

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2016 – 5:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for October 25, 2016 was called to order by Council President Mark Olstad at 5:00 P.M.*

**CALL OF ROLL:**

*On a Call of Roll the following members of the East Grand Forks City Council were present: Mayor Lynn Stauss, Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice-President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Mike Pokrzywinski, Henry Tweten, and Marc DeMers.*

*Nancy Ellis, City Planner; Steve Emery, City Engineer; Ron Galstad, City Attorney; Paul Gorte, Economic Development Director; Mike Hedlund, Police Chief; Charlotte Helgeson, Library Director; Reid Huttunen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent; David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; and Megan Nelson, Executive Assistant.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President Determined a Quorum was present.*

**1. Northland College Update – President Dennis Bona**

President Bona publically thanked the City Council for all of the improvements that have been done by the college and how he hopes they continue to work together. He informed the Council that enrollment had increased, the graduation rate has increased, and the placement rate for students is off the charts. He added how the transfer rate has been excellent and the loan default rate is shrinking. He continued saying they were working on shrinking the opportunity gap as well as working with manufacturers to create new programs that will be starting in the fall of 2017. He added how businesses in the area are and will be sending employees for some of the classes for training as well.

President Bona informed the Council that the college is looking at adding a service learning requirement which would require students 15 to 20 hours of community service before they would be allowed to graduate. He said how it valuable to help teach students to become good productive citizens in a community. He stated he had implemented this at the school he was previously at and it created good community relations. He added he would be happy to answer any questions.

Council President Olstad stated how the community service was a great idea and commended President Bona on what they have been doing at the college. Council member Pokrzywinski commented on the excellent event that was held, that the community college is the best kept secret in East Grand Forks, and they should work changing that. Discussion followed about how tuition and State allocations are

currently capped so the college is very limited on what they can do for growth and adding programs unless enrollment continues to grow. More discussion followed on how the public will be informed on when the public service requirement is put in place.

## **2. Request to Address the Council by Representatives from VFW Post 3817**

Mr. Frank Ringstad stated that he was attending the meeting for the VFW Post 3817. He commented that there had been previous meetings about a proposed apartment building going up next to the VFW, how that would have created even more of a parking issue, and that those plans did not move forward. He stated the VFW felt confident the project had been put on hold so they moved forward with roof repairs and now there is discussion again about another apartment building. He stated how the businesses are concerned. He stated that since 1997 the VFW had contributed \$1,687,707.22 to help different organizations in the City. He continued saying how taking parking away would affect their business tremendously.

Council President Olstad asked Mr. Gorte to review the process that the City is taking regarding the proposed project. Mr. Gorte explained that per the policy that was adopted by the City Council an interested buyer submitted a request which then gets sent to staff who prepares reports, an appraisal is completed, and all of the information is then submitted to the City Council. He stated that a public hearing is held and then the Council would be able to take action. He added it would be approximately a three to four month process before any action would be taken.

Council President Olstad commented that the Council is going through the process, that they want the businesses to be aware about what is going on, and they also want input from the businesses. Council member Pokrzywinski stated that a developer had approached the City, that the City is open for business, and that this is a long way from approval. Mr. Galstad stated the utilities had been marked off because the Water and Light Department needed to see where things were located and where they could possibly be relocated to. Mayor Stauss commented that he would veto this project if it came to a vote. He commented on how the VFW is very involved with hockey, how they have older patrons, and that the developer should find a different area to build the proposed building. Mr. Justin Larocque from Up North Pizza stated they had opened a few months ago, that the building they are currently in sat empty for over three years, and a big reason for that was because of parking. He said parking is a huge issue and people go where it is convenient. He added how they hope they continue to grow, how they are looking at opening another business, but if parking is taken away they won't be. He stated there should be more businesses added down town, not more apartment buildings.

Council President Olstad thanked everyone for coming in and for their comments. Mr. Ringstad asked that the businesses be kept informed about the progress of the request. Mr. Forrester stated he had an estimate of \$245,000 just to move the electric and fiber optics as of right now. Mr. Grabanski stated that is was not a good practice to move the system and added how all of the businesses would have to be redone. Mayor Stauss added that if the developer wants to do the project they should have to pay for everything. Mr. Forrester stated that was all he had at this time.

## **3. Campground Update – Catherine Johnson**

Ms. Catherine Johnson introduced herself to the Council and started her presentation. She reviewed

what currently is available in the campground for sites, how there is a boat landing, trailheads, and a fishing platform. She continued saying they had to evacuate the campground three times this last year due to storms and how the reservation system has changed. She informed the Council most of the guests come from Manitoba, Minnesota, or North Dakota but guests do come from all over the world. She reviewed different programs that are available to the public that are put on in the campground and at this time they have rented approximately 340 more sites than last year. Discussion followed about the fishing pier was done as an Eagle Scout project, how they are trying to build one that is ADA compliant, and how they are looking at adding more lighting and signage on the trails in the campground.

Mayor Stauss stated the City Council will need to decide on how they would like to proceed with the next contract with the DNR and that this will be a major decision. Mr. Murphy stated that the contract he had received was the same as the contract for 2016. Discussion followed on how people are already booking their sites for 2017, how they have their own archery equipment for Archery in the park, and Ms. Johnson mentioned the items that are available for sale in the office.

#### **4. Request to Change a Portion of 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Joan Kroc Parkway – Mayor Stauss**

Mayor Stauss stated that since the flood there was always talk about honoring Joan Kroc because she gave \$2000 to each resident in town. He stated that something should have already been done and that he would like to rename 4<sup>th</sup> Street from the levee to the Kennedy Bridge as Joan Kroc Parkway since it would be located between the two parks. Council member DeMers said he thought that already had been voted on. Council President Olstad asked to have it looked into before the next meeting. Council member Tweten stated that something should have been done before and to get it done.

#### **5. Special Assessment Information – Megan Nelson**

Ms. Nelson stated that there are special assessments that will be brought forward at the next meeting. She explained that some are being done through agreements but there were a few that were for snow removal and delinquent utilities. She added she just wanted to bring this to the Council's attention and answer any questions before the next meeting.

This item will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

#### **6. Golden Shovel Website Request – Paul Gorte**

Mr. Gorte stated that this had been discussed previously and at this time it was only the EDA and Planning Departments that were interested in this. Council member Vetter asked if there would be two websites. Mr. Gorte explained that they would integrate these pages into the existing website. He added how this company specializes in EDA websites and how they would keep the pages up to date. Ms. Ellis stated if it was going to be integrated into the city site she didn't need to be a part of it. Discussion followed about how there would be two fees paid for websites, how this company would give the EDA a tool to better market what is available in the City, and how not marketing the EDA in the past has been a downfall.

Council President Olstad stated that the EDA board all voted in favor of moving forward with Golden Shovel. Mr. Gorte added that any of the departments could still join. Council member Tweten asked

how much it cost. Mr. Gorte stated \$950 per month. Discussion followed about how this is a platform for clients, that all receive updates, and that they insert the information into the web pages. Mr. Gorte told the Council to look at examples of their clients to get an example of what they offer. More discussion followed about how the City may want to look into branding and marketing before making a change to a different website, that the current EDA pages are inadequate, and that if a contract is signed only a 30 day notice needs to be given to terminate.

## **7. Consideration for Agency Agreement for Advance Warning Signs & Bike Racks**

Ms. Nelson apologized to the Council for not including this item in the packet. She stated that is was for advance warning signs and bike racks and that MNDOT would be acting as the City's fiscal agent. She added how the estimated cost was \$13,100 and the City was going to receive 80% or up to \$10,480 for this. Ms. Ellis explained to the Council that this grant had been applied for three years earlier, that it was going to be two separate amounts, but with the lowest bid coming in at \$42,000 it was decided to keep it as one as well as it would be best for the City to do the in-kind work and because it wasn't cost effective to bid it out.

This item will be referred to a City Council Meeting for action.

## **8. Request for TAP and HSIP Funding – Steve Emery**

Mr. Emery reminded the Council of the discussion from October 11<sup>th</sup> regarding the TAP program. He reminded the Council again that the funding was an 80/20 split, that it did not cover any of the engineering costs, and the minimum cost of the project was \$50,000. He commented they had discussed both bike lanes on Bygland Road and the extension of the path off of the Kennedy Bridge. Discussion followed about how the estimated costs for painting the bike lanes was \$40,000, grinding the lines in was a more expensive option, and plans were completed for both. Council member DeMers commented how there may be a good chance the TAP committee will find another reason not to fund the bike lane project. Discussion followed about the bike lane project and if it would work with round-a-bouts being put in.

Council member DeMers suggested submitting a sidewalk project to connect sidewalks out by South Point Elementary school. Discussion followed about the positives and negatives about the project, how there wouldn't be time to hold a public hearing before submitting the application, and that the project would qualify for TAP funds. Ms. Ellis stated that MNDOT would be participating with the project of extending the trail that will be coming off of the Kennedy Bridge. She added the bike lanes could be painted which would not qualify or the City could commit to the grinding project. Discussion followed about painting the bike lanes to get the public use to them before grinding them in and how the Council would like to move forward with a sidewalk project coming down 17<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, on the south side of 13<sup>th</sup> Street SE, and along 20<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. Council President Olstad stated they would move forward with the sidewalk project for TAP funding and the HAWK system for HSIP funding.

## **OTHER:**

Council member DeMers asked to get the information out about private rinks to residents.

**ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TWETEN, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER VETTER, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 25, 2016 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 7:13 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: DeMers, Vetter, Pokrzywinski, Tweten, and Olstad.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

*Absent: Buckalew and Grassel.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer