



COTTAGE GROVE PLANNING COMMISSION
12800 Ravine Parkway South
Cottage Grove, MN 55016

October 28, 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 P.M.

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was held in the Council Chamber and telecast on Local Government Cable Channel 16.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Frazier called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Pradeep Bhat-Here; Ken Brittain-Here; Jessica Fisher-Here; Evan Frazier-Here; Eric Knable-Absent; Derek Rasmussen-Here; Emily Stephens-Here.

Members Absent: Eric Knable

Staff Present: Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director; Conner Jakes, Planner; Riley Rooney, Associate Planner; Crystal Raleigh, Assistant City Engineer; Zac Dockter, Parks & Recreation Director; Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director; Kori Land, City Attorney; Tony Khambata, City Council Liaison

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Rasmussen made a motion to approve the agenda. Brittain seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (6-to-0 vote).

4. OPEN FORUM

Frazier opened the open forum and asked if anyone wished to address the Planning Commission on any non-agenda item.

Diane Masloski said we live down in Pine Coulee, 11570 Layton Avenue South, and I'm here to propose that we find a way through grants, through something, to get a bike path connecting us from that area up to the bike paths that we have here, and we would be able to go all the way, as I talked to Zac, about to Lake Elmo once we connect here. Right now, my husband and I ride bikes regularly, and we come on the highway in order to connect to the Ravine Park and then go from there; and it's very dangerous to go along the highway, you have semis, and especially during the construction, Holy Toledo, it was bad. And I drew you some maps and made a proposal for you that we find a way. I'm more than willing, I taught in the district here for 20 years, and I am more than happy to work on grants or do whatever it takes to try and get us something to connect us to the rest of the places; we can't get into Hastings because of the bridge and the river and whatever, and we can't get up here because we have to go on the highway. So, if there is a way that we can find some of the money to get this in the planning stages at least before I have to move out of there and live in a home somewhere; and we can get, we have lots of younger families moving into our area, it would be a lot safer for them to be able to get out and go, and it's good exercise for the families to be able to do this. So, I'd really like to see us try and get something. I am willing to do whatever it takes to try and work on it, and whoever needs to have me help, I'm there to do it. I'm retired now, I can do those things. So, do you have questions, or?

Frazier asked the commissioners if any of them had questions.

Fisher responded I want to see your map. Frazier said yes, we'll take your map. Masloski stated yes, my beautiful map; I was not an art teacher, but I proposed an east and a west side of the highway. Frazier asked Schmitz if she wanted to maybe put it up on

the screen so everybody can see it, but that wasn't possible. Fisher said we can just pass it, too, that's fine. Masloski said our thoughts were that coming on the east side of the highway, we'd be able to connect at Kimbro to the frontage road there and come into Ravine Park on that side that used to be the drive-in area, which is now kind of closed off, but you can get in there with your bike and/or walking. And that, to me, would be the easiest way to do it, but I'm not a planning person so I don't design things like that. Frazier replied understood, okay. I've got one quick question: Is the challenge getting across Highway 61, is that the worst? Masloski replied oh, yeah, we're on the west side, and so we have to get over there. We usually come at the light and then the rest of the way you've got about a mile or a little bit more of riding just along the shoulder of the highway, and we try to get to Kimbro before anyone gets to you, so, it's a scary part. We have two grandchildren, and we like to take them riding with us, but we can't do some places unless we haul the bikes; and that makes it difficult when you're wanting to go do something every time you want to go out and do that, you have to bring your bikes on there. And, like I said, there's a lot of neighbors who now have young children, young families, and they do a lot of biking; we have one man who has a handicapping condition, and he rides a low bike and pedals with his hands. He can't get anywhere except in our little circle neighborhood there because it's too dangerous for him to go on the highway. But there are a lot of walkers, and I was telling Emily earlier, I said COVID at least brought everyone together because we're all out walking and exercising and doing things now, and it would be nice if we had a connection to someplace other than just our three streets that we walk around. So, that's my haunt.

Bhat asked did I hear you say that you liked the east side plan better than the west side plan? Masloski replied I do, I think it would work better because that would give us a way to cross the highway at the stoplight and have a crosswalk there, where on the west side plan you'd have to come up to County Road 19 with the trail and then come across the bridge on 19 in order to get up to Ravine Park or any of the other trails beyond that. So, I thought it would be better to do it that way; I don't know that, but that's what I thought. Bhat said okay, thank you.

Frazier asked Masloski did you intend for us to keep the maps, or did you want them back? Masloski replied they're all yours. Frazier said all right, without objection we'll make them part of the record for the meeting tonight. Thank you very much.

Bonnie Matter, 6649 Inskip Avenue South, Cottage Grove, said I'm going to say this now rather than as part of the CIP, but the City of Cottage Grove has a website. All Public Hearings should have a separate post on the landing page in the Latest News section. The Latest News Public Hearing posts should go up at the same time the meeting files are posted in the Public Meeting section. Link the Public Hearing Latest News entry to the Public Hearing documents. The City must be as transparent as possible with the residents and provide this information in a timely manner. A post on the City's Facebook page would also help in reaching as many residents as possible with Public Hearing notifications. Thank you.

No one else spoke. Frazier closed the open forum.

5. CHAIR'S EXPLANATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

Frazier explained the purpose of the Planning Commission, which serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, and that the City Council makes all final decisions. In addition, he explained the process of conducting a public hearing and requested that any person wishing to speak should go to the podium and state their full name and address for the public record.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPLICATIONS

A. Chase Bank Plat - Case PP2024-018

KIN, Inc. (Kohl's Department Stores) has applied for a Preliminary Plat at 7990 Hardwood Avenue South, which is adjacent to Culver's, U.S. Bank, and contains the recently constructed Chase Bank in the south parking lot, which would split 1.03 acres in order for the constructed Chase Bank site to be within an individual parcel.

Jakes summarized the staff report and recommended approval subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report.

Frazier asked if there were any questions for staff.

Rasmussen asked dividing out this parcel, is it safe to assume they still meet all setback and parking requirements? Jakes replied yes, that's correct. So, Kohl's still meets all parking requirements and applicable standards, as well as that Chase Bank site that

was recently approved; and then there is an Access Agreement in place between the parcels to allow access to each site via that private drive. Just to note, that Chase Bank site would be required to abide by the conditions of the resolution that approved it.

