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St. Cloud Times

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City Council votes to censure Hontos



St. Cloud City Council member George Hontos, right, recently sent a letter to the editor outlining changes to the council rules of order that moved the open forum to the end of each meeting. The letter displeased some on the council. DAVE SCHWARZ/ST. CLOUD TIMES FILE PHOTO

Some thought letter disregarded rules of conduct

Jenny Berg St. Cloud Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

St. Cloud City Council approved on a confidential 4-2 vote Monday night censuring council member George Hontos following what some council members say are a violation of the council's rules of conduct.

Council member Mike Conway requested a discussion on the council's rules of order at the last council meeting. He cited an Aug. 14 letter submitted by Hontos to the St. Cloud Times.

Hontos' letter to the editor outlines changes to the council rules of order that moved the open forum to the end of each meeting, following adjournment, as well as added language about the open discussion portion of the meeting.

"It's disheartening. ... I'm a little concerned," said Conway, noting when council members are elected to the council, they agree to abide by the rules of conduct.

Conway cited rule No. 6, which states council members "respect the majority vote of the council, and do not undermine or sabotage implementation of ordinances, policies and rules passed by the majority."

Conway said in the business world, relitigating a decision in the public after the board or council has taken action is considered a "hallway veto."

Council member Dave Masters agreed, citing not only the letter to the editor but instances of "intimidation" or comments made after meetings. In the past few years, Hontos has gone back and forth at meetings numerous times with St. Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis, staff and other council members – arguing about the merits of the Heritage Park sale or whether members of the St. Cloud HRA board deserve to receive per diem.

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New offices, retail could be on horizon for Roosevelt Road

Council unanimously approves commercial zoning for property

Jenny Berg St. Cloud Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

St. Cloud City Council unanimously approved Monday a resolution amending a planned unit development in the 3500 to 3800 block of Roosevelt Road to allow commercial uses along the highway corridor.

The applicant's original request, which was discussed at the Aug. 13 St. Cloud Planning Commission meeting, included plans for future multifamily residential districts on the west side of the plat and abutting single-family houses to the north.

Twenty-one neighbors signed a petition in opposition to the proposed rezoning of the property sought for residential redevelopment, stating concerns about increased traffic through Plum Creek residences and access to 33rd Street or Stearns County Highway 75. Neighbors also spoke at the planning commission meeting about wanting to protect the quality of the adjoining single-family houses.

Since the planning commission meeting, an adjacent land owner has purchased the property sought for multifamily zoning, according to Community Development Director Matt Glaesman, which removed the "contentious portion" from the original application.

The applicant was Leigh Lenzmeier, representing the Rose M. Lenzmeier Irrevocable Trust. North of the site are single-family homes and a car dealership, to the south is farmland and a tire store, and to the east across Roosevelt Road is a hotel.

The amended planned unit development establishes two 1.8-acre lots for office uses along Roosevelt Road north of 36th Street South.

The approved zoning for that site includes uses such as day cares, office spaces, places of worship, banks, salons, public buildings, massage facilities, veterinary offices and medical or dental offices.

The amended planned unit development also establishes 16.3 acres for mixed retail uses along Roosevelt Road south of 36th Street South.

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State lawmakers will hear about contentious assisted suicide bill

Steve Karnowski ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS – A woman with terminal cancer will tell her story Wednesday before a Minnesota House committee considering a bill that would allow adults with less than six months to live to obtain medication to end their lives on their own terms.

The bill is patterned after an Oregon law that has been in effect for more than 20 years and has spread to seven other states plus the District of Columbia. A court ruling last month made New Jersey the latest state. Advocates say New York could soon follow suit, although a bill there failed to pass this year. But the idea faces tough opposition from the Catholic Church and allied groups that see the practice as a violation of the sanctity of life. The medical community is divided.

Marianne Turnbull, 61, of St. Paul has been living with stage IV ovarian cancer since 2015. She said she plans to tell lawmakers that she wants to live as long as she can, but also that she wants the right to choose a peaceful death instead of enduring prolonged suffering.

"I don't know if I would even use the medicine, but it would reduce my anxiety by so much if I just knew there was an option," Turnbull said. "I'd really rather not spend the last time that I have in major medical care."

Turnbull has already gone through two major surgeries and 12 rounds of chemotherapy. The retired clinical social worker for the St. Paul Public Schools system is hopeful about getting into an experimental

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