



# **City of Grand Island**

**Tuesday, February 14, 2006**

**Council Session**

## **Item G3**

**Approving Minutes of January 28, 2006 City Council Special  
Study Session Retreat**

**Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards**

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL STUDY SESSION (RETREAT)

January 28, 2006

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Study Session (Retreat) of the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska was conducted at Jackrabbit Run Golf Course, 2803 N. Shady Bend Road on January 28, 2006. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on January 18, 2006.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. The following members were present: Councilmember's Meyer, Whitesides, Pielstick, Gilbert, Nickerson, Pauly, Hornady, Walker, and Haase. Councilmember Cornelius was present at 8:30 a.m. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Gary Greer, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Public Works Director Steve Riehle, City Attorney Doug Walker, Finance Director David Springer, Police Chief Steve Lamken, Utilities Director Gary Mader, Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland, Building Department Director Craig Lewis, Fire Chief Jim Rowell, Library Director Steve Fosselman, Parks & Recreation Director Steve Paustian, Emergency Management Director Lela Lowry, and Regional Planning Director Chad Nability.

INVOCATION was given by Councilmember Jackie Pielstick followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

INTRODUCTION:

Mayor Vavricek commented on being accessible, responsive and accountable for efficient and effective government services by "walking the line". Mentioned was that this year was the "year of management". Mayor Vavricek welcomed the council, directors and public attending the meeting.

STUDY TOPICS:

Annexation: Chad Nability, Regional Planning Director explained the difference of developed and undeveloped property. Reviewed were annexation policies. Two county industrial tracts were discussed which were allowed by state statutes. County services were provided to these tracts. Reviewed were the water and sewer distribution systems for the City of Grand Island and proposed areas of expansion.

The following questions were discussed:

1. Does Council want to pursue annexation of urbanized areas around the City of Grand Island as identified by the Grand Island Comprehensive Development Plan?

If so which ones or all of them?

Discussion was held with regards to which areas would be the most cost effective: Area 8 - Schroeder Subdivision, Area 6 – Vanosdall, Area 7 - Rainbow Lake, and Area 9 - south of Stolley Park Road east of Engelman Road were mentioned. Lack of growth to the south of the city limits was due to no sewer infrastructure.

2. Does Council wish to identify a hard edge growth boundary or do you want to continue with our current policy of using available infrastructure, installation of dry sewer and water lines, and large lot zoning requirements to influence where development occurs?

Mr. Nabity mentioned that we would see future residential development in the northwest area of the city because infrastructure was already there. Councilmember Cornelius commented on using a combined approach. Discussed was the hard edge boundaries such as east lakes and north of the Burlington Northern Railroad.

3. Does Council wish to encourage development in certain directions by building sewer trunk lines and water mains? South Locust, South Blaine, 281 South, East Lakes, St. Paul Road north of Capital Avenue.

Mr. Nabity suggested that long term planning needed to be done in Area 4 – East Lakes, Area 7 – Rainbow Lakes, and Area 9 – South of Stolley Park Road East of Engelman Road. City Administrator Gary Greer commented on a business standpoint of developing Area 7 as being more of an advantage to the City with future development toward the south. Discussed was long term growth south between Highway 281 and South Locust.

Phil Mader, Northwest School Board President commented on the valuation of rural areas and the property tax base decreasing with regards to annexation. Steve Joel, Grand Island Public School Superintendent commented on their ability to handle the growth of the city with quality education.

Discussed was to start developing sewer to the south of the city between South Locust Street and Highway 281 for future development opportunities. The cost of sewer was discussed with regards to cash versus bonding. It was decided that annexation east to Area 4 was not a priority for the city.

**Vision for Police Department:** Steve Lamken, Police Chief stated he met with each employee of the Police Department to find out what was working well and what needed to be improved. A brief overview of the department was presented.

The following was mentioned as the Police Department's community policing commitment:

- A spirit of service to people
- Basic respect and dignity for all people regardless of circumstances
- A partnership with people, organizations and other government units to improve the quality of life in Grand Island
- A proactive, problem solving approach to law enforcement problems

- Empowerment of employees to exercise discretion, decision making, and problem solving in performing their work

Presented were the following examples of the department's ongoing efforts to further community policing:

- School Resource Officer program in partnership with Grand Island Public Schools
- Uniform Patrol Shift teams identifying crime or traffic problems and providing directed patrol efforts towards them
- Community Service Officer program addressing many quality of life issues
- HUD Officer program in partnership with the Housing Authority
- Child Abuse Investigation Team in partnership with the Nebraska Health and Human Services Department
- North/South geographic teams assigning officers to geographic patrol areas
- Traffic Unit providing resource for increased traffic enforcement at targeted problem areas

Discussion was held with regards to the motorcycle units, code enforcement, police presence at neighborhood association meetings, School Resource Officer's, SWAT Team, Bicycle Officers, K-9 Unit, and the Spillman computer system.

