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

Staff:  Geralyn Barone and Perry Vetter

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

1.  Boards and commissions interviews

Deborah Calvert
Calvert said she has been a resident of Minnetonka for 11 years. She and her husband moved for the Hopkins School District. She has been a past president of the Perry County, Illinois school PTO and founded a string music board and established a music program for the public school system while living in Michigan. Her husband works for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and that has allowed her to become familiar with natural resource issues and interagency cooperation. Calvert previously worked for Senator Klobuchar’s office and was involved with the Legislative Action Committee for public schools. She currently works at William Mitchell College of Law supporting the president, dean and board of trustees. Her work experience has inspired her to be involved and commit to community service.

Schneider asked how she would identify sensible development. Calvert indicated that natural resources are a priority and yet we live in a world with real needs of housing and choice. Minnetonka has no downtown, but walkability, livability and preserving green space is a priority. Sensible development would balance those things and allow for housing, transportation and development providing for a vibrant economy.

Wagner asked how a commission member would need to balance their time. Calvert indicated her schedule is now less demanding since she is not working in the Senator’s office and she has more time to dedicate now. She has spoken to others and is confident she can balance her commitments.

Allendorf asked of all her choices in boards, which would be her priority. Calvert indicated her first choice would be the Planning Commission to help shape the community and the second would be the Park Board to work on environmental issues and interagency cooperation.

Wiersum asked how she would validate the status quo of balancing need. Calvert responded that participants in the process want to be heard, especially when difficult decisions need to be made. She added that preserving green space is a balance and there is a way to use size and location to meet needs. Emphasis on communicating how decision making occurs is important to the process.
Kevin Hanson
Hanson said he has been a resident for three years and was drawn to Minnetonka for the schools, green space, balance to work and that it is a nice community. He wants to become more involved and help shape the city into what families like his would like. His background is in commercial real estate and while he has worked in a variety of capacities for his field, he is currently in the financial area. Through his experience and education he understands sites and how each decision can shape the future. There are right and wrong ways to do things and in his experience he has noted that one development can limit future ones that are adjacent to it. He feels he has a strong understanding of the tools a planning commission has and there is a need to find balance for the city, which his experience in commercial real estate and raising a family could help discover.

Wagner asked how he would find balance with city directives and policy with his own personal philosophy. Hanson commented that he would remain impartial and understands he is not a city planner.

Schneider indicated there is only one opening on the planning commission and none currently on the EDAC. He asked Hanson where his interests lie. Hanson replied he is ultimately interested in both commissions, but he is particularly interested in the planning commission first. Schneider also commented that there are two openings for the SWLRT citizen advisory committee and Hanson indicated he was also very interested in that opportunity.

Chris Gabler
Gabler said he has been a resident of Minnetonka for 38 years and has been involved with Bennett Family Park since 1991, four of those years as board president. His goal was to give back to Bennett since he played there in his youth. He has been involved in the Legacy Field project at Minnetonka High School which he found intellectually challenging due to Title IX requirements. He took the approach that instead of having equal mediocre facilities there should be world class facilities for both genders and worked to accomplish that. He feels the park system is underutilized and would work to get kids and parents out of the house. His experience with budget constraints for maintenance would allow him to be creative on how to maintain parks.

Wiersum asked how Gabler sees maintenance dollars will keep up with demand and how he views that issue as part of his point of view and experience. Gabler indicated he deals with perception and that at one time everything is shiny and new and as time goes on we need to ensure that park users see the value we are giving them. At Bennett they had to look at other sports to be viable and that the city may need to "sell" the parks to the community to increase their perceived value. His ultimate way to do that would be to get kids out of the house and using the park system.
John Powers
Powers indicated he likes to be outside and feels active and reenergized in a good park system. He recently returned from New York and commented on the park system he was able to experience during the time he was there.

Schneider asked about the balance between youth sports and active seniors. Powers replied that parks are an interesting problem; one could make the argument that they are underutilized, but often they are places waiting to be enjoyed upon discovery. There are active and passive members of society and each would approach what park use means differently.

Wiersum asked for his view professionally on how Minnetonka's park system stacks up for people looking to move into the community. Powers replied that there are too many answers to provide just one. Each person looking to move here has a different opinion based on their preferences. Those preferences could range from a hockey family looking at the youth sports options to those wanting opportunities to be able to walk for recreation. Each person looking to move here has such unique needs and he feels we offer a wide range of opportunities.

Derek Diesen
Diesen indicated he is a 13 year resident of Minnetonka and his neighbors asked him to become more involved and apply for the planning commission. He previously ran for the Wayzata School Board and has a diverse background as a licensed general contractor.

Schneider asked how he would approach a single issue to then represent the broader community. Diesen indicated in the case of the Highland Bank proposal he would do what makes the best sense and in his opinion it was not the height of the building he opposed, but that it was promises the developer made got left out for the community. He understands there will always be a balance required between the community and a developer, especially as it relates to the diversity of housing needed. He doesn't have any ideological issues and thinks that both the Applewood Pointe and Tonka on the Creek developments were good projects for Minnetonka.

Wiersum asked because there was only one planning commission position open if Diesen had any other interests. Diesen responded his desire was to connect with the community and would be interested even in the comprehensive guide plan group.

Wagner asked Diesen to elaborate on his application of the desire to review the PUD ordinance as it relates to the values of the community. Diesen responded his desire is to look at the PUD ordinance and ensure that the guidelines listed correlate to applications made under it. He feels that applications should
reference those guidelines and there should be an aspect that is defined to avoid too much flexibility. While he understands the PUD ordinance there is always room for improvement.

2. City manager’s performance review

Schneider announced that the council would enter into closed session to conduct the performance review of Geralyn Barone, City Manager. The council will summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation at the January 26, 2015 meeting.

3. Adjournment

The study session adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Perry Vetter
Assistant City Manager