

South St. Paul City Council Work Session

Session Notes for March 31, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Francis called the City Council Work Session to order at 7:00 PM on March 31, 2025

No formal Council Action is taken at a work session meeting, this is a summary of discussion that took place.

Council Members Present: Jimmy Francis, Lori Hansen, Tom Seaberg, Joe Kaliszewski, Matt Thompson, Pam Bakken, and Todd Podgorski

Staff Present: Ryan Garcia, City Administrator

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Policy Manual / Code of Ethics

Mr. Garcia introduced the draft Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct Policy as drafted by the City Administrator and City Attorney. Mr. Garcia was seeking Council feedback on the Policy as Staff continues to work on compiling a comprehensive Policy Manual to be presented for formal review and consideration in mid-2025. Key topics discussed included:

- Mr. Garcia clarified that rules of order and bylaws for boards and commissions, ultimately, will be integrated into the City's code of ordinances.
- Council consensus was that the Oath of Office taken by Council Members is in effect a succinct acknowledgement and commitment to uphold a Code of Ethics and Standard of Conduct as expanded upon in the draft Policy.
- Council acknowledged the importance of having a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all elected and appointed officials, and supported clarifying and reconciling the 2011 Employee Standards of Conduct Policy to apply to Council Members and members of Boards and Commissions.
- Council consensus was that it would be important to communicate that the Policy applies to Public Officials and Staff specifically in their "official" capacity and to recognize the application of the Policy to the private affairs of Public Officials and Staff.
- Council suggested that it would be appropriate to further engage the City Attorney in preparation of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, and advised that it should be approved in conjunction with a more comprehensive Policy Manual rather than on its own.

B. City Buildings/Facilities Master Plan Update

Mr. Garcia provided a concise review of the key findings from the 2024 Buildings & Facilities Master Plan, highlighting critical deferred maintenance particularly at the

former Library, Northview Pool, and Central Maintenance Facility. Reviewing this plan is anticipated to take place at least annually as the City makes early preparations for the budget and capital improvement planning process.

Council confirmed a commitment to addressing critical deferred maintenance items at the former Library, as currently proposed in the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan and reaffirmed by the New History library repurposing study currently underway. Further, Council advised that the City's focus should continue to be on finding a developer/partner to repurpose the space, while remaining open to there being some potential, albeit secondary, public presence in the facility's reuse.

Council discussed the former Community Learning Center suite at Doug Woog Arena, and the potential to continue to leverage this space for expanded recreation offerings through the City's Parks and Recreation department. Council felt that Staff should be mindful to avoid competing with existing small business that are offering programming in the community and instead focus on those services and activities that are not being provided by the private market. Council was supportive in the exploration of investments at the facility, potentially including restrooms and/or changing rooms, creating dedicated access, and outfitting the space to host a more dynamic range of activities for the community.

C. Economic Development Update

Council discussed the City's location options for Public Works, and resolved that 316 Malden Street, acquired in 2023 by the City, was not a preferred option pending the results of Kraus-Anderson's Pre-Design Study (anticipated delivery June 2025). Mr. Garcia clarified that if Public Works were to relocate to the EDA-owned Wakota Crossing property, alternative methods to the geotechnical challenges of the site (12-15 month soil surcharge) were a possible solution to reduce the financial costs associated with the development. Council agreed to revisit the disposition of 316 Malden Street after receiving the Kraus-Anderson study.

Council was supportive of the EDA taking steps to prepare select development sites for future development, with the following (in order of priority) sites identified:

- Hardman Triangle South Phase 1 Commercial
- Wakota Crossing North
- 110 Bridgepoint Drive

Council discussed the 2024 Fund Balances in Funds 20260 (Housing) and 20280 (Economic Development). Council was identified an opportunity to leverage fund balance and potentially to engage funding partners towards the restoration and relocation of the Armour Gates to Kaposia Landing as discussed in worksessions in mid-2024. More broadly, Council supported dedicating the 2024 fund balance to Fund 20284 and continuing to focus on supporting the economic development strategy.

3. COUNCIL COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

No additional council comments or questions arose at the meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council at the special work session meeting, Mayor Francis declared the meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/: Ryan Garcia
City Administrator