Brittain said it was mentioned in the staff report about park dedication, and could you clarify for me when that occurs? I see this is a lot split, and I know that that triggers things, but something got built here. Does that only occur when there's a lot split, or should we be doing this as new structures go up? Jakes replied that's a great question. In this case, it's a bit of a unique situation given Chase Bank was not on its own parcel; so, usually, we receive park dedication at the time a new parcel is created. So, at the time of Chase Bank, we weren't able to collect park dedication at that time, so we can collect it now that a new lot is being created. Also, at the time of original approvals with Kohl's, there was not actually park dedication paid with that original approval in 2002; so, in 2007, Culver's also paid park dedication and then we're applying that here, to the Chase Bank site, given there was no previous reception of park dedication funds and there's the new lot that's created. Brittain asked so if the additional 20,000 square feet east of Kohl's were developed and it wasn't split into a separate parcel, would that trigger a park dedication fee, or would it have to then split that parcel as well in order to trigger that? Jakes replied I would assume that we would not be able to collect park dedication given its not a new parcel, and that addition was approved with the original approvals in 2002. If there was a newly-split lot, it would follow kind of the same process as Culver's and Chase Bank here, and we normally would collect park dedication funds at that point. Brittain said so knowing now what we know, would we have collected park dedication fee when Kohl's originally built and then it wouldn't matter? Jakes replied correct. Brittain said okay, thank you.

Bhat asked so the access is being shared by three plots or three parcels. Jakes replied yes, that's correct. So, the access comes off of Hardwood Avenue here and then US Bank has an access, Chase Bank, and then Culver's has the drive through and then access to their parking lot. So, there's a private Access Agreement that all properties are a part of and party to that allows basically people to travel within that area to each parcel. Bhat said but my question is does that meet the requirements? I mean, that's a private access, right? Do we have any regulations on that, because it's now shared between four parcels? Jakes replied yes, that would be basically a private agreement between the private parties, that the City wouldn't have any party to or interaction with, so all the property owners would be required to have that recorded and work through that process privately, apart from City involvement. Bhat said okay, thank you.

Frazier said I have one more question, and I don't know that you know the answer to this, but is there a reason why the lot split wasn't done at the time the approvals for Chase Bank was done in 2023? Jakes replied that's a good question; I don't know for certain, but from the sounds of it, Kohl's is kind of going through a company-wide restructuring, reorganization where they're trying to split off parcels where they have parking lot developments as they call it, it's just to clear things up. And it helps on our side, too, because our utility billing kind of follows parcel identification numbers, so it works out kind of in the best interests for everyone and then separates taxes and such. So, that's kind of what I was informed of. Frazier said okay, thank you.

Frazier stated the applicant wasn't able to be here tonight, so at this time we'll open the public hearing. No one spoke. Frazier closed the public hearing.

Fisher made a motion to approve the preliminary plat, subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Rasmussen seconded. Motion passed unanimously (6-to-0 vote).

B. CIP 2025-2029 - Case CP2024-020

The City of Cottage Grove has applied for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to amend the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for 2025-2029.

Raleigh and Dockter summarized the staff report and recommended approval.

Park Improvements:

Rasmussen said maybe I missed it, in 2028, Local Option Sales Tax \$5.25 million, can you help me understand what that is? Dockter said I'm going to address that in the future slides coming up, so I skipped over all the Local Option Sales Tax items on there, and I'll address those separately. Rasmussen asked about the pickleball courts; do we have any in town? Dockter replied we do: We have three at Granada Park currently, we have six at Glacial Valley Park, and then we have two, one at Cedarhurst Meadows and then one at Sunnyhill Park, which are the kind where you have to bring our own net. We've had three at Granada Park since 2014 and then we built the six at Glacial Valley Park, and we thought that would take care of the growth of pickleball, but it's been open for one year and it's already to the point where people can't get on it, it's full.

Bhat said with the Highlands Tennis Court Replacement, I've been there, it looks like it needs replacement right away, why wait until 2028? Dockter replied yes, there's pretty significant cracking there, and we're going to try to patch that this year; if that patch doesn't hold, we may have to change some things. And that's the one thing with the capital improvements, this is our projected plan, there are plenty of times where if that repair doesn't work, we might have to come back to Council at next year's CIP and say we want to move the Highlands Park Tennis Court up and then move something else back. So, that's a good point.

Brittain said as we're talking about all these pickleball courts, it looks like as you get to old ice-rink areas, you pave them, and a lot of them can be used for sports courts. Glacier Park, I don't believe that's paved, or is there a hard surface on that rink there? Dockter replied it is not paved right now. Brittain asked is that something that would be put in the queue for all of these things to have it be like the other courts and be able to be used in the off season, like these courts that are being refurbished. Dockter replied that's a possibility; unfortunately, that one's a little bit harder because it has to be excavated out, so you've got to take it all apart and its got a concrete border around it. So, we did look at that one, and the Athletic Association is even looking at maybe partnering for like a rollerblade court or something or for roller hockey. So, it's still in the conversation, but that's a little more difficult. We already know at Woodridge Park the whole thing needs to come out, and we're kind of starting over, and you can run the paver down there as opposed to trying to wiggle into an existing rink. Brittain said okay, I'm assuming since all these refurbished parks are getting it, that from what we know now, even if it's not pickleball but rollerblading or something else, any new parks that we have we'd consider that if it has a hockey rink feature to have that paved as kind of a standard? Dockter replied I think that's fair to say, that we want to look at that, but we also want to be careful because ice and running equipment on it in the winter, I mean that can be pretty hard on it, right? We see what happens to the tennis courts with no equipment on it, so we're a little bit hesitant to go all in right away; we kind of want to see how Woodridge Park handles it first. And then just real quickly, I should mention, too, Glacial Valley Park is not a full-size rink, but Woodridge and Peter Thompson are full-size rinks; so, you can maybe fit four-or-five pickleball courts on those and at Glacial Valley you could probably only fit three on it.

Fisher asked with these pickleball courts, so is it just regular pavement or is there a specific, like a special surface for it? Because I know if the ball doesn't bounce right, people get real upset. So, what is the material that you pave it with? Dockter replied it's just another section of pavement, but then you have to hire another company that comes out and they actually use, its like a driveway sealer, but it's much different than driveway sealer, so that's how they apply it. Fisher said so it's like a coating, basically, on top of it. Dockter replied yes, it's basically; we call it a court paint, it's not really a paint, but it's a shell that goes on there, and then they put the lines on top of that. Fisher said okay, and you hire that, so that's an added expense to the asphalt as well. Dockter replied correct. Fisher said okay, thank you.

Preserve.Play.Prospers:

Brittain said just to clarify, just because I've had people ask me, it's not a half percent per project, it's a half percent total for the Local Option Sales Tax, regardless of how many get approved, whether it's one, two, or three? Dockter replied that's a great question. The maximum sales tax is 0.5% no matter how many questions pass, and the maximum revenue that can be gained through the sales tax is \$36 million, which is what's been proposed and accepted by the State. So, the 0.5% max sales tax has to come off either after 25 years or when the \$36 million in revenue is achieved.