The following 2006/2007 goals and objectives were presented:

- Improve the effectiveness of internal communications and operations of the Grand Island Police Department
- Improve the efficiency of the department's report processing system
- Increase current efforts to suppress drug activities in neighborhoods and provide timely response to suspect targets
- Relocate to a new collocated law enforcement center with the Hall County Sheriff's Office in 2007

**Recreation Philosophy:** Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Department Director reported on the following:

Jackrabbit Run Golf Course: Mentioned was the number of rounds decreasing due to other golf courses in the area and the increase in expenses due to replacing golf carts, chemicals, etc. Discussed were the efforts to increase the use of the golf course and management issues with regards to expenses.

Island Oasis Water Park: Reviewed were the attendance, revenue, and expenses related to the water park over the last 5 years. Mentioned was the Aquatic Facilities Report with a children's playground expansion, wet children's play area, and Island Oasis expansion. Presented were possible expansion ideas to the current facility.

Racquet Center: Mentioned was that the Racquet Center was given to the city for back taxes. Scott Norton, Manager of the Racquet Center was present and spoke about the youth soccer program and stated this was a huge opportunity for the city. Reviewed were the possibilities that

could be held at the Racquet Center such as soccer, volleyball, football, tennis, baseball, kids programs, and special events.

Emphasis was put on the quality of life issues each of these provided and that they should be affordable to everyone and not meant to be money makers.

### **LUNCH WITH HALL COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

The following Hall County Board Supervisors were present for the Joint City/County Special Study Session: Jim Eriksen, Bud Jeffries, Bob Rye, Bob Humiston, Scott Arnold, and Marla Conley County Clerk.

**City/County Efficiency Committee Update:** Beth Arnold, Chair of the City/County Efficiency Effectiveness Committee explained the creation of this committee and their purpose. Reported were the activities the committee looked at in how the City and County could be more efficient and effective. The first item looked at was the possibility of the City managing or owning the Hall County Park. It was decided that the County would maintain ownership and maintenance of the Hall County Park with efficiencies in operating hours, staffing, reducing equipment expenses by sharing equipment with other departments. The second project looked at was the possibilities of sharing city employees to meet the needs of the county. This was not allowed by state statutes. Ms. Arnold stated the committee would continue to look at all areas of both city and county government services to see where efficiencies could be realized.

**Public Safety Center Update:** Police Chief Steve Lamken reported on the joint city/county public safety center. Reviewed was the Grand Island/Hall County Enforcement Center site plan.

The following timeline was presented:

- January 2006 – Approval of the Interlocal agreement by the City and County Board
- February 2006 – Completion of construction documents
- March 2006 – Approval of construction documents and advertising of the project for bids
- April 2006 – Opening and awarding of the bid to construct the facility
- May 2006 – Groundbreaking and construction begins
- Winter of 2006/2007 – Outside of facility is closed in allowing interior work through the winter months
- September/October 2007 – Completion of the facility and ribbon cutting
- October/November 2007 – Completion of transfer of operations from current location to new facility

**City/County Emergency Management Program:** Emergency Management Director Lela Lowry reported on the Local Emergency Operations Plan, National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command, Homeland Security Grant Funds, Bio-Detection, Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS), CNRI, amateur radio clubs, Inter Local Law Enforcement Committee, FCC radio licenses, 911 Center, and outdoor warning sirens & generators.

The following Goals for 2006 were presented:

- Complete the expansion of the 911 center

- Install a new 911 telephone system and phase II mapping for the enhanced 911 telephone systems
- Purchased new consoles in the 911 center to meet the technology updates required to run the 911 communications dispatch center
- Purchase updated furniture to allow for flexibility with capability of adapting to an expanded environment
- New remote radios in the Emergency Operations Center
- Up-to-date telephones for decision makers in the EOC
- A multi-functional EOC conversion boardroom table
- Need to new voice and radio logging recorder to ensure uninterrupted recording of dispatch and 911 telephone calls
- Emergency Management would be replacing 5000 gallons of diesel fuel for the generators within the next 12 months to ensure uninterrupted operations of the equipment
- Expect to see a minimum of quarterly emergency management training directed to the city and the county decision makers.

**Jail Update:** Supervisor Jim Erikson reported on the new jail facilities. This would be a steel and concrete building with brick facing on the front. Mr. Erikson stated it would take approximately 18 months to complete the 296 bed facility. Location of the jail facility and the law enforcement facility was discussed.

**Other Issues:** Discussion was had concerning contacting the County Supervisors through the internet. Currently the Supervisors had no joint e-mail through the county.

### **DISCUSSION TOPICS:**

**Charitable Organizations Funding:** Councilmember Walker asked what the history was concerning charitable organizations. Paul Briseno, Assistant to the City Administrator researched back to 1979 where charitable organizations were included in the budgets. Mr. Walker sated concerns about the process of receiving funds from the city. It was suggested that every organization should come before council to present their request.

**Update on 1/2 Cent Sales Tax Projects:** Councilmember Walker spoke about concerns that the 1/2 cent sales tax would not cover the projects ear-marked in Ordinance No. 8910. Discussed was that half of the 1/2 cent sales tax collected was to go to reduce the real property taxes and half was to go to capital projects. Administration will work with Finance to ear-mark exactly where this money is going.

**Heartland Events Center Promotion:** Councilmember Walker asked what the role of the city was in promoting the Heartland Events Center. Gary Greer, City Administration commented on the agreement the city had with the Heartland Events Center for administration and promotion. Also mentioned was an occupation tax being collected by the local hotels.

**Truck Parking:** Councilmember Pielstick spoke about concerns with trucks parking in residential streets. She presented pictures of trucks parked on residential streets and requested more

enforcement. Discussion was held with regards to areas within the city where trucks could be parked.

Reduce Property Taxes 10% More: Mayor Vavricek expected to recommend a reduction in property tax by 10% in the 2006/2007 Budget.

Develop an Understanding of Recreational Philosophy: This item would be brought back to the City Council at a future Study Session.

Design Household Hazardous Waste Facility: Gary Greer, City Administrator commented on money received for the household hazardous waste facility. A contract for Architectural/Engineering Services would be brought to council for approval.

Establish Redevelopment Plan for Five Point's Business District: Chad Nability, Regional Planning Director commented on the CRA retreat and discussions of submitting the Five Point's area as a blight and substandard district. If this was designated blighted and substandard then monies could be used such as Tax Increment Financing to improve the entrance to the northern part of Grand Island similar to the South Locust corridor.

Develop a Plan for Racquet Center: Mayor Vavricek commented on a future study session of this item.

Develop Alternative Fuel Policy: It was mentioned that Resolution #2006-32 was adopted at the January 24, 2006 City Council meeting approving an alternative fuel policy.

Update City Code: City Attorney Doug Walker commented on meeting with the committee regarding the city code update. Weekly meetings would take place with department director's being contacted where affected. Changes would be taken to council on a monthly basis.

Develop User Friendly Initiatives for the City: Mayor commented on continuing to find ways to make city's services more efficient and effective.

Community Appearance Plan: Gary Greer, City Administrator commented on a Community Appearance Plan similar to St. Joseph, Missouri which was included in the council packet.

### **GOAL SETTING FOR 2006-2007:**

Mr. Greer commented on the 2005-2006 Goals and stated each goal had progressed with the exception of the roundabouts. The following were recommended goals for 2006-2007. Mr. Greer briefly explained each proposed goal.

#### Public Safety

1. Continue to Develop a Fire Training Facility
2. Start construction on Fire Station #1
3. Implement Police Vision Plan
4. Start Construction of Police/Sheriff Public Safety Center

Economic Development

5. Assist in Creating and Retaining Quality Jobs through LB 840 Program
6. Assist CRA in Identifying and Creating New Business Redevelopment Projects
7. Participate in Creating a New Vision for Downtown

Infrastructure

8. Support Infrastructure for Sustained Housing/Commercial Development
9. Develop Funding for Southern Sewer Expansion Project
10. Rework and Implement Annexation Policies
11. Complete Railroad Corridor Study and Develop Implementation Plan

Government Efficiency

12. Move to Lower City Tax Rate to 22.5 Cents per \$100
13. Seek Interlocal Partnerships that Eliminate Duplication and Promote Efficiency
14. Reduce Costs by Streamlining City Services
15. Complete a Comprehensive City Code Review and Update
16. Identify and Develop Citizen-Friendly Programs and Policies

Quality of Life

17. Continue Construction of the Library Expansion Project
18. Support Ethnic Diversity Programs through Multi-Cultural Coalition
19. Develop a Children's Play Area at Island Oasis
20. Continue to Support Development of the Heartland Public Shooting Park
21. Evaluate Racquet Center Redevelopment
22. Complete Projects at WWTP Including Odor Reduction Measurers
23. Develop Policy Concerning Recreation Facility Operation Funding

Community

24. Manage/Support/Create Awareness of Community Youth Council
25. Support Start up of the Heartland Events Center
26. Develop a Community Appearance Plan
27. Develop Alternative Fuel Policy for the City
28. Form a Community Partnership to Set a Timeline and Recommendation by Year End on a 50-Meter Swimming Pool
29. Participate in Discussions with the Community Transportation Association Regarding a Public Transportation System

Public Health

30. Design Household Hazardous Waste Facility
31. Continue to Address Environmental Issues
32. Implement Storm Water Plan/Program
33. Re-Establish Septic Tank Inspection Program



Discussion was held concerning the Community Youth Council. Councilmember Pielstick requested more interaction with this group and the council. Roxy Clark, 386 North Pine Street spoke regarding housing issues and the downtown area.

Mayor Vavricek thanked City staff for their participation.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

RaNae Edwards  
City Clerk