



City of Spearfish
City Council Study Session Minutes
November 15, 2023, 4:15 p.m.

The City Council Study Session was called to order by Mayor Senden at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. The following council members were present: Clark, Hodgs, Hourigan, Jacobs, Klarenbeek and Rath. Absent: none. City staff present were: City Administrator McFarland, City Attorney McDonald, Public Safety Director Rotert, Finance Officer DeNeui, Public Works Director Broyles, City Planner Kapsa, Assistant Finance Officer Tyler, and Parks Maintenance and Forestry Superintendent McDonald.

Clark moved, Hourigan seconded, and all voted to approve the agenda as presented.

Items for Council Discussion:

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) update – Rex McDonald, Parks Maintenance and Forestry Superintendent, provided an update on the City’s EAB plan. The plan was adopted in 2019 with a goal to spread the cost of EAB prevention and mitigation over 10-15 years. Ash trees are native to Spearfish and EAB comes from infected firewood brought to the area. In 2012, a survey found that we had 360 ash street trees and 700 ash park trees (28% of all park trees). To assist homeowners with the street trees, the city has a cost share program. To address the ash tree population within the parks, the plan specifies 5% of trees will be removed annually and replaced with trees that increase biodiversity. So far, 111 ash trees have been removed and these were replaced with spruce, honey locust, and maple trees bringing the overall percentage of ash trees to 21%. This plan will be continued over the coming years. If staff or residents believe they may have an EAB infected tree, they should contact Rex in the parks department and the tree can be tested. Pre-treatments are available for trees once a confirmed infestation is found with 15 miles of Spearfish, but this hasn’t occurred yet.

Marijuana Dispensary License – Discussion was held on increasing the number of marijuana dispensary licenses in Spearfish. Currently one dispensary license is issued and two testing, two manufacturing, and two cultivation licenses are available but not issued. The council took comments from Jim Gwynn and Frank Pavich representing From the Hills regarding the need for additional licenses. The council will consider the information presented and seek input from the public.

City Council Agenda:

Draft Agenda – The draft agenda for November 20, 2023, City Council Regular Session was previewed. An item will be added to the agenda regarding the cost share for the traffic signal at Rushmore Road and North Avenue.

The public comment period was opened at 4:50 p.m. Comments regarding the December 19, 2023 special election in Lawrence County were received from resident Lynne Larson. No other comments were received and the time for public comment was closed.

No additional discussions were held and with a motion from Hourigan, and second from Jacobs, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.