

Subject: Re: July 8th council meeting/Pledge discussion
Date: Sunday, June 30, 2019 at 4:26:31 PM Central Daylight Time
From: thom miller
To: Anne Mavity, Jake Spano, Nancy Deno

Anne, Jake, Nancy, We need a concise agenda for this meeting and we need it long before the meeting starts. We cannot walk into this thing with cameras in our face, a packed chamber, and not have an agenda. The meeting will devolve into chaos.

When things such as this are chaotic, I think it's best to follow our procedure: On the 8th, the pledge is brought up as proposed topic for a future study session (by jake), nothing more. No deliberation on the pledge, other than discussion about whether it be put on a future agenda. Date- TBD to be balanced with all our other study session topics. Over. Cameras go home, chambers empty. Perhaps staff sends out a study session urgency ranking exercise to the council again. I'm going to assume this Pledge gets ranked relatively high.

When the study session topic comes up again, staff will have created a report about this history of the pledge, which other cities are saying the pledge, what alternatives there may be to the Pledge, and we deliberate. This seems simple.

Consider the CFO. This will work similarly. Once we announced that we were looking into this with further study, the media and concerned parties backed off considerably from their media-fed frenzy.

— Thom Miller

From: Anne Mavity <anne@[REDACTED]>
Date: Sunday, June 30, 2019 at 9:16 AM
To: Jake Spano <mayorjakespano@[REDACTED]>
Cc: Thom Miller <thom.thommiller@[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: July 8th council meeting/Pledge discussion

The question first is how this appears on the agenda. Our protocol would indicate you would have the form included in the packet and proposing to put it on a future study session. Then we decide whether to do that. If you're proposing that this is on the agenda as a discussion item that is different. Is this a five min show of hands or is this the discussion (which is out of order)? What are you envisioning?

If you personally want to separately hold a listening session or whatever you can do that. I do not think this study session is the venue to allow people to speak. Your tweet and invitation to this meeting has set up expectations but our study session (and subsequent council mtg) is not the venue. If you believe you want to host such a session then you can do that but there's no win from an official council public forum. I'd like to know your plan before the agenda is sent out.

You indicate that there's not a strategy I think you need to think through the various ways this could go before the agenda is sent out. This news cycle would be over by a week from Monday. So let's think about how long you are envisioning continuing it.

On Jun 30, 2019, at 5:06 AM, Jake Spano <mayorjakespano@> wrote:

Anne-

I'm not sure there's a strategy here except that I'm trying to accommodate what I'm hearing from Thom who wants to make sure if we reconsider this there's a deliberate process, another colleague who wants to reverse the decision as soon as possible, balanced against some of our residents who are on all sides. I'm also trying to avoid any more frustration about end arounds and power grabs so I'm not really inclined to further chatter before the meeting. I also need to think about the mechanics of the meeting because this has the makings of a wild one.

Look, if the council decides on the 8th that they've arrived at a decision one way or another and want to move on without further discussion, that's the will of the majority.

I fly to New Mexico in 90 minutes for the day job, back the night of the 3rd (and working at the office in the 4th ironically) but u can try me if you like.

Jake Spano
Mayor
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

On Jun 28, 2019, at 10:04 PM, Anne Mavity <anne@> wrote:

Jake, when you catch a breath this weekend let's talk. I'm concerned about your strategy to continue this pointless discussion into August. I'm available except noon hour Saturday.

Anne Mavity

St. Louis Park City Councilmember

Anne@

On Jun 28, 2019, at 5:16 PM, Anne Mavity <anne@> wrote:

Hey Jake - just following up.

Are you going to tweet now that it won't be discussed on July 8th? This is going to go on and on and on. July 8th to decide WHETHER to discuss then the July 20th actual study session then aug 5th city council agenda vote. Or the news cycle could die off this week.

On Jun 28, 2019, at 12:14 AM, Jake Spano <mayorjakespano@> wrote:

Anne and Thom-
Just seeing this now.

I am happy to fill out the form and bring it to the meeting on the 8th.

To be clear, after I landed at MSP at 6:00 and I heard that 6/7 of us had voted on the request and not hearing any concern the manner in which this was decided, I waited an hour or so and then posted something on my Facebook and Twitter to the effect that we'd be relooking at this and then put my phone away to be with my kids for a few hours. I'm guessing that's where the tv folks picked it up.

This was not a deliberate/intentional attempt to subvert our normal operations, I was just trying to move quickly, and I didn't make this decision alone. I genuinely thought given the seriousness of the response we were getting that making this request in this manner was ok. I asked my colleagues if they would reconsider it and a majority agreed.

I'd be happy to discuss it with you tomorrow.

Jake Spano
Mayor
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

On Jun 27, 2019, at 9:49 PM, Thom Miller <thom.thommiller@> wrote:

I fully agree with Anne on this point. This would be an extraordinary power given to our mayor which is not within our norms or past practices. One council member, even the mayor, should not simply email the group and create a study session topic, least of all to reconsider an official vote. This is, in fact, a serial meeting on an important topic by proxy of progressive emails to the city manager.

In this case the mayor, or whomever, should fill out the proper form (or simply raise the topic at a meeting) and that topic should be considered, for a potential study session topic.

This is a serious precedent we would be setting and provides the mayor, in this case, with disproportionate power.

I suggest that Jake submit the topic on July 8th and we all deliberate if the topic should be placed on a future study session date and whether or not it is aligned with our priorities and to what degree this matter is urgent. This seems to be the only correct way to address this matter not just because of procedure but because doing otherwise will be rushed, messy, reactive, and not thoughtful.

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From: Anne Mavity <anne@>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2019 9:28 PM
To: slpcouncil@
Cc: ndeno@; Maria Carrillo-Perez; Jacque Smith;
tharmening@
Subject: Re: July 8th council meeting/Pledge discussion

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Colleagues,

We have protocols for raising issues with our council colleagues. Please do NOT use this language, until we follow our council protocols to consider this. Doesn't seem appropriate that I was required to "fill out the form" on May 13th for our study session on May 28th but in a few hours - when I had no access to email to even see this conversation - that this decision was made by the Mayor.

Anne

On Jun 27, 2019, at 8:41 PM, Tom Harmening
<THARMENING@> wrote:

Mayor and Council - as a result of Jake's email question below, four members of the council agreed to revisiting the decision on the pledge at the July 8 study session.

For those of you who have been contacted by the media, local or national, a suggested message back would be:

After hearing many comments from the community, the St. Louis Park City Council is revisiting its decision to remove recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance from city council meetings. The council will discuss this topic at its July 8, 2019, 6:30 p.m. study session. I appreciate your interest in an interview; however in light of this development I will have to decline your request. Thank you.

Just let me know if you prefer staff to handle this for you.

Tom

-----Original Message-----

From: Jake Spano [<mailto:mayorjakespano@>]

Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2019 2:52 PM

To: Tom Harmening; Jacque Smith

Subject: July 8th council meeting/Pledge discussion

Colleagues-

Im sure the last 24 hours have been pretty eventful for all of you, as they have been for me.

I understand that I was not at the meeting where this was discussed/decided but I feel strongly that we need to revisit the decision on the pledge of allegiance at our next meeting on July 8th. I don't ask this lightly, in fact I've never asked my colleagues for something like this, but I think this decision deserves another look by all of us.

Please reply to Tom with if you agree that we should revisit this on July 8th.

Thank you,

Jake Spano
Mayor
St. Louis Park, Minnesota