votes needed to pass this project. Mr. Harmening stated this is needed for the GO bonds issuance as per the city charter.

Councilmember Rog stated this bridge spans 3 wards and she has been very involved in this project. She is excited about this north south connection adding it will change how folks get around the city, connecting a busy park, the school, and fields. She noted folks have been frustrated in the past about access, and the bridge will alleviate this. She added, however, she has concerns about the levy impacts over the next 10 years or more. She asked whether the city can build a bridge less expensively – but noted it does not seem that can be done. With all the pieces, it adds up and recognizing the impacts to the levy and costs to the community, she will support the project.

Councilmember Rog stated that the public art being proposed is a fraction of the cost of the bridge, and she requests this plan be amended to include modest additional funds for the art component. She noted the mural to be done by the native club at Peter Hobart honoring native plants, and the stampings will honor the Dakota people and culture. She stated this is in line with the city’s strategic priorities and celebrates youth and people of color and indigenous cultures. She added the city does have alternate funding sources, so there may not need to be a levy for the modest funds for public art portion.

Mr. Harmening noted it is the administrative fee on the lodging tax collected.

Councilmember Mavity asked since the city does not have a specific art plan envisioned, can the amendment say, ‘up to $80,000’ and have as much flexibility as possible.

Councilmember Rog stated her concern is short-term gain vs. long-term loss. She stated she would like to capture this opportunity right now.

Mayor Spano stated he is an advocate for art and would like to see 1% of the budget devoted to art projects, with the funds for any purpose, but when the lodging tax was created, public art was one of the key components.

Councilmember Rog also supported the plan and motion as it relates to the public art component, finding that while flexibility is important, she does not want to see this go.

Councilmember Harris stated bridges don’t have a lot of inherent beauty, in her opinion, but added we are at a pivotal time in our community of being inclusive, public art is one way we demonstrate this, and is powerful in placemaking. She would be in favor of the project and the amendment as well.

Councilmember Kraft stated having a budgeted amount, doesn’t mean we have to spend that amount. He is in support of the additional money for public art, but also supports Councilmember Mavity’s comments. He stated he will support this, but is
uneasy also, noting the increased costs this year over last year. He asked how much of an increase is too much. He noted it would be helpful to know how many car trips will be eliminated with the bridge, and added it will benefit north south connections in the city, make it easier for students getting to Peter Hobart, and bicyclists getting to the west end, or to the high school.

Councilmember Mavity added when she first worked on Connect the Park, this bridge was seen as an essential connection and she is excited to see this move forward. She added it is a connection all the way to West End.

Councilmember Rog also appreciated staff’s strategic work on going out for bid.

Mayor Spano stated staff tried over 2 dozen different alignments on this and should be commended on their work. He added it is a substantial investment in the community and it is a phenomenal project.

*It was moved by Councilmember Rog, seconded by Councilmember Brausen, to adopt Resolution No. 20-065 approving final plans and specifications and authorizing bidding documents for Dakota North bikeway and bridge project no. 4019-2000 and amend the staff recommendation to include additional $80,000 for the public art components.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

8c. **Declare a state of emergency in St. Louis Park due to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Resolution No. 20-066

Mayor Spano explained in order for staff to be able to move quickly as issues develop, and that might threaten the health or safety of residents, staff, and the council, it is recommended the council declare a state of emergency within the city. Mayor Spano stated that under state law a declaration of a local emergency only lasts for three days, noting the city will not be out of this in three days. He added that the resolution that accompanies this aligns the timing of our local emergency with the county’s and state’s declaration of emergency.

*It was moved by Councilmember Mavity, seconded by Councilmember Harris, to approve the Resolution No. 20-066 approving a state of emergency proclamation in St. Louis Park due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to evoke the city’s disaster plan.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

8d. **Plans and specifications and authorizing advertisement for bids (4018-1050)**

Resolution No. 20-059

Councilmember Rog stated she is very supportive of the improvements in the historic Walker Lake District, but noted it is proposed to widen the street at Lake Street, and add conventional bike lanes, and she is not supportive of this, especially if the speed limit will be lowered going forward.
Councilmember Kraft asked what the traffic count is on Lake Street. Ms. Heiser stated it is 3700 vehicles per day and the average speed is 27 miles per hour.

Councilmember Kraft stated he supports Councilmember Rog’s comments.

Councilmember Mavity stated she supports moving forward with this plan as presented by staff.

Councilmember Harris stated she supports the plan as presented but there is merit in adjusting speed limits as well as looking closer at bike facilities on city roads.

Councilmember Rog stated the 11th hour is exactly the time to make changes, and when thinking of the significant environmental impacts of widening the street, she is not in favor of this approach.

*It was moved by Councilmember Brausen, seconded by Councilmember Mavity, to approve the Resolution No. 20-059 approving plans and specifications and authorizing advertisement for bids (4018-1050).*

*The motion passed 4-3 (Councilmembers Kraft, Rog, and Mohamed opposed).*

9. Communications

Councilmember Brausen stated these will be trying times and we all appreciate everyone’s kindness to each other during this time, adding that everyone will try to do their best.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

Jake Spano, mayor