



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Council Session

Item G3

Approving Minutes of April 5, 2005 City Council Study Session

The Minutes of April 5, 2005 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

April 5, 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 April 5, 2005. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on March 30, 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, Public Works Director Steve Riehle, and City Attorney Doug Walker

Mayor Communication: Mayor Vavricek commented on the following:

1. April 6, 2005 Quad City Mayor's Conference hosted by Grand Island
2. Thanked City Council for last week's meeting that lasted 15 hours

Presentation by Shonsey & Associates for FY 2004 City Single Audit and General Purpose Financial Statements. David Springer, Finance Director introduced Terry Galloway representing Shonsey & Associates who reviewed the FY 2004 City Single Audit and General Purpose Financial Statements.

The financial audit received an unqualified rating which was the highest rating possible. Reviewed were the long term debt, revenue bonds, bond rating, water rates, net assets, cash reserves, and operating income for Grand Island which were very good.

Mr. Galloway commented that the infrastructure policy needed to be looked at. Federal Grants were received at over \$500,000 which was low for the size of Grand Island and encouraged the City to apply for more grant funds. Mr. Galloway said that the City of Grand Island was in great shape but planning for the future was important.

Internal controls regarding computer passwords were discussed. It was recommended by Shonsey & Associates to keep better controls on this. Mr. Springer commented on employees sharing their passwords and that this was hard to control. He stated this would be looked into.

Presentation by Downtown Improvement Board: Steve Rasmussen, Downtown Improvement Board member presented a PowerPoint regarding the Downtown Plan.

Reviewed were the following:

- Local retailing
- Financial services

- Professional offices
- Residential housing
- Government Center

The following major achievements during the past 5-7 years were presented:

- New logo
- Entrance Signs
- Downtown banners
- Major streetscaping project with trees and landscaping
- New benches & trash containers
- New pocket park (funded by Sprint)
- New Web site – www.DowntownGI.com

Completed alley way project, alley entrances & identification, alley crossing concept, diagonal parking, parking lot enhancements, and major building renovation projects were presented.

Mentioned were the following challenges:

- Deteriorating historical buildings
- Historical buildings typically cost 25-30% more to restore than to build new
- New building codes
- Key buildings isolated from parking
- Needed improvements to street curbs and brick pavers
- Continue to increase foot traffic

Proposed were the following “Downtown’s 4 Step Action Plan”:

1. Historical building restoration/upper level housing
2. Parking solutions
3. The physical environment – streetscape project
4. The Arts & Humanities Center for Grand Island

Estimated Investment was presented as follows:

1. Building renovation/upper-level housing: \$500,000 revolving 0% interest loan fund.
2. City to become an equity partner on selected buildings of historical significance.
3. Historic Masonic Temple building project: Purchase/demolish 2 buildings with parking lot: \$350,000 (includes supporting contribution to private developer).
4. Street curb project: \$1/2 million over 3 years. Similar to Hastings, Kearney, others.
5. Grand Theatre project: \$10,000.
6. Kaufman-Cummings Park/Amphitheatre: Goal 50%+ contribution from private sources.
7. G.I. Arts & Humanity fund: City to determine.
8. Encourage government facilities in Downtown

The following representatives from downtown were introduced: Jim Berglund, Top Hat Furniture; George Bartenbach, Bartenbach Galleries; Mark Stelk, General Collection; K.C. Henke, Historic City Hall and Chairman of the downtown board; Craig Hand, Howard’s Jewelry;

Tom Ziller, downtown rental property owner; Cindy Johnson, Chamber President; and Diana Kellogg, management service provider for the Chamber.

Discussed were the new building codes that were passed by council. Questioned was if there were exceptions to historical buildings. Craig Lewis, Building Department Director stated there were no exceptions, it was more important for public safety especially in these older buildings. Water mains were discussed as adequate in the downtown area with regards to fire safety and electrical updates would be needed.

Explained were bump-outs which would reduce the street width, make pedestrian crossing shorter, and slower traffic. Masonic Temple parking was discussed with regards to costs.

Councilmember Nickerson asked which one of the projects were the most needed with regards to the City helping with the cost. Mr. Rasmussen stated the Downtown Board would have to decide that issue. Currently the City does not have money budgeted except for a bump-out at 3rd & Wheeler Street.

Cindy Johnson, Chamber President explained the historical background and funding of the Business Improvement Districts in downtown. Parking issues and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) were discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk