



# **City of Grand Island**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2007**

**Council Session**

## **Item G1**

**Approving Minutes of January 20, 2007 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 20, 2007

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 the Heartland Public Shooting Park, 6788 West Husker Highway on January 20, 2007. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on January 16, 2007.

Mayor Margaret Hornady called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following members were present: Councilmember's Pielstick, Walker, Cornelius, Nickerson, Gericke, Brown, Gilbert, Whitesides, Haase, and Meyer. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Gary Greer, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Public Works Director Steve Riehle, City Attorney Dale Shotkoski, 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, Interim Emergency Management Director Larry Smith, and Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity.

#### INTRODUCTION:

Mayor Hornady welcomed the council, directors and public attending the meeting. City Administrator Gary Greer commented on the work preparing for the Council Retreat and thanked the Department Director's and City Clerk.

#### DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Peg Gilbert recommended we combine all the Parks and Recreation items together for discussion.

**Funding Outside Agencies:** Councilmember Meyer asked how we started funding all of the outside agencies. City Administrator Gary Greer commented that they evolved over time. Some were contract for services and others were the priority of a councilmember or Mayor at the time. Councilmember Pielstick commented that the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program needed to have matching funds from the City in order to receive federal grant funds.

Mayor Hornady recommended that if we eliminate any of these agencies from City funding we needed to let them know now so they could find funding in other areas.

Councilmember Pielstick requested that she would like to see Hope Harbor and the Crisis Center put under the Police Department, G.I. Dive and Rescue Team be put under the Fire Department, and the Fishing Derby be put under the Parks and Recreation budget for funding.

Discussion was held on whether we needed to set some criteria, have an accounting of the money spent by these agencies, and whether they serve a function for the city. City Attorney Dale Shotkoski commented on the role of the council in deciding if these agencies should be funded.

Mr. Greer explained that during the budget process these agencies requested monies through an application and submitted a budget for the use of the monies. Also mentioned was that by funding these agencies there was less money to be used for the city departments. Mayor Hornady mentioned most of these agencies were a partnership. Councilmember Whitesides stated it would cost us more if we had to handle these issues without the outside agencies help and would encourage future funding of each. It was not recommended that we add any more agencies to this list.

Discussion was held whether the City was the best source of funding or if there were other ways of supporting these agencies like the United Way. It was suggested we pare down this list if they were not related to city services and fund only those areas we needed to keep due to matching funds, partnerships, etc. It was suggested that a municipal standard be made in reviewing funding for these agencies. A suggestion was made that if an agency gets funding from the United Way or has other avenues for funding then we should not fund that agency.

Mayor Hornady suggested we do not add any more agencies. Mr. Greer stated we should not evaluate these agencies because of needs because they all are very worthwhile organizations. He suggested that under the Planning Department through grant writing we could come up with criteria and set a dollar limit by prioritizing and using the “but for” test.

**Stolley Park Arboretum:** Councilmember Meyer wanted to know what the status was regarding the arboretum. Parks and Recreation Director Steve Paustian explained the history of the arboretum going back to when the city had the zoo. To date everything had been accomplished except the arboretum and ice rink due to the cost of these projects. Mr. Paustian recommended the city develop the infrastructure and have the community come together to help fund the arboretum as was done with the “Kid’s Kingdom”. Also mentioned was that once this was done there would be a need for an additional FTE to keep up the maintenance of the park.

Discussion was held regarding the log cabin, cave, and Stolley House. The Hall County Historical Society was currently using the house for offices and meetings. Building Department Director Craig Lewis stated there was money from donations for the upkeep of the house.

Councilmember Gilbert recommended we needed to have an overall plan for all Parks and Recreation projects including: swimming pools, shooting park, golf course, parks, softball fields, racket club, etc.

**Competitive Swimming Pool:** Parks and Recreation Director Steve Paustian stated the council needed to make the decision of whether or not the city would move forward with a swimming pool. At the current level of funding in the Parks Department for capital projects none of these projects could be accomplished besides the upkeep of them.

**Golf Course Amenities:** Councilmember Meyer commented on the urgency to get the golf course up and running. Mr. Paustian reviewed the golf course operational plan. The following activities were mentioned:

- Return to the market place to hire a new contractor to serve as the Golf Professional
- Develop an incentive based contract eliminating guarantees found in the previous contract
- Through succession, eliminate one maintenance position by October 1, 2007
- Conduct a comprehensive user survey to receive input regarding the golf courses overall operation, suggested improvements and operational modifications

Mr. Paustian explained the current Golf Pro contract was not renewed and the process that was taking place to hire a new Golf Pro.

**Adequate Facilities for Girls Softball and Ownership of Fields:** Councilmember Pielstick commented on the history of the girls softball fields and all the work Bob Sorenson had put into them and recommended we not change the current arrangement.

Councilmember Gericke commented on calls he received from the public due to not enough fields for girls and boys. It was recommended that teams play during the day. Discussion was held regarding the Webb Road fields used for soccer nine months of the year. Mr. Paustian stated the fields were being overused and there needed to be time for them to rest during the summer season. Maintenance issues were mentioned. Scheduling solutions were being worked on by the teams and Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Greer stated the Master Plan would look at the uses of each field and would give a recommendation for future uses. Recreation had changed considerably from the last Master Plan which was created in July 1996.

Mayor Hornady stated we needed to use the facilities we had with less money. By being more efficient and effective could solve some of these problems and save money. Coming up with creative solutions was recommended.

**Smoking Ban:** Councilmember Gilbert commented on the public input she received concerning a smoking ban. Reviewed was the history of what had been done in the past here at the city. She stated she thought we needed to take action on this issue. She recommended that the city take a leadership role on a smoking ban. Mentioned was LB 395 introduced in the state legislature regarding the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act.

Discussion was held regarding the decision of the Council in 2005 that the public needed to petition this issue on the ballot. Several Councilmember's spoke in favor and several spoke against a smoking ban and/or restrictions.

Comments were made regarding the council taking the direction on this issue otherwise the public may take this to a ballot issue in which may not be what the council wants. Discussion was held on how far we go with the ban regarding the work place, public place, etc.

Mr. Greer stated the council needed to decide what they wanted to do, deciding whether to pursue this issue or drop it and not spend any more time on it as it had been discussed for several years. It was recommended that the City Attorney draft ballot language for Council review at an upcoming Study Session.

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

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

**Heartland Public Shooting Park Presentation:** Bill Starkey, Heartland Public Shooting Park (HPSP) Superintendent presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining the Heartland Public Shooting Park and what it had to offer. Tim O'Connor with the HPSP Advisory Board explained the public/private partnership and history of the shooting park. Questions were answered regarding future development of the park. Mr. O'Connor commented on the tremendous number of volunteer hours and work that had been completed.

Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director commented on the day-to-day operations including many volunteer hours.

**City/County Emergency Management:** Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director updated the City Council and County Board regarding the recruitment process for an Emergency Management Director. To date there had been 12 applications. The committee met January 19, 2007 and were in the process of reviewing applications and interviewing candidates.

**City/County Efficiency Committee Update:** Beth Stecker, Chair of the City/County Efficiency Effectiveness Committee explained the creation of this committee and their purpose. Ms. Stecker reported there had been no meetings in 2006. Suggested was a broader scope in what the committee could do. The following areas were presented:

- Purchasing
- Preparedness
- Streets and Roads
- Parks

Mr. Greer asked if the Efficiency Committee could do a complete makeover in revenues to see what areas both the City and County could work together for cost savings. Mentioned was the working relationship between the City and County and positive effects it had.

**Truck Parking in Residential Areas:** Councilmember Cornelius and Walker mentioned current City Code did not allow trucks on residential streets, but could park in residential areas. Inconsistencies were discussed within the code along with penalties. City Attorney Dale Shotkoski commented the City could expand City Code Section 22-141 to include truck parking.

Police Chief Steve Lamken stated he did not want to see us eliminate this code. Increasing the fine would help. Discussion was held concerning semi-truck/trailer and the damage to streets due

to their weight. It was recommended we do not allow trailers on residential streets. Chief Lamken stated they do receive calls and issue parking tickets for tractor/trailer violations which amount to \$10.00. Discussion was held regarding current city code not allowing busses in yards.

Mr. Shotkoski explained the problems with prosecuting these types of violations. It was recommended to change city code to not allow trailers on residential streets and increase the fine. Mr. Shotkoski stated the fines are set by state statutes, but parking tickets are handled administrative. The fine could be increased to \$25.00. It was the consensus of the Council to have the City Attorney change the city code to increase the fine to \$25.00 and not allow trailers on residential streets.

**Parking on Non-Paved Surfaces:** Councilmember Haase wanted to see the City Code changed so no vehicle could park on non-paved surfaces. Discussion was held concerning the number of vehicles, motor homes, trailers, etc parking in back yards and/or side yards. Building Department Craig Lewis commented on Section 36 of the City Code relating to zoning regarding hard surface parking which was in conflict with Section 22. It was the consensus of the Council to address this issue when we do the code revision for this section.

**Auditor Report:** Cancelled.

**Other Items:** Brenda Sutherland, Human Resources Director updated the Council regarding the City Administrator hiring process. Ms. Sutherland stated over the last 20 years the City has had 5 Administrator's. Different processes had been used over the years. Recommended was the following process:

1. Negotiate a contract with a consultant to oversee the recruitment process.
2. Develop a profile of the ideal candidate for the position.
3. Implement an advertising strategy.
4. Recruitment of qualified candidates which includes preliminary screening (Screening may include core competency assessments and written exercises).
5. Background and reference checks.
6. Interview of finalists by Council.
7. Contract with new City Administrator

Estimated turn around time was 90 to 120 days. The approximate budget for consulting fees used for the search of this position would not exceed \$20,000.00. Ms. Sutherland stated the last time took 4 months.

### **GOAL SETTING FOR 2007-2008:**

Mayor Hornady commented that the 2006-2007 Goals were in the packet for council's review. The following were recommended goals for 2007-2008. Mr. Greer briefly explained each of the following proposed goals:

#### Public Safety

1. Seek and secure funding for the development of the Fire Training Facility (Seeking and securing funding was encouraged – long term program which would not be completed this year)
2. Complete construction on Fire Station #1 (Estimated completion date set for first of April)
3. Complete construction of Police/Sheriff Law Enforcement Center (Estimated completion date set for September or October 2007)
4. Secure funding and begin upgrade of Emergency Communications Center (Homeland Security grant funding being looked at)

#### Economic Development

5. Assist in creating and retaining quality jobs through LB 840 program (lend expertise to EDC)
6. Assist CRA in identifying and creating new business redevelopment projects (CRA moving forward with blight and substandard study in the Five Points area)

#### Infrastructure

7. Support infrastructure for sustained housing/commercial development
8. Begin incremental implementation of the Railroad Corridor Study (Railroad looking at putting in quiet zones, implementing Corridor Study a little at a time and working with the Railroad on other issues such as closing crossings, etc.)
9. Prepare a master plan for infrastructure development south of Grand Island

#### Government Efficiency

10. Seek interlocal partnerships that eliminate duplication and promote efficiency (Efficiency Committee)
11. Complete a comprehensive City Code review and update (Ongoing)
12. Develop a budget with no increase in the property tax levy
13. Develop criteria for outside agency funding

#### Quality of Life

14. Complete construction of the Library expansion project (Completion of the new addition set for February 13, 2007 with remodeling old part with completion summer 2007)
15. Construct a children's play area at Island Oasis (Engineering near completion, funding needed for implementation)
16. Continue to support development of the Heartland Public Shooting Park (Ongoing, funding needed)
17. Update Parks and Recreation master plan (Discussed earlier to proceed with plan)
18. Start construction of Aerated Static Pile facility (Design meeting scheduled with targeted completion of construction fall 2007)
19. Implement the Community Appearance Plan (Presentation scheduled for Study Session in spring of 2007)

Public Health

20. Secure funding and begin construction of the Household Hazardous Waste facility (Grant being applied for)
21. Continue to aggressively address environmental issues and advocate for citizens
22. Develop language for smoking restrictions to be considered to be placed on the ballot

Discussion held regarding the budget and tax rate for the upcoming year. Mayor Hornady commented she would like to see no increases in the tax rate for 2007-2008. Requested the Grand Island Independent do an article to educate the public regarding tax statements and what the funds stand for.

Mayor Hornady thanked Council and City staff for their participation.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

RaNae Edwards  
City Clerk