



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, February 10, 2004

Council Session

Item G2

Approving Minutes of February 3, 2004 City Council Study Session

The Minutes of February 3, 2004 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

February 3, 2004

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 February 3, 2004. Notice of the meeting was given in the Grand Island Independent on January 28, 2004.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Councilmembers Meyer, Pielstick, Gilbert, Nickerson, Pauly, Hornady, Walker, and Haase. Councilmembers Whitesides and Cornelius were absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Gary Greer, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Finance Director David Springer, City Attorney Doug Walker and Public Works Director Steve Riehle.

RESERVE TIME TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS: No individuals reserved time to speak on agenda items.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION: Mayor Vavricek mentioned that water service lines may freeze due to the cold weather. City Administrator Gary Greer stated that due to the pending weather conditions forecast for tomorrow, the City will be in a snow emergency alert. Mayor Vavricek mentioned that \$50,000 was awarded today to the Habitat for Humanities. A reminder was mentioned of the election process and the primary scheduled for May 11, 2004 and that Councilmember Pielstick filed for re-election today.

Discussion Concerning Use of ½ Cent Sales Tax for Overpass/Underpass on Broadwell Avenue at the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks. Public Works Director Steve Riehle reported that the sales tax survey results showed significant support for the construction of an underpass/overpass on Broadwell Avenue at the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Without a new funding source for an underpass/overpass such as sales tax, the Broadwell Avenue Underpass/Overpass may never be built.

Mr. Rihle stated the Broadwell Avenue crossing just north of 3rd Street was the heaviest used crossing in the city. The Nebraska Department of Roads used a calculated exposure factor by multiplying the number of vehicles per day times the number of trains per day. If the number was over 500,000, it qualified for a grade separation (over or underpass). The NDOR had railroad grade separation projects already on their list that would take over 50 years to complete at existing funding levels. A comprehensive railroad corridor study should be conducted before the plan for how the community addressed issues such as this Broadwell Grade Separation could be finalized. The study should look at grade separations, crossing closures, directional horns, quiet zones, an east by-pass, replacement of the Sycamore and Eddy Underpasses, etc.

Staff was working on an RFP where they would ask for proposals from consulting engineering firms to prepare a Railroad Corridor Plan for all railroads in and around Grand Island. Olsson Associates was studying the proposal to construct a grade separation on Broadwell Avenue at the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

Tom Leikam representing Olsson Associates presented a PowerPoint presentation for the study of the Broadwell Avenue Grade Separation Across the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks. The following parameters and assumptions were presented: traffic volume on Broadwell was over 12,000 vehicles per day; minimum design speed for Broadwell should not be lower than 35 mph; sidewalk facilities would be provided along both sides of the structure; minimum vertical clearance should be 14'6"; design should provide clearances to allow for a future third mainline track; and a shoo-fly would need to be constructed at the existing tracks to maintain train traffic for construction of an underpass structure.

Preliminary Alternatives were listed as follows:

- 4-Lane Overpass on Broadwell Avenue
- 4-Lane Underpass on Broadwell Avenue with 3rd Street Open at Broadwell
- 4-Lane Underpass on Broadwell Avenue with 3rd Street Closed at Broadwell
- 4-Lane Overpass on Madison Avenue
- 4-Lane Overpass, Madison to Broadwell Avenue

Aerial maps were presented showing the different options available. Discussed was the elevation of Third Street and drainage problems in that area. Mr. Leikam suggested the next step being a preliminary design with public input.

The following were the preliminary opinion of probable costs:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4-Lane Overpass at Broadwell Avenue | \$10,700,000 |
| 4-Lane Underpass at Broadwell Avenue | \$12,600,000 |
| 4-Lane Overpass, Madison to Broadwell | \$11,200,000 |

Councilmember Nickerson questioned the possibility of by-passing the trains around the city. Public Works Director Steve Riehle stated that they would have to talk with the Union Pacific Railroad. Mr. Leikam mentioned Hastings had by-passed the trains around the city at a cost of \$40,000,000 to the City of Hastings. The railroad benefited from that situation where it may not here in Grand Island. A comprehensive railroad corridor study was discussed.

Discussion Concerning Use of ½ Cent Sales Tax for Aquatics. Parks & Recreation Director Steve Paustian reported that for many years the City of Grand Island had discussed the need for additional and/or updated aquatic facilities. Many enhancements had been accomplished to various aquatic facilities including Island Oasis and wading pools located in Pier, Lincoln and Grace Abbot Parks. Additionally, a great deal of discussion had occurred among various organizations including the School District, YMCA and Hospital concerning enhancing the aquatic system in Grand Island.

Mr. Paustian stated that current expansions to Island Oasis and an up-grade or replacement of Lincoln Pool had been included in the ½ cent sales tax discussion. It appeared that with many

citizens and organizations having great interest in this subject it may be time to conduct a comprehensive look at the aquatic system in Grand Island. Other communities had engaged in an aquatics study aimed at surveying all facilities, evaluating each facility, measuring need, and developing a plan which provided an implementation scenario for the future. Such a study could eliminate duplication, streamline tax investment and bring about collaboration among interested parties.

Mr. Paustian stated Hastings, Nebraska was in the process of building a water park which may have an impact on Island Oasis. A study of the market would help to understand the dynamics of the area and help react to changes. After a study was completed, projects could be earmarked for funding using the ½ cent sales tax. It was recommended that the City Council consider moving forward with a study to help determine aquatic projects to be developed with the ½ cent sales tax or other revenue sources if sales tax funding was not available. The cost of the study was estimated to be between \$20,000 - \$40,000. Discussion was had concerning working with other organizations on this project.

Discussion Concerning Use of ½ Cent Sales Tax for CAAP. Parks & Recreation Director Steve Paustian reported that in 2000 the City finalized the purchase of 420 acres of land for a shooting facility to be located on the former Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant (CAAP) site. Originally the purchase was necessitated with the development of the new South Locust Interstate Exit and the need to relocate the skeet and sporting clays range from the City Well Field.

Over the past several years, strides had been made in that development effort. To date, six skeet ranges and four trap ranges were nearing completion, a sporting Clays range had been roughed in and buildings from the former range site had been relocated to the CAAP site. A new clubhouse was also under construction and was nearly 75% complete.

Plans called for the additional construction of a rifle/pistol range that would accommodate most calibers of rifle and pistols. Activities to be hosted on the site would include long range rifle shooting, cowboy action shooting, a 22 cal. plinking range and many other shooting activities. Plans also called for the development of a lake for fishing and to host retriever training and trials. Construction of a modern campground that could accommodate up to sixty camping pads were also in the overall development plan.

Mr. Paustian stated that while these additional improvements would cost over one million dollars, it was anticipated that patron fees and ancillary uses would help offset some of the operational costs. It was also anticipated that the facility would bring many visitors to the Grand Island area that would spend money on motels, gas, food and shopping.

Sales tax proceeds would play an important part in the development of these additional facilities and the speed at which they could be developed. Alternatives presented were: 1) Develop the facility without additional sales tax dollars, and/or 2) Discuss the project and it's inclusion in the 1/2 cent sales tax proposal. Staff recommended the continued development of the facility using Sales Tax dollars along with some of the proceeds from the additional ½ cent sales tax when available.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk