



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

Council Session

Item G-2

Approving Minutes of October 16, 2018 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

October 16, 2018

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 October 16, 2018. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on October 10, 2018.

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

INVOCATION was given by Mayor Jensen followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

Introduction – “The Diamond of the Island”. Mayor Jensen commented on “The Diamond of the Island”. Mentioned were the following projects: to the north the Veteran’s property, to the west Husker Harvest Days and the Heartland Shooting Park; to the south Highway 281 corridor and the economic impact of traffic traveling on Interstate 281; and to the east the Fonner Park and State Fair Complex.

Mentioned was the importance of bringing people to Grand Island along with tourism. He commented on concerns of the budget for the City of Grand Island. The most important revenue for the City was sales tax. The Food and Beverage Tax was used to market Grand Island. These dollars were used for the Lottery match, ballfields, Husker Harvest Days improvements, etc.

Introduced was “Project Million” – collectively all stakeholders and attenders attending all activities held in Grand Island for a total of 1 million people. Listed were all the stakeholders in Grand Island.

The following barriers of success were mentioned: no clearly defined goal; no current collaboration of stakeholders; no clarity of roles and responsibilities of the campus; no working relationship of Fonner Park and the State Fair; and no communication between the stakeholders.

Presentation on the Nebraska State Fair. Executive Director Lori Cox representing the Nebraska State Fair presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the State Fair. In 2019 the Nebraska State Fair will celebrate 150 years. Their master plan conversations were: concerts, livestock; and infrastructure.

GILCA – Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority was explained. Four parties consisted of GILCA: Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, Fonner Park, and the Grand Island Convention & Visitors Bureau worked together to bring livestock shows to Grand Island.

Reviewed were the following infrastructure issues: concourse, parking lots, storm water, ingress to campus, ADA issues, limited RV space, power & water, building expansion, and new buildings needed.

Concerts were an important part of the State Fair. As a result of the 2018 outdoor concerts that had to be cancelled due to weather, they had decided to not use the racetrack for future outdoor concerts. The Heartland Events Center was not big enough for the type of concerts they would like to bring to Grand Island. Price, cost of artists, and saturation were mentioned.

A concert vision was being discussed. Marketing; customer service; a full slate of returning a concert series for every day of the fair; and back of house. An outdoor pavilion was presented which if built here in Grand Island would be the first on of its kind of any state fair in the nation.

Ms. Cox answered the question with regards to the cost. She stated the State Fair would cover the costs.

Presentation on Grow Grand Island. Grow Grand Island Chairman Tonja Brown gave a Grow Grand Island Report. Reviewed were projects where the Food and Beverage Tax was used. The mission statement for Grow Grand Island was: Grow Grand Island cultivates bold ideas that create business and quality of life opportunities in our region through planning, partnering and doing. Grow Grand Island was created to promote entertainment, agricultural and livestock shows, trade shows and similar events that would attract visitors to Grand Island.

Reviewed were the following projects that Grow Grand Island had help fund:

- Olympic Bunker Trap at Heartland Shooting Park
- Equine Stalls at State Fair Grounds
- Fundraising Campaign for Private Partnership

Presented were the following priorities:

- Workforce Development
- Downtown/Railsides
- Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Affordable Housing
- Grow Grand Island, Inc.

Ms. Brown answered questions concerning the four year agreement with Grand Island. Council would have the opportunity to continue the agreement after it expired.

Presentation on the Heartland Events Center. CEO Bruce Swihart with Fonner Park introduced Kyle Overturf representing Almquist Maltzahn Galloway and Luth who gave a presentation of Fonner Parks financials. Mr. Swihart gave a report on the Heartland Events Center. Reviewed was the history of the center.

Diane Willey commented on the high risk with concerts. Mentioned was the competition of other venues within the state over the years. Also were the difficulties and expenses of getting artists to come to Grand Island.

Discussion was held concerning what would happen when the City became the owner of the Heartland Events Center in 2024. Mr. Swihart stated they would like to continue with the management contract currently in place.

Jay Vavricek, 2729 Brentwood Blvd. complimented Mayor Jensen on bringing these issues forward. He mentioned the 1868 Foundation and volunteers as being other stakeholders for the Nebraska State Fair. He stated it was important for people to attend the concerts in order for them to come out ahead.

Mayor Jensen stated this meeting was to bring people together to talk about the future of the Fonner Park Campus.

Brad Melluma representing Grand Island/Hall County Convention and Visitors Bureau answered questions regarding the \$500,000 the City donates to Grow Grand Island each year from the Food and Beverage Tax. Gene McCloud presented a video marketing Fonner Park.

KC Hehnke, 8406 N. 110th Road, Dannebrog stated Fonner Park was hosting a National Marketing Firm to help Fonner Park market events. He said it was very important to get people to come to Grand Island because they would spend money creating sales tax which was our most important way to increase revenue for the City and would in turn help property owners in not having to pay more property tax.

Ray O'Connor, 611 Fleetwood Road commented on bringing agricultural shows (beef, sheep, swine, equine, etc.) that would bring families and spend time in Grand Island thereby paying sales tax, food & beverage tax, and hotel occupation tax. Recommended was a community calendar promoting events here in Grand Island.

Cindy Johnson representing the Chamber of Commerce stated this was similar to when they worked on getting the Nebraska State Fair here in Grand Island 10+ years ago. Everybody needed to work together, acknowledging and respecting each other.

Steve Kunzman, 2408 Riverside Drive representing Fonner Park stated the financial responsibility for the buildings were Fonner Parks. Communication was very important and steps had been taken before this meeting. Fonner Park was willing to work together with the other entities. Amos Anson, 4243 Arizona Avenue clarified how the money could be spent from the Food and Beverage Tax.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk