Council Present: Patty Acomb, Dick Allendorf, Bob Ellingson, Tony Wagner, Brad Wiersum, and Acting Mayor Tim Bergstedt. Mayor Terry Schneider was excused.

Staff: Geralyn Barone, Perry Vetter, Jeff Sebenaler, John Vance, Corrine Heine, Julie Wischnack, and David Maeda

Bergstedt called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Emergency Management for Elected Officials

Joe Kelly, director of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, gave the presentation. Eric Waage, director Hennepin County Emergency Management, added comments as well.

Wiersum asked in declaring an emergency was it more common for officials to act too quickly or too slowly or do people usually act in the appropriate manner. Kelly said it varied and depended on experience. Those that have had to deal with multiple disasters tend to declare an emergency in a proper timeframe and often those who are dealing with a disaster for the first time struggle with when to declare an emergency. His rule of thumb was if an official was thinking about declaring an emergency, generally it should be done.

Bergstedt complimented Kelly for keeping the presentation simple. He thought the information was useful.

Bergstedt called a recess at 8:02 p.m. He called the meeting back to order at 8:18 p.m.

2. Emergency Procedures Review

Police Chief Jeff Sebenaler reviewed the procedures.

3. Preferences and Perceptions of Minnetonka

Community Development Director Julie Wischnack presented the information.

Wiersum suggested using the public service announcements on the billboards to drive people to the city website. This would allow for a lot more detail to be shared. Wischnack said the suggestion was similar to how information is presented on the side of buses.
Wiersum said he thought there was a meaningful number of people who had open enrolled that lived outside the city but wanted to move into the city. He noted the people that bought his house had lived in Osseo but had enrolled their twins in the Minnetonka School District because of its Chinese immersion program. Wischnack agreed this was an untapped market that had not yet been tackled.

Wagner asked if the work that had been done by the teams had identified the three or four things that the city wanted to use to get its story out to people. Wischnack said the information was available. Some of the messages relate to people not understanding the diversity of housing available as well as not identifying the city's parks and trails as being any better than other communities. The city knows it's really good at public safety and this had not been promoted. These were themes that could be worked on.

Acomb said she attended a National League of Cities session about marketing a city. Often businesses check out a city's website before they ever talk to someone from the city. A city could be eliminated before it ever knew it was being considered as a potential location for a business. The suggestion was to put information on the website about why existing businesses were in the city.

Wiersum said the message of public safety would probably be presented more effectively by having residents indicate one of the reasons they love living in the city was they felt safe. This would resonate better than just saying the city was a safe place to live. The message would be more effective from a resident's perspective rather than from the city's perspective. Wischnack said staff was trying to determine what messages resonate.

Allendorf said he was having a hard time seeing the focus. Who was being targeted by the marketing efforts? Wischnack said in simple terms it was new residents. Allendorf said that was too broad and he thought the effort should be on identifying the types of people the city wanted to attract. At one point it was discussed that the city wanted to attract younger couples with young children. A strategy could be developed focused on younger couples.

Wagner said the marketing discussion had been going on for eight years. The city got a lot of demographic information showing that it was an aging community and that the housing stock was getting old. It was determined there was a long term mix issue. People were skipping over Minnetonka, choosing to live in other suburbs because the kind of housing being looked for didn't exist in the city. The city then developed its home improvement programs. Studies were conducted to
get more information about the health of the housing stock. The home improvement programs were not resonating and it was decided maybe the reason for that was the city’s message was not getting out to perspective residents. Allendorf said his point was the city had to decide who its market was and everything that is done should be directed to that market. Wagner said the city had good baseline information about the market that doesn’t live in the city and what it thinks about Minnetonka. The question becomes what areas, based on the comprehensive guide plan, does the city want to focus on given what is known about its current attributes. One of the attributes are the large lots in the city with homes that need some work. These could be marketed to people looking to renovate a home. Rather than chasing people that are looking for the housing found in Victoria, Minnetonka should market the assets it has.

Wiersum said he thought Allendorf made a really good point and the city should not be ashamed about focusing on families. Minnetonka was a family community. What makes the city unique was having three of the best school districts in the state. Any resident of the city could send their kids to a great public school no matter where they lived in the city. The city has large lots with homes that could be renovated. This wouldn't be attractive to everybody but the city has things it could offer that couldn't be found in other metro suburbs.

Acomb said she had concern about only targeting toward one audience because she has heard often from older residents who have lived in the city a long time that didn’t want to leave their homes and didn't feel like the city was supporting them. She didn't want the single message to be all the city wanted was young families.

Wiersum said a lot of that concern could be addressed by media choice and targeted marketing. Wagner said the idea was to target the city's brand toward people the city had a deficit in. This didn’t mean the city did not want seniors but the message was for those where there was a deficit in the city.

Bergstedt suggested using a message like “discover Minnetonka” or “rediscover Minnetonka” on the electronic billboards. This would get people to think about the city’s amenities. Focus would always be on the quality of schools in the city. Public safety as a quality of the city had not been thought of in the past but he said as the first two items of this meeting showed, it would become a bigger and bigger issue. One of the most disappointing things was that the community survey showed residents value the parks and trails in the city but the survey of non-residents indicated they didn’t think Minnetonka’s parks and trails were any better than the city where they currently resided. The diversity of housing in the city should also be a selling point.
4. **Update of Village Center Studies**

Wischnack provided updates on the Ridgedale and Glen Lake studies.

5. **Adjournment**

The study session adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Maeda
City Clerk