



**Meeting of the City Council
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Monday, February 3, 2025**

Members Present: Mayor John Dietz, Councilmember Jennifer Wagner, Councilmember Mike Beyer, Councilmember Cory Grupa, Councilmember J. Brian Calva

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Cal Portner, Public Works Director/Chief Engineer Justin Femrite, and Deputy Clerk Jolene Richter

Others Present: Matt Barker and Steven Bona representatives from Capstone, Dale Gade and Mike Kronzer representatives from MnDOT

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. CONSIDER AGENDA

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to approve the agenda. Motion Carried 5-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Councilmember Grupa and seconded by Councilmember Calva to approve the following consent items as outlined in their respective staff reports. Motion Carried 5-0.

4.1 January 21, 2025, Minutes

4.2 Check Register

4.3 Resolution 25-07: Release of Mortgage at 15725 Jarvis Street NW

4.4 Request for Proposals: Elk River Retail Store(s) Construction

4.5 Hire Fulltime Liquor Store Clerk

4.6 Cannabound Business Plan

4.7 Caterpillar Model: 255 Compact Track Loader w/ Attachments

5. OPEN FORUM

No one appeared for Open Forum.

6. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

There were no presentations.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 Discuss Work Session Items

Councilmember Wagner asked if the Council could get an update from the Public Works Director/Chief Engineer, Justin Femrite regarding the stop light timing along Highway 169.

Mayor Dietz asked if the Fire Department would be reporting back with the architectural study results. Mr. Portner stated they would report back in March or April.

9. COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATES

9.1 Council Liaison Updates

The Councilmembers provided updates as outlined in the respective advisory board's minutes.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Councilmember Beyer and seconded by Councilmember Wagner to adjourn the meeting of City Council. Motion Carried 5-0.

The regular meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m. Mayor Dietz called the work session to order at 6:48 p.m.

11. WORK SESSION

11.1 Specht Farm Traffic Impact Study Review

The staff report was presented.

Katie Schmidt, Traffic Engineer with SSTS LLC, presented a summary of the Traffic Impact Study outlined in the staff report.

Councilmember Calva asked if the three options considered other future developments. Ms. Schmidt

stated it does consider the general growth of the volume on Highway 10.

Mayor Dietz asked if any other areas could be developed in the area. Mr. Femrite explained that the Specht family is reserving all their property on the east side. Then it moves to Cargill ownership, who has not indicated their plans for their property at this time.

Councilmember Beyer asked how the truck traffic on the other side of the highway affects the study. Matt Barker representative from Capstone answered saying that the study generally considers all traffic.

Councilmember Beyer expressed his concern that it is not the quantity that he is concerned about, it is the truck traffic specifically in that area and is concerned about trucks coming onto the highway in that area when traffic speeds on the highway are high and the trucks move slowly onto the highway. He is concerned that it makes a very dangerous corridor. He wants to see it done right.

Councilmember Calva asked if overpasses would be considered. Mr. Femrite explained they are going into construction ahead of the funding for overpasses. They are not in the timeline right now which is why they are looking at interim improvements for the development.

Mayor Dietz asked to help with the development if they would need to adjust the 171st signal to give them a longer cue to allow people to get out of the development by traveling east. Mr. Femrite said he would have to confirm that with MnDOT operations.

Councilmember Beyer asked if the timing of the lights on 171st comes into the traffic impact study factors. Ms. Schmidt explained it provides more gaps for the eastbound traffic, but the gaps are not as much as one would expect because of the side street traffic turning on Highway 10.

Councilmember Calva asked if the J-Turns have an opportunity to have acceleration lanes. Ms. Schmidt stated yes and they would coordinate with MnDOT to make the acceleration lanes work.

Mr. Femrite explained the traffic impact analysis tells us why the different scenarios would work or not work and that it considers safety and mobility aspects.

Dale Gade, MnDOT representative, further explained why they are supportive of the J-Turns. He explained that J-Turns allow you to make a better gap assignment to make your movement, by breaking up the moves with small gaps instead of trying to cross the whole intersection, you are crossing just part of the intersection at one time. He further explained that J-Turns would be the best interim option for safety concerns. Ultimately, future grade-separated interchanges would be the best option.

There was discussion and comparison of the MN Highway 65 and 143rd Avenue intersection in Ham Lake, and Mr. Gade stated the volume for that intersection is 37,221 vehicles per day. However, the intersection has a signalized intersection on both sides as opposed to the intersection at Highway 10 and 165th has a lower volume of 32,887 but only has one side that has a signalized intersection. The signalized intersections help slow traffic down and create gaps.

Councilmember Wagner asked if there is an opportunity for the speed limit coming into Elk River to be lowered. For example, when traveling westbound on Highway 10, the speeds are high. She was wondering if the J-Turn would make any difference for the safety aspect at the 171st stoplight.

Mr. Gade replied and stated yes, as a road transitions into a freeway there will be higher speeds. They

would prefer grade separation, but that is not a reality right now. He also stated that the J-Turn would not reduce speeds. He further explained that MnDOT is not an agency for mobility anymore, it is in preservation. There is a greenhouse gas VMT bill that limits MnDOT's ability to make mobility improvements in the future without mitigation being done.

Mayor Dietz confirmed with Mr. Femrite that the studies recommended adding the J-Turns. Mr. Femrite stated the studies support the 3/4 J-Turn intersection being the safest solution and best serving mobility.

Mayor Dietz asked Capstone how long it would take to build the 538 houses. Mr. Barker stated about 6–8 years for the 538 houses to be finished. Mayor Dietz then stated that the traffic would not be fully impacted right away, it would be a gradual increase.

Mayor Dietz asked if the city has any costs for this or would it all be Capstone's. Mr. Femrite said he thinks Capstone would be looking for help with the costs. Mayor Dietz asked if it would be eligible for state aid dollars. Mr. Femrite stated yes it would be if the city would consider supplementing costs in the name of safety and mobility.

Mayor Dietz asked if there would be a cost estimate. Mr. Femrite stated not at this time.

Mr. Barker added to get a permit to build, there has to be a design for access. Also, they set aside funding of \$200,000 for improvements to Highway 10, but they are looking to talk about the costs.

Councilmember Grupa asked if they thought the length of the trucks would be able to do the J-Turns. Mr. Femrite stated he thinks the longer loads, beyond standard-length tractor-trailers, would probably gravitate toward the I65th intersection.

Mr. Barker asked MnDOT how they incorporated into the design for truck traffic to make the J-Turns. Mr. Gade explained the turning radius is obviously always a concern, so they make what they call loons, which is extra pavement added on the side of the turn radius.

Mr. Barker stated they would like to see some guidance sooner rather than later regarding the design for access. He explained that to submit the PUD and the preliminary plat they need an agreement with the design with the city and with MnDOT. Staff will continue to work with all parties to move forward with the recommended access design as supported being the safest and most efficient from the Traffic Impact Study.

12. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to adjourn the meeting of the City Council. Motion Carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jolene Richter.



John J. Dietz, Mayor



Tina Allard, City Clerk