



# Chaska City Hall Bulletin

## "The Best Small Town in Minnesota"

### Chaska City Hall

[www.chaskamn.com](http://www.chaskamn.com)

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## COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT RESULTS

By Matt Podhradsky, Chaska City Administrator

The Chaska City Council and City Department Heads had a busy couple of days during their annual two-day strategic planning retreat in October. The City uses an annual retreat session to help define our vision and goals for the upcoming five-year period, as well as to plan a strategic direction for the community into the future.

The Council and Department Heads had two specific objectives for the retreat. One objective was to discuss the current strategic plan and re-evaluate the goals for the next five years to make sure they still met our vision. The second goal was to continue discussions on the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The City had gone through the steps to begin implementation on our top two goals of reinvesting back into our existing infrastructure and also into new development. We had not had an opportunity to discuss the third priority of the CIP, which is new community building projects to continue to move the community into a positive direction. In the past, some of these large community building projects have been the construction of the Community Center and its additions, the Chaska Town Course, Chaska.net, the Flood Control Levee, and planning to support the historic downtown and new growth areas.

The Council spent a half day of the retreat discussing specific goals we would like to achieve in the next five years. These strategic goals include:

1. Chaska creates and promotes an environment to allow for the attraction of a number of high quality jobs.
2. Chaska is recognized for exceptional recreational opportunities.
3. Chaska is a diverse life cycle community.
4. Chaska has a historic downtown with a vibrant commercial district (that is a Twin Cities destination).
5. Chaska has exceptional core City services.
6. Chaska has engaged leading edge (progressive) and focused leadership.



After developing the list of strategic goals to guide us through the next five years, we then turned our attention to the three priority projects in the

Capital Improvement Program and what large community building projects to focus on. While discussing potential community building projects, a number of themes recurred that helped develop our direction. Some of the common themes were:

- Resident expectations are met to keep Chaska moving forward and not rest on past laurels.
- Projects should focus on building community and promoting a small town image.
- Projects should achieve multiple objectives or goals, such as those to create new community assets, jobs, and increased economic development downtown.
- Focus on funding for projects that does not go beyond the life of the ten-year CIP so that future Councils are not constrained for future projects.
- Focus on new resources as an investment.
- Be cognizant of continuing to provide a good value for the cost of City services to residents and businesses.

Based on those themes and discussion points, after many hours of discussion the Council selected three priority projects to work on for the next five to ten years to help better the community. The three projects include:

- Redevelopment of the City Square West Block in the downtown area (the block directly west and across the street from City Square Park).
- Fireman's and Schimelpfening Parks redevelopment.
- Develop a year-round multi-sport recreational facility.

CITY SQUARE WEST REDEVELOPMENT

Discussed in the Downtown Master Plan as being a catalyst site for future downtown investment, the City Square West redevelopment looks at attempting to reutilize the block directly across Highway 41 from City Square Park. This block is currently occupied by Klein Bank, the Post Office, and the City Square strip mall. The hope of this redevelopment project is to help investment into the downtown by addressing ways of bringing people downtown. One of the key components discussed in the Downtown Master Plan for the site was a new library that would be properly sized for the population of a City the size of Chaska. Currently Chaska has about a 8,000 sq ft library. Chanhassen, with a population similar to that of Chaska, has a library that is approximately 30,000 sq ft. A building of this nature is more appropriately sized for a community of 25,000 and can accommodate more programs, meeting rooms, educational classes, computer areas, and other activities. Having a larger more extensive library would help to bring more people downtown.



This redevelopment project would preserve the Post Office on the site and create a more permanent location for it, as well as preserve Klein Bank since they have a desire to

downsize their building on the site. Also, new and existing commercial uses would be looked at for the site for incorporation into the redevelopment project.

Additionally, two other components are important to the project. One is the inclusion of a parking facility within the center of the block to accommodate the new building and create additional space for existing businesses. New housing units would also be created in the project to add to the housing stock in the downtown area. More people in the downtown area would utilize more businesses.

Finally, an objective of the project is to insure that the development complements and enhances City Square Park.

#### FIREMAN'S/SCHIMELPFENING PARKS REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment of the Fireman's-Schimelpfening Parks area was identified in the Master Plan as a catalyst site to help further investment downtown. One of the important components of the area is to enhance the recreational amenities of the site so that we can draw more people downtown. It was also discussed that the two parks be pulled together through trail connections and potentially by a bridge across the Clayhole Lake, looking at the sites as one large facility instead of two separate locations.



Discussion also occurred about adding a restaurant or two to the site to help support a recreational facility and draw people to the park. We also wanted to celebrate the history of the site through public art, preserving the history of the brick yards up to the current. We are hopeful we will be able to develop a recreational amenity at the site that would bring more people to the downtown commercial district.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF YEAR ROUND MULTI-SPORT RECREATIONAL FACILITY

As part of the last Commitment to Community Task Force meeting, one of the specific recommendations that came out of the group was for the City to explore the potential addition of a multi-sport facility to meet the year round needs of youth sports associations and the school district. Currently other communities such as Eden Prairie and Minnetonka lease Chaska space in their dome facilities during the winter. This allows our athletic associations to have indoor practice space. Our youth associations encompass several thousand children and renting recreational facilities is costly, takes these individuals out of the Chaska community, and gives them less than opportune practice times.

A multi-sports facility would serve our association needs and draw additional visitors to the community for tournaments and rental space. The facility would also work in conjunction with the school district to help meet their sporting venue needs. A facility of



this type has received a significant amount of attention and support from our youth athletic associations and from residents across the community.

With these three priority projects selected, the City will now be moving forward to begin to lay the groundwork for the work necessary to achieve these objectives. Each of the projects are in the visionary stage now and will require a significant amount of discussion and work with the stakeholders of the community to narrow down and refine the projects. Over the next several months City Staff will be working to identify master planners for these projects who will be responsible for engaging community input. We will also be working with financial advisors to discuss funding options and other groups impacted by the projects. We want the projects to truly involve the community and enhance our living area.

The City is excited to move ahead with work on these priority goals. We will continue to inform the public as we go through the different stages of development. If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please feel free to contact the Chaska City Administrator, Matt Podhradsky at 952-227-7523 or [Matt@chaskamn.com](mailto:Matt@chaskamn.com).

**SPEAKING OF FIREMAN'S PARK REDEVELOPMENT .....**

You may have noticed some damage to several trees on the southeast side of Fireman's Park as you travel on Highway 41. One beaver was hard at work in the area. Public Works personnel and a wildlife removal contractor finally outwitted the wily rodent about a week ago. The male beaver, who weighed approximately 70 pounds and had a dam under construction on the northeast side of the pond, was ultimately live trapped. For several days he eluded his captors however. Each time the beaver began gnawing on a tree, crews wrapped chicken wire around the tree and a live trap was placed near it. The beaver would move to another nearby tree. The process started over again. Finally the beaver was virtually surrounded by his handiwork and could no longer ignore the lure of the pheromone laced devices. This beaver totally destroyed one tree and damaged three others on the edge of the Clayhole.



The City only moves beavers when they become a nuisance to property and trees or block water control structures in the ponds. All in all, including this big guy, seven beavers were trapped from several downtown area ponds this summer and made a part of the City Relocation Program. We have not yet received word of their forwarding addresses.

The November 26<sup>th</sup> Heritage Preservation Meeting is cancelled. Next meeting is December 17.

**CHASKA CITY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28 AND 29, IN CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING. HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY!**

