

MINUTES
TONKA BAY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
ZONING REVIEW
JUNE 10, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Mayor Jennings and Council Members Eckland, Ottum, and Wischmeier. Also present were City Administrator Holl, Public Works Superintendent Schallberg, City Engineer Bradford, and City Attorney Nason

3. DISCUSSION TOPICS

Midco & Lumen Franchise Agreement – City Attorney Nason provided an update on communications received from Midco and Lumen, noting that multiple cities have been contacted. Both companies appear to be seeking franchise agreements; likely related to expanding fiber service in the area. Lumen, affiliated with CenturyLink, has indicated an interest in confirming authorization of their existing fiber infrastructure and potentially expanding within the City. However, it is unclear exactly what they are requesting, and clarification has been sought from both companies.

Midco has already provided a sample franchise agreement, and while discussions are still preliminary, the attorney's colleague (who is leading negotiations on behalf of several cities) is working to draft a franchise agreement for Midco and follow up with Lumen to better understand their proposal.

Key Points:

- No urgent deadlines have been indicated, but Midco did express a desire to begin work this summer.
- Estimated franchise fees are relatively low—around \$300 per month.
- The primary concern is ensuring any new infrastructure work includes provisions for site restoration and avoiding disruption or damage, as utility work can often be messy.
- Despite low revenue, having another provider could increase competition and potentially reduce costs for residents by offering an alternative to Mediacom and CenturyLink.
- Any franchise agreement would need to be established through ordinance, consistent with the City's existing franchise with Mediacom, and must comply with statutory and public notice requirements.
- The agreement would be non-exclusive, allowing for multiple service providers in the community.

Speed Humps – City Engineer Bradford addressed the community’s concerns about speeding and provided an update on the installation of speed humps as a traffic-calming measure along Pleasant Ave and Birch Bluff Road. The new humps will be installed in the same locations as previous ones, except for two on Pleasant Avenue, which have been repositioned for better spacing.

Key Points:

- Pleasant Avenue is a major concern due to its straight layout and history of being used as a shortcut by southbound drivers on Hwy 19 to bypass Smithtown Road, resulting in high speeds.
- Birch Bluff Road is narrower and curvier, making it unsuitable for heavy traffic, and a focus for speed mitigation.
- The goal is to reduce speeding and cut-through traffic by installing strategically placed speed humps.
- Recommended height to be at least 3 inches high—sufficient to slow vehicles without excessive bottoming out.
- Lighting Concerns: There is no plan for overhead lighting at each speed hump, partly because residents do not want the street fully lit, which could encourage faster driving.
- Visibility Measures: Each hump will have reflective signage, 10-inch white stripes, and white chevrons with reflective beads to ensure visibility at night through headlights.
- Speed humps will also be pedestrian-friendly, allowing people to walk around them without stepping into grass or mud.
- Project costs for the speed humps are already included in the overall budget.
- Council views this installation as a pilot project that will be monitored over time to assess its effectiveness.

Council Member Anderson arrived at 6:51 p.m.

Sewer Line Ordinance – The Mayor led a discussion on inflow and infiltration (I&I) requirements, explaining that this program ensures all private sewer lines, from the home to the main connection, are visually inspected for cracks or infiltration that can overwhelm the city’s sewer system and increase treatment costs. While addressing I&I citywide will take time, the long-term plan is to inspect private lines during property sales, eventually reaching all homes. Bradford and Schallberg provided clarification.

Key Issues Discussed:

- **Code Clarity & Ownership Responsibility:**
The City’s current ordinance is unclear and contradictory about who is responsible for sewer line maintenance. It currently states ownership is from the home to the property line, but enforcement is difficult.
 - Council consensus leaned toward making property owners responsible for the entire line, from the home to the main, aligning with the belief that since it is a private line serving a private property, it should be the homeowner’s responsibility.

- Simplifying the Ordinance:
There is an opportunity to streamline and modernize the I&I ordinance to make it clearer and more efficient for Staff and residents alike.
- Comparison with Other Cities:
Research from the City Planner showed that most cities place responsibility on the homeowner up to the main connection, including the portion under the street. Language would be added to address repairs under the street; noting that repairs should be done by a contractor with plans approved by the City Engineer. Public Works would oversee and approve completed work to make sure it meets city standards.
- Next Steps:
 - City Attorney Nason was directed to draft updated ordinance language assigning responsibility from the home to the main and incorporating all supporting provisions discussed.
 - Nason is also preparing an agreement for title companies, requiring them to hold escrow funds until the City issues a certificate of completion for I&I compliance.
 - Bradford recommended revising the water line language to match the sewer line ordinance for consistency across utility policies.

Council expects to review a formal draft for consideration at a future meeting.

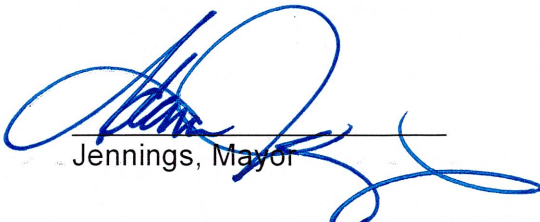
Misc - Bradford explained how Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) determines wastewater treatment charges. MCES bases each city's future rates on their share of total wastewater flow from two years prior. For example, 2026 charges are based on 2024 flow data. Because 2024 was a particularly wet year, communities with high inflow and infiltration (I&I), like Tonka Bay, will see higher rate increases. Bradford noted that the City has been working to reduce I&I through sewer lining projects and updated policies. As a result, Tonka Bay is expected to benefit from these improvements starting in 2027, with lower relative MCES charges compared to other high-I&I cities.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Attest:


Gildemeister, City Clerk


Jennings, Mayor