



City of Grand Island
Tuesday, December 13, 2016
Council Session

Item -2

**Approving Minutes of December 6, 2016 City Council Study
Session**

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

December 6, 2016

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Study Session of the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska was conducted in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 100 East First Street, on December 6, 2016. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on November 30, 2016.

Mayor Jeremy L. Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Mitch Nickerson, Mark Stelk, Jeremy Jones, Chuck Haase, Julie Hehnke, Linna Dee Donaldson, Vaughn Minton, Roger Steele, and Mike Paulick. Councilmember Michelle Fitzke was absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Marlan Ferguson, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Finance Director Renae Griffiths, City Attorney Jerry Janulewicz, and Public Works Director John Collins.

Mayor Jensen introduced Community Youth Council member Reid Bednar.

INVOCATION was given by Community Youth Council member Reid Bednar followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

Presentation and Discussion concerning the Grand Island Cemetery. Parks and Recreation Director Todd McCoy reported that Confluence had examined multiple sites for expansion possibilities for the Grand Island Cemetery and two sites had been recommended for Council to consider, Webb Road and Capital Avenue.

Matt Carlile representing Confluence reviewed the two locations. Webb Road was closest to the existing cemetery which would be able to use the existing maintenance facilities. The property was currently owned by the City of Grand Island so there would be no acquisition costs. The irrigation system was in place but would need adjustment for cemetery uses. The challenges of this location were the existing sports fields were heavily used and well maintained. Relocation of these sports facilities may not be a cost-effective solution. Large portions had been developed into parking lots and to remove and remediate, compaction would impact development costs. Trees would need to be planted immediately to begin to build the desired cemetery character. Noise from adjacent highway and railroad tracks would need to be addressed. The following constraints were mentioned: this piece of land was land-locked with US 281 Highway embankment to the west and Railroad right-of-way to the north. There were varied industrial developments on all other sides so future expansion for this site would be limited. The access points were only available off of South Webb Road. Another access would be preferred if Webb Road would need to be closed for any reason.

Discussion was held regarding the timeline between phases. Mr. Carlile stated it could be around 20 years in between phases, depending on funding.

The Capital Avenue cemetery site benefits included: the land had been donated by the State to the City so there were no acquisition costs. An existing cemetery was on-site, so shared maintenance facilities and equipment may be possible. This site had a good street presence and would provide good views. There were multiple access points along both frontage roads and access through the tree line along Webb Road was also possible. There was plenty of available contextual land for long-term expansion needs. The challenges mentioned was the traffic along the roads could cause unwanted notice, tree plantings would need to begin immediately to being to build the desired cemetery character, and notice from adjacent highway and railroad tracks would need to be addressed to create a tranquil cemetery setting. Several constraints were mentioned. The current Veterans Cemetery would need to be incorporated into the future cemetery design. There was a historic drainage way existing through the site, currently drainage had been diverted to the perimeter, and there were high-water table issues that would need to be mitigated for cemetery use, especially in the northern portions of the site.

Drainage at this site was discussed. Mayor Jensen stated on this site he would like to see Phase I and II started at the same time.

Burial and cemetery trends were reviewed along with burial types.

Each site was planned for a three phase development as follows:

	<u>Webb Road Site</u>	<u>Capital Avenue Site</u>
Phase 1	\$1,377,156	\$2,382,704
Phase 2	\$ 836,825	\$1,881,308
Phase 3	<u>\$ 505,703</u>	<u>\$1,137,345</u>
Total	\$2,719,686	\$5,401,357
Full Build-out:	21 acres	67 acres
Development Cost per acre:	\$129,508	\$80,617

Because the Webb Road site was much smaller, future development efforts may mean another significant investment in 40-50 years. The Capital Avenue site would last 80-100 years and would require initial investment in a maintenance facility and equipment, but those costs may be able to be shared with the Veteran’s Memorial Cemetery efforts.

Mr. McCoy answered questions regarding the cost moving the soccer fields from Webb Road.

Possible revenue generating opportunities were: increase burial service charges, increase charge for burial plots, increase charge for permanent maintenance fund, additional plots available for Green Burials that otherwise would be unsold and occupied by tree plantings, increase in burial service and plot demand due to the aging of the Baby-Boomer Generation, and increase in demand if Westlawn is to reach capacity or retire it’s burial service business.

Possible opportunities to reduce operating costs included: reduce maintenance expectations and staffing needs at the existing 90 acre Grand Island Cemetery, maintenance cost sharing

agreements – between sports field organizations at Webb Road and between the Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery staff, and approach community organizations or clubs to explore volunteer opportunities to offset some maintenance costs.

Mr. McCoy stated he would work with Administration on how to generate revenue for this expansion. Mentioned was that the Webb Road ball field 21 acres could be sold to generate revenue.

Erica Randall, 705 W. Hedde Street spoke in opposition of the Capital Avenue site. Dan Naranjo, 1328 Hagge Avenue spoke in support of either site but mentioned economics with regards to the increase of cremations. Jerry Hirschman, 2315 Gateway Avenue spoke in opposition to the Capital Avenue site.

City Administrator Marlan Ferguson stated this item would come before Council for a final decision within the next 60 days. Park and Recreation Cemetery Superintendent Mark Sands commented on cemeteries not being profitable, columbarium’s, and the need for more staff.

Council recessed at 8:36 p.m. and reconvened at 8:42 p.m.

Presentation and Discussion concerning Blighted and Substandard Designation at Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant. Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity reported that in 2013 the State Legislators passed LB 66 which gave authority to Cities of the First Class to approve Redevelopment Plans and use Ad Volorem Taxes (TIF) generated by the project(s) approved in the plan to pay for eligible expenses under certain proscribed conditions on formerly used defense sites outside of the corporate limits of and within the same County as the City.

LB 66 did not declare formerly used defense sites blighted and substandard or change the standards for declaring an area blighted and substandard. It also did not remove or alter the requirement that an area be declared blighted and substandard prior to the approval of a Redevelopment Plan.

The Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CHAAP) is a 20 square mile plant west of Grand Island built in 1942 for World War II, reactivated for the Korean War from 1950 – 1957, reactivated for Vietnam in 1965, and was declared excess in 1989. Congress gave local authority to the Hall County Reuse Committee to determine post plant land uses – ag, industry, no housing.

In order to use TIF at CHAAP the area must be declared blighted and substandard. This would not count toward the 35% limit of the City. All, or a portion of the property could be declared blighted and substandard but must meet statutory criteria for the declaration. All procedures and hearings must be followed like any other blighted and substandard declaration. If this area was declared blighted and substandard it could expect TIF projects.

Mr. Nabity reviewed the requirements to use TIF at CHAAP and the zoning districts for this area. He stated the reason this topic was brought up was that Pat O’Neill with O’Neill Wood Resources had submitted a Blight Study for 285 acres at the northwest corner of Old Potash

Highway and 70th Road. A second study was likely to be submitted in the near future. He mentioned that a study could be completed to aid redevelopment of the Husker Harvest Days site also.

Mr. Nabity explained the process and notification required to bring this before the Regional Planning Commission and the City Council.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk