



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Council Session

Item G-3

Approving Minutes of April 7, 2015 City Council Study Session

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

April 7, 2015

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 7, 2015. Notice of the meeting was given in the *Grand Island Independent* on April 1, 2015.

Mayor Jeremy L. Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Mitch Nickerson, Mark Stelk, Jeremy Jones, Chuck Haase, Linna Dee Donaldson, Michelle Fitzke, Vaughn Minton, and Roger Steele. Councilmembers Julie Hehnke and Mike Paulick were absent. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator Marlan Ferguson, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, Interim Finance Director William Clingman, City Attorney Robert Sivick, and Public Works Director John Collins.

Mayor Jensen introduced Community Youth Council members Abigail Richling and Hannah Sugita.

INVOCATION was given by Community Youth Council member Abigail Richling followed by the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

Discussion Regarding Dog Park Development. Parks and Recreation Director Todd McCoy stated that dog parks were popular in the nation and Nebraska. Last year \$50,000 was budgeted to create a dog park. A dog park planning committee had been created and recommended L.E. Ray Lake as a good fit for a dog park. There were bathrooms, parking, electricity and other amenities. A small dog area would include 1/3 acre which would be fenced and an all dog area included 3 acres all on the lake. Amenities could be added such as a dog waste station, double gated fence area, possible showers, trees, benches and picnic tables at a nominal cost. He stated the dog park could be built this summer and open this fall.

Discussion was held regarding ticks. Mr. McCoy stated they could address that with minor cleaning and signage. Questions were answered concerning the startup costs of the park. He stated \$20,000 would be for fencing and the other costs would come from the \$50,000 budgeted for 2014/2015. Ongoing expenses would be the time park employees took to mow and clean up. Five sights had been studied. Liability was mentioned. Mr. McCoy stated from talking to other towns they had not seen a higher risk. City Attorney Robert Sivick stated he didn't see any higher risk at the dog park than at any other park facility. Rules had been created by the dog park planning committee concerning dangerous dogs.

Human Society Executive Director Laurie Dethlof spoke in support.

Presentation of Cemetery Expansion Options Study. Mr. McCoy introduced Matt Carlile and Ben Sandell representing Confluence of Des Moines, Iowa who explained the study.

It was reported that the Grand Island Cemetery was nearing its capacity and a new location was needed. A study was completed to create a master plan to serve as a 50 year development guide to future expansion of the cemetery. After examining a variety of different properties and locations the following four options were given for the cemetery's future needs:

Option 1 – Webb Road Sport Fields – this location is west of the current cemetery and the current maintenance facilities could be used. Minimal earth work would need to be done because the land was relatively flat and the ball fields would be moved to the Veterans Athletic Field Complex. The land was owned by the City and was purchased with funds from the Cemetery Trust Fund for future expansion of the cemetery. There would be very little cost to retrofit the irrigation system.

Challenges for this area were the existing sports fields were heavily used and well maintained and would have to be demolished and moved. Other items mentioned were retrofitting the irrigation system, noise from Highway 281 and the railroad tracks, and no trees. If this area was not used as a cemetery the City would have to reimburse the Cemetery Trust Funds in the amount of \$345,000. Development costs for this area were estimated at \$642,500. This site was limited to future expansion. It was estimated that this location would last 42 years before future expansion was needed.

Option 2 – Westlawn Memorial Cemetery – this location was currently a functioning cemetery down the road from the current Grand Island Cemetery with maintenance facilities. There were approximately 10,000 plots available with possible future expansion.

Challenges were trees and landscaping, burial markers needed to be reset, irrigation issues, interior roads were asphalt or gravel paths, entrance would need to be reworked, and windbreak vegetation along the railroad tracks would need to be addressed. This area was limited to future expansion by the railroad R.O.W. Traffic and dust issues could be a problem with the large manufacturing facility located to the southeast. It was estimated that this location would last 25 years before future expansion was needed. This site would need to be purchased which could cost approximately \$1.4 million along with additional equipment (\$651,000) and two employees.

Option 3 – Undeveloped urban land – this land was located within the Grand Island City limits. Due to its proximity to the industrial development it could be the most expensive per acre. Maintenance equipment, facilities, irrigation, water lines, and landscaping would need to be purchased. It was estimated that this location would last 73 years before future expansion was needed. The land could be purchased and developed for an estimated \$2.4 million.

Option 4 – Rural property – this land would be located outside of the city a couple of miles. It had established windbreaks and mature trees, with some sheds and barns that could be used as maintenance facilities. A new water service may be required, but it does have a small pond on site which might be used to supplement the irrigation supply. It also had plenty of room for

expansion. It was estimated that this location would last 73 years before future expansion was needed. The rural land could be purchased and developed for an estimated cost of \$2.3 million.

Dan Naranjo, 1328 Hagge Avenue spoke of concerns at Westlawn Cemetery regarding trust funds for opening and closing graves and mausoleums.

Bill Dugan, 3826 Stolley Park Road representing Westlawn Cemetery stated the records regarding the trust funds; pre-paid burials, etc. were in order. He stated last year sales were \$219,000; expenses were less than the City Cemetery due to fewer employees. Net income last year was \$47,000.

Dr. Jay Stewart, 3785 West Stolley Park Road stated he owned property next to Westlawn Cemetery and was willing to sell for further expansion of the cemetery.

Paul Wicht, 1708 Jerry Drive spoke of other cemeteries in and around the City that had not been kept up.

Discussion was held regarding the timeline to create any of the four options which would come in the next phase of the project in the Master Plan. Currently the City had 5 employees at the City Cemetery. Two full time employees would be needed to take on the Westlawn Cemetery. Perpetual care/trust fund was discussed.

Cemetery Superintendent Mark Sands answered questions regarding complaints because of dust due to the manufacturing and gravel road north of the cemetery. He answered questions concerning paving the roads in the cemetery. Comments were made concerning phasing the Webb Road option allowing the ball fields to continue for a time. Mr. Carlile and Mr. Sandell commented on the importance of creating a Master Plan.

Presentation on Stolley Park Road Configuration. Public Works Director John Collins reported that there may be Federal funding available for this project.

Matt Reif representing Olsson Associates presented their recommendation. A thorough analysis of this route indicated that the best configuration was a combination of 3, 4 and 5 lanes. A 3 lane section was proposed from St. Joe Trail crossing, east of Brentwood Boulevard, to South Locust Street consisting of one through lane in each direction and a center shared left turn lane. Also recommended was a bicycle lane where the 3 lane section would be created. They proposed a 4 lane section from Webb Road to 1500' east of Webb Road and a 5 lane section 1500' east of Webb Road to the St. Joe Trail.

Deputy Public Works Director Terry Brown commented on new federal funding (90%) for this project with 3 and 4 lane roads along with bike lanes. The project was scheduled to start this year but may have to be delayed to see if we were granted the federal funding.

Paul Wicht, 1708 Jerry Drive spoke in opposition of 3 lanes.

Discussion was held regarding the school traffic areas at Stolley Park Road, Barr Middle School, and the new Starr Elementary School to be built. Mr. Collins stated they had been working with the schools to handle the number of cars expected in these areas. Comments were made regarding pedestrian signals, timing of the project, and bicycle lanes. Mr. Collins stated they were studying intersections to see if they qualified for stop lights. Truck traffic on Stolley Park Road was mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk