



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, January 22, 2002

Council Session

Item G4

Approving Minutes of January 15, 2002 City Council Study Session

*The Minutes of the January 15, 2002 City Council Study Session are submitted for approval.
See attached MINUTES.*

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards



OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

January 15, 2002

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 January 15, 2002. Notice of the meeting was given in the Grand Island Independent on January 9, 2002.

Mayor Ken Gnadt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Councilmembers Pielstick, Seifert, Larson, Hornady, Whitesides, Haase, Murray, Walker and Sorensen. Councilmember Ward was absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Marlan Ferguson, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Public Works Director Steve Riehle, City Attorney Charlie Cuypers and Finance Director David Springer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was said.

Mike Toukan said a few words about the South Locust Project and their committee.

Presentation by Zoo Reuse Committee. Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director, reported that in early September of 2001 Mayor Gnadt appointed a group of interested citizens to assist the Parks and Recreation Department in the development of a reuse plan for the former Zoo site.

Introduced were the members of the Zoo Site Reuse Committee: Tom Gdowski, Leslie Neuhaus, Jim Hruskoci, Gloria Wolbach, Mackenzie Cochran and Luke McMahan. Council representative was Gale Larson, Parks and Recreation Director Steve Paustian and City Administrator Marlan Ferguson.

Tom Gdowski from the Zoo Site Reuse Committee presented recommendations for the use of the Heritage Zoo site by reviewing the existing zoo site and gathering public input. The following recommendations were made.

- 1.) Theme playground – designed, funded and built by the public \$150,000 - \$200,00
- 2.) Refurbish Train/Tracks – train rides \$80,000 - \$100,000
- 3.) Refrigerated Ice Rink – leisure skating, ice hockey and summer roller hockey \$300,000 - \$500,000
- 4.) Arboretum – shrubs and flowering shrubs for the central part of the zoo \$25,000 - \$50,000
- 5.) Outdoor Pavilion – people could rent out and use for family outings \$100,000

Three Year Plan:

Year One	Theme Playground and Train Ride	\$250,000 - \$300,000
Year Two	Outdoor Pavilion and Arboretum	\$125,000 - \$150,000
Year Three	Ice Rink	\$300,000 - \$500,000

Councilmember Larson stated that the next step in the process would be to take this issue to a regular city council meeting with a proposal to accept this report and to proceed with the project. The Council thanked the committee for the time spent on this report.

Herb Worthington, 4262 Pennsylvania Avenue, spoke about the community helping build the theme playground and the time frame involved. Gloria Wolbach, 2617 Apache Road and Jim Hruskoci, 6280 South Engleman Road, spoke in support of the theme playground. Tom O'Neill, 804 West Stolley Park Road, spoke in favor of the project and completing it in phases. John Luna, 712 East 8th Street, spoke in support of the project and suggested an enclosed pavilion.

Discussion of Possible Improvements to L.E. Ray Lake. Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director, reported that in 1994 Council authorized Olsson Associates to develop a plan for the enhancement of L.E. Ray Lake. The enhancements included camping facilities, asphalt roadways, infrastructure to serve the campgrounds, area lighting, a boat dock and boat ramp, hiking trail and a bridge connection to the small Island located in the west end of the lake. In 1994 the total project cost was estimated to be \$815,000.00. This topic will be brought up at the City Council retreat.

Councilmember Murray stated that he felt now was the time to work on this project. Mayor Gnadst stated that the daughter of L.E. Ray preferred that there be no overnight camping. Councilmember Larson stated that there currently is a need for over night camping in our community. Councilmember Seifert spoke about handicapped boat docks from the Games and Parks Commission through grants.

Discussion Concerning Former City Hall. Marlan Ferguson, City Administrator, reported that the redevelopment and or disposal of the former City Hall building had been ongoing since it was vacated by the City in 1993. Several attempts at obtaining developers had failed for various reasons and the building continues to remain empty and deteriorating. The latest redevelopment plan became null and void with a successful remonstrance on the sale of the property. Mr. Ferguson stated that no sale can take place for 12 months from the date of the remonstrance. It was staff's position that a plan be put in place so that a plan could be instituted as soon as possible. The asbestos removal and partial interior demolishing plan is currently under way.

Mr. Ferguson mentioned that the Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) is interested in partnering with the City to work on a plan to go out for requests for proposals for redevelopment of Old City Hall. The intent by the City was the restoration of former City Hall. The proposal is to partnership with CRA to get a developer on line so that work can begin this fall.

Councilmember Pielstick spoke concerning not tearing down Old City Hall and recouping the costs of the asbestos removal. Councilmember Haase questioned the Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Mr. Ferguson explained the process of TIF. Councilmember Murray stated he would prefer that a private developer obtain the building and get it back on the tax rolls.

Tim O'Neill, 1203 South Sylvan Street, stated the contract that the City had entered into was what he was against. Mr. O'Neill felt that this needed to be sold by a professional real estate

agent. Tom O'Neill, 804 West Stolley Park Road, recommended the City either remodel the building the way they want or sell it. John Luna, 712 East 8th Street, commented that the City needed to have an appraisal for the building. Mr. Luna recommended Robert Wilson from Omaha to be the most qualified person to appraise the building. He suggested that the City keep the building, remodel it and use it for expansion of the current City Hall.

Councilmember Haase asked if the building had ever been appraised. Mr. Ferguson stated that to his knowledge it had not. Ms. Haase suggested that this be done. Councilmember Murray supported an appraisal if it would help the comfort level of the citizens of Grand Island. Councilmember Whitesides suggested that we move forward with the CRA proposal. Mike Toukan, business owner at 818 South Locust Street, spoke in support of the City partnering with CRA and careful planning between the private and public sector for the best use in downtown.

Discussion of Salary Increases for City Council and Mayor. Marlan Ferguson, City Administrator, reported that this item was on the December 18, 2001 City Council Agenda and was tabled for a Study Session. The proposal was to increase the City Council salary from \$5,000 per year to \$8,000 per year and increase the Mayor's salary from \$12,000 per year to \$18,000 per year.

Councilmember Whitesides spoke on the value of time and effort and quality of persons holding office. He spoke about the per capita amount of other cities and where Grand Island falls in that array. Councilmember Pielstick questioned the amount of raise for the Mayor's position. Councilmember Whitesides stated he brought the figures forward and that the Mayor was worth half of what the County Supervisors make. Councilmember Walker asked if the Mayor's job was a full time job. Mayor Gnadt stated that it is not a full time job, but being retired he had the time to spend on City issues.

Councilmember Murray stated that there had not been many candidates filing for City Council positions and felt that the salary was the reason. Councilmember Sorensen stated that cost-of-living should be included. Councilmember Hornady stated that she had a hard time raising the Council's salary because of the increase to the taxpayers. Councilmember Larson stated that an argument could be made due to the fact that this was an elected position and the candidates had to spend out-of-pocket money to get elected to office, but felt that the Council was adequately paid.

Councilmember Pielstick requested that this item be brought back to the Council at the next regular meeting with a \$1,000 raise and a cost-of-living increase for the City Council and Mayor.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk