



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Council Session

Item G2

Approving Minutes of January 18, 2005 City Council Study Session

The Minutes of January 18, 2005 City Council Study Session are submitted for approval. See attached MINTUES.

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

January 18, 2005

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 18, 2005. Notice of the meeting was given in the Grand Island Independent on January 12, 2005.

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

Mayor Communication: Mayor Vavricek commented on a letter received from the State of Nebraska Department of Highway Safety congratulating the Grand Island Police Department for winning the "You Drink & Drive. You Lose" campaign. Also received was a letter from the Area Council for International Visitors of which Grand Island hosted 45 international visitors from 31 countries.

Discussion Concerning Heartland Shooting Facility: Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director reported that the Parks and Recreation Department had been in the planning and developmental phase of the Heartland Public Shooting Park for over six years. Phase one of the construction had been completed which consisted of trap, skeet and sporting clays ranges along with support facilities including a main clubhouse and several support buildings.

Phase two of the construction was set to start in March which would consist of all pistol and rifle ranges along with the necessary support facilities and a seven acre lake. It was mentioned that Phase three would include the construction of a modern campground.

Mr. Paustain stated that volunteers currently operating the facility had requested that the City consider hiring a Shooting Park Superintendent in the near future. The Department had planned on hiring staff as phase two neared completion. The volunteers would be willing to fund \$45,000 of the Superintendents position for the next year or until phase two was completed.

Tim O'Connor, 2112 West John Street stated they were excited about the shooting sports facility and commented on the various opportunities that were available to different organizations. So far they had exceeded their expectations. Listed were major events that were planned to be held for 2005 & 2006.

Discussion was held with regards to expenses of the facility. Currently the club funded all activities and received all revenues. A management agreement would be brought to Council for

future operations of the facility. Comments were made with regards to the Superintendents position being under the City.

City Administrator Gary Greer commented on the importance of a manager for this project. Mentioned were the volunteers that had put forth many hours into this project and the importance of a business plan. Mr. O'Connor commented about the automatic equipment and the profits that the club had made.

Councilmember Pauly suggested that the Skeet Club hire a superintendent for the first year and come back to the City with a business plan. On site housing for a caretaker was discussed because of the future 24-hour camping site.

Mr. Paustian recommended that the City move forward with the hiring of a superintendent with the \$45,000 funded by the Skeet Club beginning April 1, 2005 with the City taking over the funding of this position on October 1, 2006. Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director stated that the job description and salary ordinance were ready to come before council for a decision. Councilmember Pielstick recommended that this issue be brought to Council at the next Regular Meeting.

Discussion was held with regards to renaming the Skeet Range portion of the facility in honor of Virgil Eihusen. Mr. Eihusen donated \$300,000.00 toward the construction of the skeet ranges. Councilmember Pielstick recommended that this be brought to Council at the next Regular Meeting also.

Discussion Concerning Current Policy of Swimming at L.E. Ray Lake. Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director reported that the City of Grand Island took ownership of L.E. Ray Lake in the early 1970's which was donated by the Ray family to be used as a park. Since that time swimming had been allowed in designated areas only with lifeguards provided until 1993.

Since the opening of Island Oasis, the popularity of L.E. Ray Lake as a swimming area had drop drastically. Mentioned were the dangers of swimming in a sand pit, no lifeguards, safety of public swimming, and the five deaths that had occurred at L.E. Ray Lake since 1996.

Discussion was held with regards to the safety of allowing swimming at L.E. Ray Lake. It was the recommendation of the Parks & Recreation Department to ban swimming. Several councilmember's stated they agreed with the recommendation. Usage of the lake was discussed with regards to boating, canoeing, fishing, etc. Improvements to the lake such as camping, playground equipment, and trails were mentioned. Enforcement was discussed which would be done through the Police Department.

Councilmember Cornelius stated that banning swimming would eliminate those people who could not afford to go to Island Oasis, Morman Island, and other pools within the city the opportunity to swim on sandy beaches. It would also not eliminate accidents as some people would continue to swim even if there was a ban.

Mr. Paustian commented on the five drownings that had taken place since 1996. All were males ranging in age from 19 to 43.

Brian Levander, 209 Redwood Road and Heather Jacobsen, 2831 Wortman Drive #6 opposed banning swimming at L.E. Ray Lake. Leo Schritt, 304 East 15th Street and Carmen Ascencion, 918 East Bismark spoke in support of the swimming ban.

Mr. Paustian stated there were no other lakes that allow swimming in Grand Island. Several lakes within the City of Grand Island do allow ice fishing.

Councilmember Pielstick recommended that this issue be brought back to Council in February for a decision by Council.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk