

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
WORK SESSION WITH CITY STAFF AND PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION
CITY OF CROSSLAKE
MONDAY, JULY 9, 2012
5:00 P.M. – CITY HALL

The Council for the City of Crosslake met in a special work session in the Council Chambers of City Hall on Monday, July 9, 2012. The following Council Members were present: Mayor Darrell Schneider, Steve Roe, John Moengen and Rusty Taubert and Dean Swanson. Also present were City Administrator Tom Swenson, Clerk/Treasurer Jenny Max, Community Development Director Ken Anderson, Public Works Director Ted Strand, Police Chief Bob Hartman, Parks and Recreation Director Jon Henke, General Manager Paul Hoge, Fire Chief Chip Lohmiller, City Attorney Mike Couri and Echo Publishing Reporter Kate Perkins. Also present were Planning and Zoning Commission Members Dale Melberg, Dave Schrupp, Aaron Herzog and Nancy Addington. There were approximately fifteen people in the audience.

Call to Order – Mayor Schneider called the Special Council Meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. and stated the purpose of the meeting was to review the City of Crosslake City Council, Commission and Management responsibilities, policies and citizen and business services. Mayor Schneider noted there would be no public comment at this meeting but welcomed comments or questions to be submitted to the Council in writing. Mayor Schneider then turned the meeting over Councilmember Roe.

Councilmember Roe began his comments by noting that this meeting is a work session between the City Council, City Staff and Planning and Zoning Commission. Councilmember Roe stated there is a significant communication problem happening in Crosslake. Discussion ensued regarding the roles of the Council, Commissions and Staff and Councilmember Roe reviewed the City's organizational chart with the group. Concern was expressed that the Council is not informed on as many issues as they should be involved with. Councilmember Roe noted that it might be in the City's best interest to look at establishing policies that the Staff and Council can use to work through communication barriers. Attorney Couri stated that it is typically in the City's best interest for the Council to set policy and then allow the Staff to administer the policies as they are established. Attorney Couri also discussed the importance of having an open line of communication between the City Administrator and City Council. Councilmember Moengen questioned how well the City was run before it had an Administrator and Councilmember Swanson noted there was constant frustration between the Councilmembers as they had to deal with day to day decisions in each department. Councilmember Swanson noted he communicates with the City Administrator on a frequent basis and the City is fortunate to have someone like Tom Swenson who will listen to your ideas and take your opinions under advisement.

City Clerk Jenny Max read a memo from the City Department Heads that discussed the many positives to living in Crosslake. Councilmember Swanson expressed gratitude towards the Staff for preparing this memo. Councilmember Roe noted this memo should

serve as a guide for how the Council should want the City to appear to someone looking to be a part of this community. It was noted that the Administrator and Clerk had no audit adjustments on the City's most recent financial statement audit which is very uncommon and a great testament to the Staff's ability and financial management skills. Councilmember Roe stated the City does not need any more negative publicity and that everyone needs to work together as a team. The City should not burden its citizens with overregulation.

Alden Hardwick noted that as a consultant he feels the Council should treat the Staff with respect and any issues with the Staff should be discussed internally and not in the public eye. Mr. Hardwick also observed that the Planning Commission is very discouraged with the amount of time they dedicate to their roles and the lack of support they receive from the Council. Mr. Hardwick also expressed concern on maintaining order at the Council meetings as oftentimes they get out of hand.

Dale Melberg noted that the Council has been dysfunctional since the last election.

Pete Abler said that as the former Planning Commission chair he made an effort to run a respectful meeting. Mr. Abler also expressed his opinion that 95% of the complaints a Councilmember receives should be able to be resolved with one phone call. Many times the issue is able to be resolved simply by educating the citizen and correcting a misconception.

Dave Schrupp noted that there has been a lot of noise from the Crosslake business group but he has yet to hear any word on what specific changes they are looking to make. Any Personnel issues should simply go through the chain of command and not be dealt with in the middle of a Council meeting. If a problem surfaces it should be promptly addressed by the Council.

City Administrator Swenson stated that some Councilmembers communicate better than others and that Staff gets a lot of conflicting information from the Council.

There was considerable discussion on the process of complaints and how they are run through the Planning and Zoning Department. Councilmember Swanson said that he looks to the public to tell him whether or not they have a problem with an ordinance and how it should be changed. It is easy to make assumptions about being a Councilmember but a person only knows what it's like if they are sitting in that chair. Councilmember Swanson noted Attorney Couri is by far the best attorney the City has worked with. Councilmember Roe noted he would like to see an environment where the staff can be successful and that the City also doesn't get in the way of businesses being successful. Administrator Swenson noted that the majority of enforcement issues are complaint generated and not the Staff driving around looking for violations.

Considerable discussion was also held regarding running the City like a business and the obstacles in place that make that idea very challenging. It was noted that the City provides services and is not based on generating revenues. Attorney Couri noted that if customers were able to drive the success of a business, that business would probably be

run very differently than it currently is. Customers don't typically ask for things that are profit based but rather service based, and businesses are looking to make a profit.

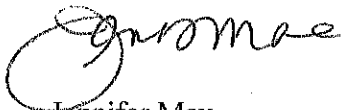
Councilmember Moengen noted that if there is a division in the Council there is a division in the community. The Council should be making decisions that are based on the well-being of the community and not just for specific citizens. Councilmember Moengen noted the Staff's memo further divides the group by making the assumption that the Council is not proud of the community.

Mayor Schneider noted that he has not always run meetings well and that he has made some mistakes. Mayor Schneider said that he would like to work out a program to provide a clear direction for the Council, Commission and Staff. There is a great division in the community and people don't feel like they are being listened to.

Patty Norgaard expressed belief that communication and transparency are key to being successful. Ms. Norgaard challenged the group to think about why they are all sitting at this meeting and hopefully it's to move the City forward using the comprehensive plan as a vision.

There being no further discussion Mayor Schneider adjourned the work session.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer Max".

Jennifer Max
Clerk/Treasurer

Deputy Clerk/Minutes/7-9-12 Special.doc