

# WEEKLY MEMO

**Date:** April 15, 2011

**To:** Mayor Lynn Stauss, Council President Craig Buckalew, Vice President Wayne Gregoire, Council Members Marc Demers, Ron Vonasek, Henry Tweten, Greg Leigh, and Mike Pokrzywinski.

**From:** Scott Huizenga

**RE:** Weekly Update

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

*April 19, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers*

*April 26, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room*

*May 3, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Council Meeting – Council Chambers*

*May 10, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Work Session – Training Room*

*May 11, 2011 – 6:00 pm – Tri-Cities Meeting – Mamma Maria's*

## **WEEKLY UPDATE:**

### **Campground Update**

Mayor Stauss and I traveled to St. Paul on Tuesday to visit legislators and officials from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the Red River State Recreational Area (RRSRA). By Wednesday morning, we left with a tentative agreement that would guarantee a new five-year joint powers agreement for operation of the campground with the following provisions.

1. The area will remain a state-designated recreational area.
2. The City will receive *all* camping revenues and daily pass revenues generated by the campground.
3. The City will reimburse DNR for administrative expenses related to the state park reservation system.

This agreement would generate at least \$50,000-\$60,000 in new revenue to the City while guaranteeing its status as a state recreation area for at least five more years. We are very grateful to the various legislators and staff who helped to craft this arrangement including Representative Deb Kiel, Representative Denny McNamara, Senator Leroy Stumpf, Senator Rod Skoe, and Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen. We should finalize the language within the next 4-5 weeks. A copy of the letter of agreement from DNR Commission Tom Landwehr is attached.

### **New Newsletter**

The latest edition of the city newsletter, *Release from the East*, is currently available on the City web site.

### **Legislative Update**

The legislature will be in recess next week for its traditional Easter/Passover break. There has not been much recent movement on the omnibus budget bills. Most of the conference

committees will meet after the break. The House passed HF57 that would ban synthetic cannabinoids such as “K2” or “Spice.” The bills is currently awaiting second reading in the Senate.

### **Flood update**

The river reached its peak Thursday afternoon. Meanwhile, we await to see what impact, if any, the recent precipitation will have on the river’s recession. The City will continue to use the existing action levels to guide the reopening of flood closures. At the current rate, the Louis Murray bridge would remain closed until the middle of next week. As always, the bridges will be inspected before they are opened to traffic. We remain cognizant of the community’s desire to allow traffic on the bridges. Nonetheless, safety is always the first priority. Meanwhile, the City and some helpful citizens have added to the flood photo collection on the City’s official flood Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/EGFFlood](http://www.facebook.com/EGFFlood).

### **NW Street Study**

City Planner Nancy Ellis, City Engineer Brad Bail, and I held consultant interviews on Monday to select a design consultant for the northwest corridor study. The study is part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)’s biannual work plan. The study’s primary mission is to analyze the impacts of a potential intersection expansion at 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW and Highway 2. The study will also study the intersections at River Road NW/12<sup>th</sup> Street NW/17<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and at Hwy 2/220. There will be several meetings throughout the spring and summer with Council and the public. The final recommendation will be released in December. The committee recommended Minneapolis-based Alliant Engineering for the study. The firm has conducted several recent studies in the area including Grand Forks, Fargo, and Thief River Falls.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

The consent agenda includes the Final Plat of Industrial Park First Resubdivision. The Council heard about the proposed resubdivision in January; and the proposal has the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The consent agenda also approves the final plans for the Transportation Enhancement for sidewalks and trails along DeMers Avenue extending to Highway 220 north. Finally, the consent agenda includes a gambling permit, a special event permit, and a new farm lease agreement for city-owned property with the current lessee. The lease agreement includes an increase in the per acre reimbursement to the City.

3. The Council will consider awarding the bid for the Safe Routes to School Phase II project. The City rejected bids on this project last fall. The proposed low bid is almost \$50,000 lower than last fall.

10. The City Council will recognize Jim Neil, Parks Foreman, upon his pending retirement for 36 years of service to the City.

11. The proposed Memorandum of Understanding with LELS reduces the compensatory time that Police Department Employees can accumulate per year. Previously, the department policy allowed up to 100 hours of comp time accumulation.

12. The proposed quotation for annual sewer cleaning would increase the City’s annual cleaning cycle from every five years to every three years per the recommendation of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust.

# Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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Office of the Commissioner

651-259-5555



April 13, 2011

Honorable Representative Debra Kiel  
423 State Office Building  
100 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
St Paul, MN 55155

Mayor Lynn Stauss  
City of East Grand Forks  
600 DeMers Avenue  
East Grand Forks, MN 56721

Honorable Senator LeRoy Stumpf  
145 State Office Building  
100 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Kiel, Senator Stumpf, and Mayor Stauss:

First of all, I would like to thank Mayor Stauss for his work on the Red River State Recreation Area (RRSRA). The city of East Grand Forks is a valued partner, and the mayor's assistance in operating the RRSRA over the years is very much appreciated.

As the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has indicated in previous correspondence, the Department's first preference is to convey the state-owned interests within the RRSRA to the city of East Grand Forks and have the city own and operate the entire recreation area and retain all revenues from its operation, minus the costs associated with the reservation system and promotions.

The Department understands that this is not the city's preference at this time, and I am therefore willing to direct my staff to work with the City to establish a new Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) for the five-year period starting in 2012 rather than pursuing a legislative solution. With significant General Fund realities looming, the DNR would like to initiate new JPA discussions as soon as possible. The new JPA would supersede the existing JPA, and therefore make amendment to the existing JPA unnecessary. In the new JPA, the Department will agree to: 1) maintain the RRSRA as a state recreation area; 2) allow the city to retain revenues from the operation and management of the RRSRA; and 3) allow for a reimbursement process for DNR to recoup its administrative and technical expenses. Determination of what constitutes revenue and administrative and technical expenses, of course, will require more detailed discussion by the parties.

Please feel free to contact Assistant Commissioner Erika Rivers if you have further questions or concerns. We, at the DNR, look forward to working with Mayor Stauss and the city to negotiate a new JPA and continue operations at RRSRA under this new agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Landwehr".

Tom Landwehr  
Commissioner

Cc: J.D. Burton  
Erika Rivers  
Courtland Nelson

