

Duluth City Council – April 12, 2021

The Duluth City Council passed (21-0256R) RESOLUTION DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN DULUTH, MN. This resolution calls for the development of a Climate Action Plan. Sponsors of this resolution were councilors Sipress, Randorf, Anderson, and Forsman. The City Council voted 8-0 approval with at large councilor Medved absent. Several community residents spoke in favor of the resolution. Councilor Forsman noted that the resolution doesn't increase taxes or lead to business mandates. He stated "Rather the Climate Action Plan really sets up a framework and an opportunity for more collaboration across the public sector, so we can all do better."

The Duluth City Council requests that the city administration develop a Climate Action Work Plan to be presented to council no later than December 31, 2021, that identifies targeted strategies for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and for becoming more resilient in preparation for a changing climate for both city government operations and in the wider community.

Submitted Jackie Johnson

Duluth City Council-March 8, 2021

A consultant recommended spending \$23 million on capital upgrades to Spirit Mountain to improve the ski area's struggling finances. Spirit Mountain has required two cash bailouts totaling more than \$500,00. The COVID has forced scale backs. Councilor Forsman feels leadership is the key culprit. Accountability and transparency are needed. He also stated that Spirit Mountain is an asset. "Every dollar we spend in tourism taxes, brings \$18.72 back. Mayor Larson recommends action in the next several weeks in order to prepare for next winter.

Submitted by Mary Jane Peteron

Duluth City Council – February 22, 2021

Nine citizens spoke to the issue of increasing the Duluth Police Department from two deputy chiefs to three. All of them cited their concerns. Invest in social services instead, please address use of force issues, need external accountability, address medical malpractice in the St. Louis County jail, and bias against people of color were topics presented. The City Council noted their concerns were heard. However, unanimously passed the resolution to hire a third deputy chief. This will not have an impact financially on the department.

Submitted by Mary Jane Peterson

Duluth City Council - February 8, 2021

February 8, 2021 - It was announced at the City Council Meeting that the DECC was awarded \$500,000 by the Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Relief Program. That is the maximum grant possible through the COVID-19 assistant program.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson

Duluth City Council – January 25, 2021

At the Duluth City Council Meeting, several Councilors stated that under existing rules they had no choice but to approve five applications for vacation rental permits. Several neighbors bordering those facilities stated concerns regarding the present ordinance rules and suggested that the ordinance be revisited and updated. Several councilors agreed and Councilor Filipovich announced plans to revisit these rules. He will lead the committee-of-the-whole meeting on Feb 22 to review and develop a new policy which could be available sometime in March.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson

Duluth City Council: February 10, 2020

The Pastoret Terrace Building is closer to demolition. The resolution passed. However, Councilors Sipress and Filipovich expressed their disappointment due to the need for affordable housing and the loss of an historic building.

A resolution was introduced by Councilors Medved and Forsman establishing the 2020 Duluth Business and Entrepreneurship Appreciation Award. Each councilor will have an opportunity to highlight a business that demonstrates positive results for their employees and the community. It should not be construed as an opportunity to promote a business. Resolution passed 6-2.

Three speakers expressed concerns about climate globalization. Climate crisis will affect every aspect of life in Duluth.

Two speakers stressed the need for affordable housing, especially since Essentia has had an impact with their buildings project.

Councilor Filipovich will meet with constituents before council meetings. Check his website and sign up.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson and Mary Jane Peterson

Duluth City Council, September 9, 2019

Nine citizens addressed the City Council and voiced their concerns related to affordable housing in Duluth. Of great concern is the fact that Essentia has purchased housing near the hospital to accommodate their expansion plans. This makes the issue of affordable housing in Duluth an even greater worry. 2,000 in Duluth are homeless and housing is a basic human need. The Council was encouraged to use their leverage to ensure that Essentia has a plan to address their concerns.