Stephens asked is River Oaks a golf course. Dockter replied it's the River Oaks Golf Course and Event Center, and what the plan is aiming to do is actually get more people to use it because it's 220 acres of public property that the City owns. The plan is trying to find different ways to use it, get different people down there, using it in different ways to utilize what we consider to be a point of pride in the community. We'd like to see more people use it in different ways. Stephens said so the improvements are to a public building, it's all public. Dockter replied it's an all-public building on public land, yes. So, you don't see a lot of golf in here, other than the Himalayan Putting Green, which is kind of a glorified mini putting course, which would be free to the public. You're seeing things like the mountain biking course, patio upgrades, the pickleball court/event court that can be used for events or programs or whatever it might be, and then the simulators, which can be used for golf, but they can be used for soccer, zombie shooting, whatever it might be.

New Park Buildings:

Rasmussen stated I really like the new park buildings that are proposed and have recently been built. Do they get staffed? Like, right now, some of our existing buildings I don't feel like are really staffed, we probably don't need to, but how do you manage public use inside a building? Dockter replied if there's a program or event, we staff the buildings. If there's no special program or event, then we do not staff the buildings. We do open the restrooms at all of our community parks, so our staff opens them in the morning, cleans them, and then we're really lucky to work with our Police Department as they come in at sundown and close them down; most communities' police forces don't do that for them, so we're pretty happy about that, and that's a good time

to have cops in the parks anyway. But that's about the extent of the staffing. I should say our Parks crew spend a ton of time in there because the rentals are crazy; we've tripled or quadrupled our rental facilities just in the last five-to-ten years, they're getting a lot of use, especially these like Glacial Valley. We projected 40 rentals and we're already at over 70 rentals for the year. Rasmussen replied wow, that's great.

Pavement Management and Utility & Pedestrian CIP Projects:

Brittain said you mentioned in 2028 the reconstruction of Jamaica to Military; would that include the realignment of Jamaica to Military with the roundabout that would be included with that? Raleigh replied that would include that, yes.

Bhat said we had a question during the open forum about having a new bike path. So, are bike paths also in the CIP or are they outside? Raleigh replied there are several bike paths within the CIP; in that area, specifically, I'm guessing that that would be part of the 100th Street realignment project, there will be a lot of pedestrian facilities within that project that would get folks from the west side of the highway potentially to the east side of the highway.

Stephens asked about the water softening; since that's in the future plans, are we doing any work now on the treatment plants to like make room for it if it actually happens? Raleigh replied I am going to have our Public Works Director answer that one. Burfeind said that's a great question because obviously it's a big dollar amount, which as Crystal mentioned is not funded at this time, but it's important to have it in the CIP just from a planning perspective and if there's ever grant opportunities. For both treatment plants, we did take that into account so it wouldn't necessarily be a direct part of the building, you'll actually see in the next presentation where that would be located for the Intermediate Zone Plant and in the Low Zone we had it as well. We made sure that we didn't preclude it, so however the water mains were set up on site, however water entered and left the treatment plant, we want to make sure that that would be as easy to do as possible to make sure we were setting ourselves up for the future.

Frazier opened the public hearing.

Bonnie Matter, 6649 Inskip Avenue South, Cottage Grove, said I guess the first thing I'd like to just remind everyone is that the City has no money, okay? The taxpaying residents of Cottage Grove are the owners of each and every item in the Capital Improvements Project plan. The Cottage Grove taxpayers expect good stewardship, transparency, and accountability from City government and City staff for the taxes they pay. When the City spends taxpayer money on large-ticket wants and a developer is not footing the bill, like Glacial Valley Park or River Oaks Golf Course or like the upcoming Kingston replacement building, then that want should be put before the taxpaying voters with a complete understanding of how much, how it fits in the current budget, and how we as taxpayers are going to pay for it and for how long. It should be straightforward and simple enough for everyone to understand. One of the questions I had with this whole LOST piece, the local area sales tax, was why Kingston? The replacement building for Kingston isn't what was looked at vs. River Oaks, why that's not on that. Before taking on additional parks building bonding, let's pay off the loan on the Glacial Valley Park building first and then begin saving for the Kingston Park replacement building and then the Olman LaCrosse fields. There are ongoing problems with pedestrians trying to cross multiple intersections on both 80th and 70th Streets; how will the City take care of these intersections to protect both residents and visitors? These are the types of Public Safety issues that require the City's immediate attention, and one of the things that I thought about, I mean we could do right away, is Bayport has flags at their crosswalks, and anyone that's crossing the street can go grab a flag on one side, put it out, walk across, put it into a little container, and that's how they work with it. We've got too many kids that are trying to get across 80th and 70th. Climate Resilience: The City experienced at least two major storms this year that resulted in homeowners' damage from flooding, hail, wind, downed trees, etc. Homeowners insurance premiums in the State of Minnesota are increasing at rates of 25% or more through the storm damage claims. What type of contingency plans are in place to help address climate change and the accompanying costs for the residents of Cottage Grove? Are dollars set aside for emergencies? Residents are told repeatedly how low our taxes are. In addition to the 2025 property tax increase, and according to the 2025-2029 CIP plan, residents can plan on the following rate increases in 2025: A 3% increase in the Storm Utility Fund, a 5.5% rate increase in the Water Utility Fund, a 5% rate increase in the Sanitary Sewer Utility Fund, an 8% rate increase for the Streetlight Utility Fund, and if it passes, a Local Option Sales Tax of .5% will be added to the current 8.37% Cottage Grove sales tax. The City also made an agreement with Xcel Energy for a 3% surcharge tax to be added to residents' electric bills for buried electrical lines on the East Point Douglas Road construction. The CIP represents only one piece of the dollars that are going to be needed to finance the City of Cottage Grove. Now might be the time to take a pause on park projects and get the debt paid down. So, that's what I'd like to share. I have one other thing, I just can't read my writing; oh, this is what it means: The River Oaks Golf Course has a lease on it, so it's up in 2025, I don't know what part of it, but I know that there is a lease that's up on part of that golf course, and I just would like to know more about that. Thank you very much.

No one else spoke. Frazier closed the public hearing.

Frazier asked if staff wanted to address some of the comments from the public.

Dockter stated it sounds like the one question was why the Kingston Park building not one of the Local Option Sales Tax projects. Frazier said I think it was specifically why River Oaks, not Kingston Park. Dockter said as I presented to the commission a few weeks ago, there was a laundry list of park improvement projects that we heard from the community that they wanted. So, we took that laundry list to the recreational activities, we tried to put those into three different park projects, really not knowing at the time where they were going to go, River Oaks, Kingston, Hamlet, Glacial Valley, or wherever. As we narrowed that list down, we looked for opportunities that made the most sense within those locations, and that's really how it ended up. You can't fund everything, right? You kind of have to pick your projects and you have to pick your locations, and those were the ones that seemed to make the most sense, based on the concept designs. We had seven park improvement projects, and we narrowed it down to five, and then narrowed it down to three. I guess I don't have the perfect answer other than you can only fund so much and you can only go to the State with so much and you can only go to the taxpayers with so much to vote on; so, those were the ones that were prioritized for the Local Option Sales Tax funding. And it doesn't prevent us from still using Park Improvement Funds and Park Dedication Funds for other projects, but they're kind of separate because there are separate funding sources. I'm not sure if that directly answers the question; if there's more that I need to add, please let me know.

Brittain said that's a good explanation, I'll just add on to that that you mentioned Park Dedication fees, so that is the developers putting money into the funding to then go pay for the parks. Because that was a comment that was made that they're not paying their fair share, where, in fact, as things get developed, money gets set aside for parks, correct? Dockter replied correct, and I think it's important to note that that's limited, too, by State authority, right? It's 10% or cash, and you can only leverage so much from that funding source as well; and we're finding that that's not covering all the fees. A good example is I used to build neighborhood playgrounds for \$25,000 and now they're \$100,000 for those same playgrounds in a 20-year span. The fees you can leverage for Park Dedication aren't as productive as they maybe were 10 years ago, 15 years ago, 20 years ago; so, it's becoming more challenging as the cost of goods and construction has gone up, it becomes more challenging to build those projects also.

Raleigh said I was going to briefly address the pedestrian crossings on 80th Street and 70th Street. It's important to note that 70th Street is a County Road, and they do have some planning in their CIP to look into the pedestrian crossings. Also, the last thing on this presentation was that Safe Streets and Roads For All, that will take a really comprehensive look at pedestrian crossings throughout the City and hopefully generate some great projects where we can see some pedestrian safety upgrades on those busier corridors.

Burfeind said I'll touch on a few of the questions: One was more of a general question about climate change resilience. I think that's always important, I think when you look at a lot of these projects, they are looking at new things like stormwater rates, things that are changing, as those things advance throughout the years and 100-year storms and things change as the years have gone on. So, that's something that we're always looking at. We actually are going back into some different areas of town that don't maybe have the flooding resiliency that other newer areas that had newer roads do, and that's what we did down on Jamaica and 95th. There's a huge pond on 95th Street that took a hugely uncontrolled part of the City that went right down to the river and catches that now in a large stormwater basin and has infiltration; so, a lot of the water is actually recharging the groundwater aquifers, so that's always important. We also have a pretty comprehensive water conservation program; we've seen a lot more droughts over the years, and it can be really easy for residents just to turn on those sprinklers and it really makes an impact on our water usage. So, we have a big water conservation program with smart controllers and different things to help kind of average out that water usage when we have those dry spells. I think it is important that we do look at that, and we look at that individually with projects that we do as well in town. There was talk about rate increases, and certainly there is discussion in the CIP about utility projects, and utility projects go into a cost on those, so with the utility funds, we can cause rate increases. I think one thing is we've obviously had pretty high inflation and an even higher cost index in the construction world, and we kind of averaged that out over the past few years, not having really large rate increases. Other things are just out of our control, so the Sanitary Sewer Utility Fund, about 80% of that fund goes to pay the Metropolitan Council for water treatment, and only 20% is City controlled, and that's something that we've seen obviously rise throughout the years. So, that's a big part of that increase.

With the Streetlight Fund, there was another larger increase, and that's largely paying the electrical bills to Xcel Energy, and I think we've all seen at home that electrical rates have also gone up over the years. So, some of those things are out of our control, but where they can be, we obviously do want to be good stewards of those utility funds.

And I want to mention, because I want to make sure there's correct information for our residents, there was talk about a 3% surcharge on our Xcel bills to bury powerlines. Now, there are two different things: 1) There were powerlines buried on the Jamaica and East Point Douglas project. There were a lot of reasons we had to do that, frankly, just to make the project work, to make the roundabout and the road widening work; that was not a 3% surcharge on electric bills. That was 89 cents per customer per month. So, whether your bill is \$100 or \$200, it's 89 cents per month was the funding mechanism to do that. 2) There was a separate percent-based franchise fee that is on the bills, and that's what pays for things like Mill & Overlays, Trail Replacements in town, and our road maintenance. That was a different type of franchise fee that was more just flat rate; I think it was somewhere around \$3 or \$4 per month, but it really put more burden on the residents, and it was kind of a pretty major low cost for higher users in town. So, the percentage-based fee is a lot of the ways the cities are going, we're seeing more and more cities switch to that to kind of more equitably have those franchise fees spread out throughout the community. So, those franchise fees do not go to paying and burying powerlines. So, I just want that to be clear. Burfeind said I think that covers all the questions; if I missed any, you can let me know.

Bhat said so one of the questions, the way I paraphrase it, is everything in the CIP comes from our tax dollars; is that true or are we seeking funding from outside sources, like the development funding, or? Burfeind replied certainly a part of that is tax dollars, I don't have the exact breakout, but it is a surprisingly small amount that is actual tax dollars. Like those Pavement Management projects, that is certainly tax dollars, a lot of different projects are what we call Development Driven, parts of Ravine Parkway, things like that that are not funded. The water tower, for example, that's over time paid for by water area charges that are paid by developers, because developers pay for the implementation of new water towers, new wells, through all the area funds that we collect. And a lot of grant funding as well; that \$55 million for the County 19A and 100th Street Project, about \$11-to-\$12 million of the \$55 million is County and City local dollars. Even in that case, for the City, a part of that will be area funds to pay for the new water and sewer and then MSA dollars, which actually come from the gas tax. So, it is information I think we could get for the commission if you want to see a breakout of what is tax dollars vs. other buckets; if you had interest, I think we have the information, I just don't have it in front of me tonight.

Frazier thanked everyone for responding to questions and doing the presentation. Is there any further discussion from commission, then, on the application?

Fisher stated I'm trying to kind of gather my thoughts, but there was a comment about being good stewards of our tax dollars, and I personally think that the City does that very well. I can go to my house, I can turn my water on, I have no worries about it, our bathrooms work, my street was just redone. I just really enjoy living in the City, and I feel like we take pride in our City and we take care of things; we have awesome parks, we have trails, we have a lot of amenities here that other places don't have. So, I just wanted to say that I think, personally, the City does a great job with planning out future projects and taking care of the amenities that the City frankly demands of them to take care of. So, good job, everybody.

Frazier said I guess I'll add to that because part of adding the amenities is then taking care of the amenities we have; so, like Zac mentioned, obviously we have all these parks out there, if we just didn't spend the money to upkeep them, no one would use them. And then when we wanted to come back around to make them usable, it would cost a lot more money than we're going to spend on trying to maintain them on a regular basis. So, in order to make sure that all of those amenities are available for people in our community, we have to put the money up; and obviously, that's part of living in the community, that's part of living in a city is providing those opportunities for everyone who lives in the City, so that's just part of the name of the game.

Fisher said right, and I'll add onto that, too, I think Cottage Grove is a growing City; we're not a landlocked City that's already done growing and all the real estate is used up, like, we're growing, we're expanding. I mean, in the 10 years I've lived here, the growth I've seen is crazy, and so we have to meet the needs of all these people that are coming to our community. So, you hear about the sewer going in and the new trunks and all the things; like those are things that we need to support the people who want to come and be a part of our City, so, yeah.

Stephens said I have a quick note. With all the parks projects and just kind of like bringing up I guess the environment, with each project I know there's a lot of opportunities for incorporating projects and low-impact development. And I'd just like a shameless plug for the Watershed District, I think they're always really happy to work with the City on those projects; and I think there's a lot of opportunity in the coming years to work together and get education and stormwater and all that stuff incorporated with these, and then you get funding as well, like everybody was mentioning.

Frazier asked if there were any further comments or discussion; as there were none, he said at this time I'll look for a motion.

Brittain made a motion to approve the comprehensive plan amendment for the 2025-2029 CIP. Stephens seconded. Motion passed unanimously (6-to-0 vote).

C. Intermediate Zone Water Treatment Plant - Case PP/SP/V2024-019

The City of Cottage Grove has applied for a site plan review, preliminary plat, and variance to the maximum building height and minimum rear yard setback for construction of a water treatment plant on a 6.78-acre parcel, which is part of the larger 40.3-acre Pine Tree Pond Park Addition. The proposed water treatment plant is located south of the Central Fire Station in Pine Tree Pond Park off 81st Street South.

Rooney and Burfeind summarized the staff report and recommended approval based on the findings of fact and subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report.

Frazier asked the commissioners if there were any questions for staff.

Fisher said Riley talked about gates and keeping the public out of the facility. But with the park and the trail and stuff are right next to the road, kind of on the western side. How are we going to keep people from wandering around the facility? I understand the gates will keep out the traffic trying to drive through, but with paths here inviting people to walk the property, I just wonder how we'll keep people out. Burfeind replied there are a couple fences that we'll be working with: One is actually connecting from the Central Fire Station to the Water Treatment Plant, that actually came up more because of the proximity of the playground to the Central Fire Station, not wanting kids to be playing there and saying oh, there are ambulances over here, let's go check them out. So, we were looking at a fence there. There's actually quite a bit of chain-link fence out here today, all around those water towers, to kind of protect all that infrastructure; so, we would probably maybe look at just tying into that with the trail. I will say with this project the City has a standard of kind of a decorative-style fence, so it would not be chain-link, it would be the decorative wrought iron style of fence; but we would do that similar to what we would do for any commercial developer, we want to hold ourselves to that same standard, so we'd look to incorporate that as well. On the eastern side is actually a really large kind of slope and probably retaining wall, so that'll kind of provide a natural barrier from the archery range. Fisher said okay, I just feel like that's a weird place to put a playground, right between the Fire Department and the new plant. I just feel like you're asking for situations, but that's just me. Okay, thank you.

Brittain said I think you guys did a great job. Burfeind said thank you. The whole variance of the setback, public space, public building to public building, I don't think that that causes any issues there. Your consideration of the height and trying to build that in is great work. One question that I have, or maybe a suggestion, would be you're naming these things the Lower Water Treatment Plant and the Intermediate Water Treatment Plant, and there's Interim Water Treatment facilities. The Lower Water Treatment Plant provides service to lower, as well as river, and the Intermediate Water Treatment Plant provides intermediate and high-pressure zones, and I found that kind of confusing. There's a lot of information in the packet, and just as a suggestion, maybe call them something different for the long term, referring to these different things as we evolve and they get used for more and more areas over time. I think that would be helpful to not tie them into necessarily lower and intermediate. Riley said thank you for your comment on that one.

Bhat asked so tying to that, when you say the heights are described here in the pressure zones, those are the heights of the water tower, or what are those heights? Burfeind replied that's a really good question. So, all of our pressure that we have on our water system is created by gravity, so the water towers do provide that height. In Cottage Grove, it's kind of on a big hill, right, the north end of town is the highest and slowly slopes down to the river; and we have to kind of break that up into zones, and that's how it operates today, that's how the City was planned decades ago. There's kind of a range of pressure that you want to have within a zone, from 35 PSI on the low end, that's not great pressure but its acceptable, all the way up to about 75-to-80 PSI. So, that's what these are is different elevations to the City. So, the high-pressure zone doesn't actually have higher water pressure than the lower-pressure zone, it's just a higher elevation in town, if that makes sense. Bhat said thank you. One more question: What's a Lamella room? Burfeind replied that's the Lamella plate settler. So, thinking about resiliency and environmental perspective, so, we have to remove iron and manganese from the water and we have to backwash these big filters at least once a week. That water is kind of filled with iron and manganese; one option is just to send it right to the sewer, which would be a huge waste of water in our mind. So, there's a special piece of equipment that actually runs the water through it and settles all the iron out and allows us to recycle about 80% of that water back through the treatment plant. So, instead of all of it going to the sewer, about 80% is cleaned through those plate settlers, and then it can go back and actually be used as clean drinking City water; so, that's trying to reduce our impact and our sewer usage. Bhat said okay, thank you.

Stephens said I kind of just have a little comment. Being that this is fully funded by 3M, and it's really cool, the Master Plan is awesome, the Concept Plan. So, there's a lot of things that require sod, right, like the disk golf course and archery. It would be really cool if there were ways to incorporate more native plantings and reduce the irrigation, especially since this is like a Water Treatment Plant, and maybe we can demonstrate reduced demand on watering. Has that been considered at all vs. just sod everywhere? Burfeind replied stated yep, that's a great question, actually, I'm glad you bring that up because I should kind of provide that break between the two. So, because we are using existing City park land that was dedicated as a park use, this was discussed with the State quite a while ago that there should be a reimbursement for the value of that land. Now, that is going to be a specific number based on an appraisal, and that will then fund these park improvements. But it's not the actually 3M Settlement paying for the park improvements; the City would get a specific dollar amount based on an appraisal and then have to kind of fit within that. So, obviously, we want to be good stewards of your way, but certainly the 3M Settlement wouldn't specifically build the disk golf course, let's say. I don't believe we irrigate things like that, like a disk golf course. I think we actually do look at more of a native, obviously, it can't be native grasses, but there'll be some irrigated stuff with the landscaping around the building, it's required; but everything around the ponding areas and more open spaces we actually are looking to do native grasses for all of those areas as well. It's kind of like the Fire Station did on the eastern side. Stephens said awesome, thank you.

Rasmussen stated a much larger project and building than I kind of anticipated, seeing the other temporary shelters popping up. I'm just curious, how does this Water Treatment Plant in size compare to the Low Pressure Water Treatment Plant, which I believe is under construction or maybe complete. Burfeind replied from a size comparison, the actual capacity of the plant is about 2.5 times, close to 3 times the capacity, but it's not 3 times the size; it's probably about double the footprint, certainly the overall footprint, but we're actually using less acreage on this one than the other one because we had to get very creative to kind of make it all work here. But its kind of roughly double the footprint size; some of those savings are because we have the height, there's kind of 2 stories of office-lab space, and then the ion exchange treatment is kind of being a little smaller in scale. Rasmussen said it's a very impressive project.

Frazier asked if there were any more questions from the commissioners, there were none.

Frazier said all right, thank you both. Before we open the public hearing on this application, I do just want to, in the interest of transparency, as noted in the Planning Commission packet, there were public hearing notices sent out to everyone who owned property within 500 feet of this project; that was 206 property owners. I own a residence within that 500 feet, I received a notice; I don't have any other information about this project other than what I have learned here tonight, and I don't believe that would affect my ability to make a decision on this matter. With that being said, I will open the public hearing on the application.

Frazier opened the public hearing.

Jerry Fuller, 8620 81st Street South, Cottage Grove, said I've been a citizen of Cottage Grove since 1974, and I've been in this neighborhood since 1986. And, that as you know from this address, this water treatment business was in all of our back yards; that's not our back yard, its City property, but we do as people use that for getting stuff in and out of our back yards, trash, grass clippings, so on and so forth. The access currently is terrible, it needs to be improved; but I'm concerned tonight that I see we're going to build a golf course there, like we need another golf course in Cottage Grove? I guess I'm a little concerned about that. Is that going to be on that property, behind us, on 81st Street is the question I have. I'd like an answer, it doesn't have to be tonight, though. Frazier said what we'll do, at the end of the public hearing, as you probably saw on some of the other applications, staff is writing down all the comments and questions right now. We'll close the public hearing, and staff will come up and explain and answer questions. Fuller said yeah, I've never been at a meeting before, never saw a need to do it. It's been a great place to live, all of those are good things. This project is somewhere to build whatever that was back there, I think its temporary, was just a horrible experience for the neighborhood, you should know that going forward. Try to do better with this, if you could, it would help a lot. That's really all I have if I can get my questions answered. Frazier said can I ask you, just so we can have the most information available, what was horrible about the experience with the temporary plants? Fuller replied well, they blocked access, for one thing. They didn't do a very good job of cleanup when they were doing it; they left open pipes there, that are very dangerous back there for people who are using that. The building, maybe that has to be, but now that its temporary, it makes me feel much better if its going away; nothing could be gone away better than that building. So, what you've done with that treatment center down there looks very nice, and you're to be commended in my view. I don't know what's going to happen to the traffic, I think you guys are right, that's going to be pretty ugly for people who live in that area, but it's part of living in Minnesota, so I don't have anything else.

Diane Fuller, 8620 81st Street South, said my concern is what's all going to happen in that whole area behind there; they're talking about a golf course, talking about other things, but my understanding is that there was a contract put together when they built those houses along that back stretch. The contract said that they would leave that area completely uninhabited, period. It was just the contract so that nothing would be going crazy back there, and these people could buy their houses with their back yards facing back there. So, that's my concern is what's all going to go on back there? And access to the area back there was difficult, but I just hope they're not going beyond that area than what they are right now. That's my concern, and I guess I would like to have somebody check out that contract; I can come up with it, I'm sure, but check out the contract that was put together by the City.

David Waletzko, 8575 81st Street South, said I love living in Cottage Grove, have lived here 12 years or so, moved from Woodbury, would never go back. I love what you guys are doing, thinking about trying to minimize the effect of everything of those around it, really appreciate that. The two things that I saw that kind of worried me is just to kind of echo those with a disk golf course back there; like, right now, we have deer and fox and owls and all sorts of stuff out in there, and to Commissioner Stephens' point, there's a bunch of, I don't know if they're native, but they're at least just wild weeds and things that don't require any maintenance whatsoever. We've got deer that will sit out there, we've seen owls hunting the mice, which is good. I really don't want that to turn into we've taken all these little snippets to build the fire station, build the temporary plant, build this; like, I don't want to get it down to where the only thing that can live in there is like mice and rabbits. I love seeing the muskrats swimming around in the pond. So, whatever we can do to try to just preserve that, I really feel that the mini disk course, like I get the Water Treatment Plant, we need it, the PFAS is horrible, we've got to do it, I'm not going to NIMBY that we can't have this Water Treatment Plant in my back yard. I might NIMBY that we don't need a disk golf course, not in my back yard, but in my front yard. I'd much rather just see that stay native and wild and just leave it open. Don't put a paved trail through there, it's a little, there's like a little maintenance trail that we can like run; there's a paved trail right around the pond, we don't need more trail right there, just leave that natural, please. And the other thing, I don't know if there's a solution to this one, is the lighting. I heard that they have to be on 24 hours for security reasons, I'm disheartened to hear that. The top of that hill is actually, it's not a dark sky spot by any means, but it's darker. You know the latest comet we had, the Northern Lights, things like that, neighbors will actually gather up on that hill and watch those things because there's no lights, and you can stand just right, and the water towers will block kind of the streetlights from over there. If we have to leave them on for security reasons, I guess we do, but I would love it if we didn't have to. And I don't know if there's someone you can ask to get a variance on that or something, or at the very least, maybe on the Fourth of July, during the fireworks shows, just for one hour turn them off, because again, we'll all gather up there, you get a great view of Cottage Grove, Woodbury's, so you can pick out other cities' all going off. It's a beautiful view, you guys know, you live right there. So, those are my two things. Again, thank you so much for the environmental concerns and all of the stuff about keeping it a low profile to the neighborhood, we really, really appreciate that. Thank you.

No one else spoke. Frazier closed the public hearing.

Frazier asked Riley if she would try answering some of those questions. Riley said yeah, I'm going to try to get to as many as I can, and then I'll probably defer to Ryan and Zac for a little bit more information on the other things that I can't address. So, first, for the disk golf course, I'll pull up that image, and just to clarify, it's not a standard golf course; disk golf is a little bit different, it's kind of like Frisbee, but it's not exactly, you're not hitting balls into peoples' back yards so you're not going to get like your window broken. From my understanding, this disk golf course is meant to be less of an impact, it's not like a standard disk golf course where there's 18 holes and there's going to be tournaments. It's supposed to be pretty quiet, reserved for the neighborhood itself. I know Zac can talk about that a little bit more than I can myself, but again, it's not a golf course, golf course. In terms of construction traffic, I think Ryan can probably give a little bit more information, or Lee can, on that end. Of course, we always want to make sure that we're not impacting the neighbors or we're trying not to impact them as much as we can, so we can take some of that commentary into our process when we go into construction. If you need any more images, I'm certain that we can provide them as to what's going to happen where and when for the whole of the park and the Water Treatment Plant. I'm not familiar with the contract that Diane had brought up, but we can certainly look into it should it be in our files anywhere. And then to address David's comments, again, I think staff can probably talk a little bit more about the plans for the golf course and his intentions for keeping the grass or not keeping the grass and I believe the trail as well. I think that's all I can address right now, I'm going to turn it over to my counterparts.

Dockter said Riley alluded to the disk golf course, it is meant to be a novice disk golf course, so there's probably going to be five-or-six holes and much shorter holes; so, it's meant to be maybe a spot where you learn with a child to throw a Frisbee a few hundred feet instead of going to Oakwood where you're going a couple hundred yards. So, it is meant to be very short, very passive, really shouldn't have too much impact on the land that's there, there are already grass trails and we intend to keep most

of those grass trails the way they are. I'll tell you I actually started the habitat restoration of Pine Tree Pond back in 2013 or 2014, trying to get that area with some native wetlands and grasslands and woodland areas as well; so, that's been under process since before the new fire station was built, so it's definitely a passion of mine to make sure that we preserve as much natural habitat out there as possible. Trails: Most of the trail expansion, as far as bituminous trail, are going to be up on that northwest side, just getting the neighborhoods into a little better access into the park; you're not going to see a lot of path growth beyond that, impacting too much beyond what's already there. I'm not aware of a contract either; I guess in the 24 years I've been here, I've never heard of a contract for anything with the public land behind that space, but I'll be happy to see it and review it if that comes to us.

Burfeind said I'll quickly address that lighting question. One thing to hopefully provide a little more information, the styled lighting, I think a lot of folks see the lighting in the neighborhoods, which is more the globe-style light, which certainly has more of an impact on the night sky. This is all downward directed, following the City Code for an area like this; so, it's kind of like we'd see out in the parking lot where it's all facedown, with the hood over the top. We do want that on just because this is obviously a very critical infrastructure that has a lot of kind of security issues and threats, and we want to maintain that; I think maybe on the Fourth of July we could take a look and maybe we could flip the switch, luckily, they are LED now, so they're a lot easier to turn on and off than the old high-pressure sodium lights. So, maybe we can take a look at that. Frazier said Ryan the other thing about the lighting, and I think Riley had mentioned it in her part of the application, was that the City Code requires that at the property line that there's a 0 full candle spillover; so, if you're at the property line, there shouldn't be any light coming from those lights, right? Burfeind replied that is correct, and we are meeting that Code requirement.

Frazier asked if there were any other questions for staff from the commission or any further discussion on the application.

Frazier stated I guess I'll just echo a lot of the residents here, as well as Commissioner Brittain and Commissioner Fisher, on thank you to staff for being very intentional about the project. There are going to be disruptions, and I think everyone understands that; it's going to be unfortunate that there are disruptions and things aren't going to go perfectly, but this is something that the City does feel it needs. It seems like it's a very good plan, and again, staff has been very intentional about trying to make it the worst kind of situation as best we can, so thank you guys for your work on that.

Brittain made a motion to approve the preliminary plat, site plan review, and variance for the proposed intermediate zone water treatment plant, based on the findings of fact and subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Rasmussen seconded. Motion passed unanimously (6-to-0 vote).

A. Cannabis Ordinance Amendment - Case TA2024-021

The City of Cottage Grove has applied for ordinance amendments related to cannabis uses.

Land summarized the staff report and recommended approval.

Frazier asked commissioners if they had any questions.

Brittain asked does that include having the Odor Ordinance in place by that time as well? Land replied it would, that would be included in the final adoption with the City Code Amendments. Brittain said okay, thank you.

Fisher asked do we know of people that are like ready to go and are wanting to open up facilities? Have we had inquiries, or? Land replied the only inquiry we've had is from Leafline Labs, so right now, the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) is still trying to establish themselves. They're making rules that then have to be adopted, and once those rules are in place, they have to get a sufficient staff level up to be able to process any applications. So, frankly, they're not ready to process anything yet; the way that it will work eventually is that people will submit an application to the OCM, they will do the background and confirm that they can apply for that particular license. Once they've confirmed that, they will send a zoning request letter to each City that these businesses want to locate and say hey, there's a business here, are they compliant with zoning if they go here? If they haven't yet applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), the answer will be no; they will have to then apply for that CUP, and then they can go back and say yes, now they've met zoning. They will then be issued their license from the OCM, which they walk in, hand over here to City Hall, and say now I'm ready to register, and that's when they can open. So, it's a lengthy process; the only thing the OCM is currently reviewing is early cultivation licenses, and I don't believe they've been able to issue any or approve any yet. Certainly they couldn't in the City of Cottage Grove because we have a moratorium anyway.

Bhat stated so in the maps that you showed with the AG-1 and AG-2, I thought AG-2 was also marked green; so, they can grow in both locations? Land replied correct, AG-1 or AG-2 if they have the sufficient number of acres. Bhat stated okay. He asked so right now, are those places selling the beverages that have the liquor licenses? Land replied currently, no, because the City of Cottage Grove does not allow it under our existing ordinance, we said they could not be sold. At the time of the 2022 legislation, it was prohibited, but they could be sold at liquor stores. The legislature cleared that up, either in 2023 or 2024, I don't remember which version, that said they can be sold but regardless, our ordinance says they couldn't. So, we did not allow them to be sold at either on-sale or off-sale, so again, none of them should be.

Frazier said I have one question, and this might be a little in the weeds, but I'm just interested. So, for the low-potency beverages, they have to register, so if one of the liquor stores here in town registers with the City, and you said that's primarily so that we know that they're doing it so we can do compliance checks. Obviously, with a liquor license, that's issued by the City and can be revoked by City Council if there are issues with compliance and their spot checks by the Police Department. Because we're only registering those businesses, do we have the ability to unregister them, or is that then something you have to send to the OCM where they then revoke the licensure? Or do we not know yet? Land replied that's a great question. I needed to dive deep into the answer to that question, and the answer is the OCM will be the one handing out any penalties, if there are any. We can, as you know, revoke a liquor license; and, so, if there are violations of either cannabis or liquor, I would think we could take that into account because it is a product that they are selling within their store. However, we would notify the OCM and we can, if we feel that it is immediate health, safety, public welfare kind of issue, we can immediately shut them down, but only up to 30 days, and the OCM can overrule that. So, it is something that we can do, it's not a permanent something that we can do; so, I went back and forth on whether or not we should require CUPs for beverages as well, but the Council felt that it was sufficient that we still have them under a liquor license. Frazier said okay and the belief, at this point, obviously outside of the licensure under OCM, that if there is a violation of this ordinance for low-potency beverages, that we can still take action on a liquor license because it's just part of the conditions of them having the ability to sell alcohol in the City. Land said and here's why I say that, because one of the requirements in our liquor license is that you must comply with all State laws. Frazier said all right, thank you.

Frazier opened the public hearing. No one spoke. Frazier closed the public hearing.

Frazier asked if there were any further questions or comments from the commission.

Bhat said I just have a simple question; so, in the next steps here, it listed Zoning, City Code, and Fee Schedule. What's Fee Schedule there? Land replied the registration process allows the City to collect a small application fee with each registration. So, as long as we have to keep track of them, and we're going to have to be doing compliance checks, we're going to adopt a Fee Schedule. The legislature has capped the amount of the fees, so they're really quite minimal, but we may as well add it to our Fee Schedule.

Fisher made a motion to approve the text amendments, subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Brittain seconded. Motion passed unanimously (6-to-0 vote).

7. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF AUGUST 26, 2024

Rasmussen made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Bhat seconded. Motion passed unanimously (6-to-0 vote).

8. REPORTS

A. RECAP OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Schmitz provided a summary of actions taken at the September 4, October 2, and October 16, 2024, City Council meetings.

Schmitz asked Khambata if he had anything else to add, or if commissioners had any questions, she stated we're both available.

Khambata said quite a lot has happened in two months between some adverse weather conditions, some challenges that staff had with clearing roads, and so on. I can't wait to see what this fall and winter bring, in terms of abnormal weather conditions. I think Emily did a great job covering the important stuff with regard to planning and development. I know that we have the MNCAR conference here coming up that we'll be attending, so we'll be communicating with some other commercial partners,

hopefully, there might have some more exciting proposals in front of you guys here in the next few months. Khambata stated I'm open for questions, but none were asked.

B. RESPONSE TO PLANNING COMMISSION INQUIRIES – None.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION REQUESTS

Fisher stated I don't know if this should have been a question before or what, but first of all, I wanted to say thank you to the City for all of the clean-up efforts after the storm; we lost three big trees, our neighbor's tree fell and snapped a powerline and whatever. But it got me thinking, as I was watching the clean-up efforts and just seeing the change of the landscape, do we, as a City, have some sort of; like the dead trees, for example, because Emerald Ash Borer like completely ravaged lines and lines of trees throughout the City, and I don't want to name roadways, but there are lots of dead trees in our City. I'm just wondering is there some sort of ordinance or some sort of way that we can help our people remove those trees? Because the tree damage that we saw through that storm was pretty substantial, and I just can't help but think that removal of some of those dead, big, huge trees that I've seen now for two years, almost three years, if there's some sort of resource for the citizens, or? I don't want to go like knock on doors and say, you have to do this, but I'm just wondering if there are resources or something at a State level or something that we can help people with that. Schmitz replied that is certainly something that we've had a lot of conversations internally about; we do have an ordinance that requires removal of diseased trees. We recognize that, but we also want to be sensitive to your point, there are some large trees out there, and there's a pretty hefty price tag with removing those. At this time, we aren't aware of funding sources; obviously, we're continuously keeping our eyes and ears open if those opportunities do exist, whether its at a County level or even at a State level if we can secure some dollars to help our residents, we're certainly always paying attention to that. Khambata said I would like to note that we do employ an arborist, and they do treat diseased Ash trees, a lot of the Ash trees in the City, specifically the ones that happen to be on City property or boulevard trees. But an interesting fact about the storm that we had is the nature of the storm, it took down more live trees than dead trees. As a Council, we're still trying to decide how we're going to mitigate the pile of trees that is building up as a result of that storm. So, we'll keep you posted on that, but yeah, great question. Fisher said yes, I definitely agree with you, a lot of trees were alive, but it got me thinking about all the dead ones that I wish the storm would've taken away, but people can't afford to, I mean, it's thousands of dollars to have trees removed. So, just looking for resources for people.

Bhat stated this is a request in that there was a program, I think it was a State-sponsored program, if I recall correctly, which would give a rebate up to a certain amount if you installed a new washer, dryer, or dishwasher in your home. But that got stopped because the funding stopped, or something along those lines. So, I was wondering if that program is still active or if it was reactivated or not? I came to know that program through the newsletter sent out by a Minnesota Senator, I didn't come to know of it in any other way, but I thought that Cottage Grove had that program. Schmitz replied sometimes there are rebates through the utility companies, Xcel or your gas company, will do that rebate. From a City's perspective, we don't have one, but I'm happy to investigate if we're aware; and Assistant City Engineer Crystal Raleigh is going to provide some additional detail. Raleigh stated we do actually have a rebate program that we can help our residents with, so it did run out of funding, but we have been refunded, I'm not positive when that refunding happened. So my staff is working on those energy-efficiency rebates. So, I believe there's a link on our City website if you are interested in applying for a rebate, and then that gets reviewed here with our Engineering staff, and then the rebate goes out. Bhat asked where is that link exactly? Is it the Engineering Department, where should I go and look for it? Raleigh replied that's a great question that I'll have to get back to you on, I don't know exactly where it is. Bhat said okay, thank you.

Bhat said I do have one more request. So, during the discussion today, it was offered that they could provide us a breakdown of tax dollars spent on projects, right? So, just for our reference, I mean, we don't have to go through all the projects, but maybe they can pick one here and maybe in 2025 and give us that breakdown of how much is our tax dollars and how much is coming from outside. Schmitz replied we can provide those in an update.

Brittain stated this is not a request, but a comment. In the Capital Plan presentation, there was a reference to Mounting Bike Trails and I think it might be Mountain Bike Trails; they may spell it different ways, but it might be something that you want to clean up before it goes to the City Council.

Frazier said I guess the last thing I will say is Election Day is next Tuesday; please make sure you take the opportunity to vote if you'd like to. Outside of obviously all the partisan offices, there are City Council positions, the Local Option Sales Tax presentations that we've seen from the City on some pretty important pieces that the City would like to do, as well as some other

racers, like judicial races that are on the ballot that are very important for everyone to do some research and look at. So, that'll be my plug for democracy at the end of the meeting here today.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rasmussen seconded. Motion passed unanimously (6-to-0 vote). The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.