

CITY OF SUNFISH LAKE

Item 8.b.

DATE: April 29, 2020
TO: Mayor & Council
FROM: Cathy Iago, City Clerk
RE: Discussion of Records Retention

In response to previous discussions relating to Records Retention and scanning of City documents, I contacted the Minnesota Historical Society to ask if the City must retain the paper copies of “permanent” documents once they have been digitally scanned. Charles Rodgers, a staff member from the Historical Society, responded that the City does not have to retain the original paper document once it is scanned, however, the City must ensure that the scanned documents will be preserved and available to access as technology changes. Mr. Rodgers also advised that the Historical Society would accept documents that are considered “permanent” for storage at their facility at no charge to the city.

In discussions with the City Attorney, he and I agreed that it would be wise for the City to retain the paper documents even if they are scanned in order to ensure that they would be available if technology changes.

I contacted the City Engineer to determine if the rationale for scanning the documents for convenience of access to the files electronically or so they would not have to store the 19 boxes of files that were transferred from NAC to WSB. He stated in his opinion, part of the rationale was due to the storage issue and he was unsure how many of the transferred files were digitally transferred to WSB from NAC. He recommended that this matter be delayed in order to receive input from Planner Krzos when he returns from maternity leave.

I also contacted the City of Lilydale to ask if it would be possible to store the additional file boxes at that location. The City Clerk of Lilydale agreed to store the documents, if there was sufficient room in the area we currently use for storage. In my opinion, storage could be accommodated, however, it may require the City to purchase either shelving or file cabinets to accomplish the storage. If the City purchases fire-proof filing cabinets for storage of permanent records, it would be wise to include other permanent documents such as Ordinances, Resolutions and Council and Planning Minutes and packets.

Another factor for consideration is that the files at Lilydale are not stored in a “climate controlled” or “vault” area where they would be protected from the elements, rodents or fire. I checked online for the cost to store the files in a climate-controlled facility; the cost for a 10 ft. X 5 ft. climate-controlled storage facility in Inver Grove Heights was approximately \$70.00 per month.

There are also files stored at my home and I believe some financial files are stored at the Treasurer’s home; these files should also be transferred to either Lilydale or a rented storage facility or stored in a fire-proof file cabinet for protection.

Once the “stay-at-home” directive is lifted, staff can go to Lilydale and assess what files can be purged and also to determine if there is sufficient room for storage and what would need to be purchased to accommodate the file storage.

Finally, the City Attorney and I concluded that it would be wise for the City to retain the paper copies of permanent records to ensure that they would always be available regardless of any digital changes. We also concurred that if Council agrees that scanning of the Planning files should be done for backup or convenience purposes, it would be wise to include scanning of other permanent documents such as the Council and Planning Commission minutes and agenda packets, and the City Ordinances and Resolutions.

ACTION REQUESTED: At this time, staff recommends that discussion of records retention be continued until Planner Krzos is available to provide input on this matter and to allow staff to conduct further research regarding costs for storage and scanning of the documents.