Duluth City Council, April 8, 2019

It was Water Week and seventeen citizens, which included a group of UMD students, addressed the City Council with their concerns for the security of Lake Superior. A speaker from Soudan, MN stated that there is a 140-mile dead zone for wild rice in the St. Louis River. It has disappeared due to water coming off from mining operations. Former Governor Arne Carlson's report reminded us that, "Water is a victim of mining," "The process is flawed," "We must have evidentiary hearings," "Watershed cannot be replaced," and "It is time to wake up and take action." The recent dam failure in Brazil was cited as an example of consequences from copper nickel mining. The Council was urged to speak up. Water is life!!

The City Council addressed the need for scooter and bike regulations within the city. The resolution was tabled for Council members to study the resolution, get feedback from the community, and become informed as to regulations other communities have implemented.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson and Mary Jane Peterson

Duluth City Council Meeting, March 11, 2019

Prior to the Council meeting a citizens group presented its findings related to issues facing the Duluth city golf courses. Financial difficulties of renewing assets and needs for capital improvement were discussed. It was deemed important that Duluth have an available golf course. The entire lengthy report can be accessed on the Duluth Parks and Recreation website; Findings of the Duluth Golf Citizen Advisory Committee.

City Administrator Schuchman comments: City of Duluth is exploring opportunities for more daycare centers which are needed; challenging snow season is ending and possible snow emergency rules for next season will be evaluated; Mayor Larson is in St. Paul advocating for the sales tax, which is badly needed for street improvements.

Eight citizens expressed their concerns about the future of the Duluth public golf courses. "Why was the advisory committee contracted by the city?", "Cannot sell the Lester Park Golf Course. It is park land.", "Why is debt held against courses when not against other Duluth amenities?", "Marketing and raising prices would help save the courses.", "A Master Plan is needed." Friends of Duluth Golf is a group of 400 concerned golfers that want to present positive alternatives to maintain the courses, without selling to a developer. The Parks and Recreation Meeting on March 13 will listen to public comment and provide input in order for the City Council to make a wise decision.

Dr. David Sproat from the Duluth Library Board thanked the Council for supporting the library. However, it is difficult to fulfill the mission of the library when there has been no increase in funding for the past years. Technology is backwards in time, which requires librarians to spend time on these tasks, rather than helping patrons. A staff position for early childhood literacy is needed. The physical plant is in dire straits. A resolution was passed to accept the \$90,000 gift from Friends of the Library. We would encourage all LWV members to join the Friends of the Library!

Submitted by Mary Jane Peterson and Jackie Johnson

Duluth City Council, February 12, 2019

The Duluth Fire Department was denied a request to add another command position. Chief Dennis Edward's request to add a third deputy chief was supported by city administration and Local 101 Firefighters. "We need to expand the command staff to adjust to the changing needs of the fire department." This request required a unanimous approval by the Council. Eight councilors approved the request. Jay Fosle opposed.

Arik Forsman will seek reelection to the At Large Duluth City Council seat he now holds. He had been appointed to serve out Elissa Hansen's term.

Submitted by Mary Jane Peterson

Duluth City Council, January 14, 2019

Finance resolutions were read and approved. Two speakers questioned the affordable housing project, Lake View Apartments. "Why no mention of the grocery store?" Council overturned a 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission to approve the Park Point Marina Inn's plan to put up a three-story addition on the southeast side. Speakers voiced concern as to the view on the north side of Park Point. It was stated by Keith Hamre, that the 200-foot limit is not included in the "topography." Councilor Forsman explained that the 200-foot width already exceeds the limit. The resolution failed. The current rule needs to be revisited and more clarification is needed. A large contingency of T21 were present and voiced their approval to amend Chapter 11 of the city code, which prohibits the distribution of tobacco or tobacco related devices to anyone under the age of 21 years. This was a first reading. "Tobacco use has increased in MN in the past 17 years." "Vaping in high school bathrooms poses a concern." "Tobacco is the leading cause of preventive deaths." A 120-day implementation period was added to the resolution. It could go to a vote on Jan. 28.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson