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(Neb.)-Chadron City Council Votes To Proceed With Various City Projects



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 03/05/2013 10:22 AM

Photo: Finance officer Lois Chisek shares a financial perspective as members of the Chadron city council discuss the approval of projects at their meeting Monday night. (Photo by KCSR-Roxie Graham-Marski)

(CHADRON)-There's lots of potential growth taking place in and around the city of Chadron. The city council's agenda Monday night was full of items that were brought before the council requesting the approval of preliminary plats, renovation and reconstruction at the Dawes County Fairgrounds and Maurice Horse baseball field, and easements for sewer lines and lift stations, among other things.

Three requests were presented before the council seeking the use of LB 840 Community Development Funds, which is currently funded from the city's ½ cent sales tax. The first appeal came from the Dawes County Fair Board requesting assistance in renovating a portion of the rodeo arena, from the bucking chutes north, and reconstructing the walkway and accessibility ramp to the grandstand area. The total amount requested for the project was \$85,564.10, with \$64,390.50 being proposed for the arena and \$21,173.60 being proposed for helping make the walkway more ADA accessible.

The second and third requests came from Chadron Youth Baseball Leagues, Inc., and City of Chadron Parks Department asking for assistance in finalizing the renovation and purchase of equipment at Maurice Horse Field as well as replacing two dugouts. The renovation project will receive \$21,777.00 and will include a field drag, a new pitch roof on the old bathrooms, a new sound system, a wind screen, and two portable bleachers with concrete pads that are moveable and thus can be used elsewhere as needed, such as when Chadron hosts tournaments or Babe Ruth games. The dugout project will receive \$19,840.81 in aid and will help replace the current dugouts and drinking fountains. Parks superintendent Scott Schremmer says the new dugouts will provide more seating for players and coaches and will also make it safer for the young people, especially when accessing the drinking fountains. He said students from the Job Corps will help lay block, which will help save money on the project. The council voted 5-0 in favor of all three projects.

In other news, the council approved the preliminary plat for the property formerly occupied by the

Bomgaard's store in the 1200 block of West Sixth Street. The owner is wishing to subdivide the land into two parcels. The plan is that Morford's Decorating will purchase the existing structure and use it as a carpet store. On the west parcel, a new building will be erected and will be occupied by a Hibbett sporting goods store. City engineer Dave Coe spoke in favor of the plat design, saying it looks to be "a nice division." He did say, however, that it will cost some substantial money for a new sewer line that will need to be extended and tied in across the street. The owner will be responsible for the installation and will give rights to the city once complete.

The council also discussed approving right-of-way easements as well as plans and specifications and authorizing notice to bidders for a sanitary sewer extension slated for the East Niobrara Avenue addition. The city, which owns the property, has had to start paying taxes on it and has been trying to get it ready for sale. In previous discussion, the council had mostly agreed that adding a sanitary sewer system would increase the asking price of the property and would most likely increase its desirability as well.

At the meeting Monday night, city zoning/building official Janet Johnson reminded the council that the city has approximately \$160,000 of TIF grant money available to use exclusively on new infrastructure that could be used to cover the cost of the sewer installation.

Council member John Gamby expressed concerns about putting money into "a sewer that is going nowhere," as there are no specific buildings in need of sewer at this time along the route. He said he would prefer to have the property auctioned off and let contractors put in the sewer at their expense at a later date.

Johnson explained that about five years ago, the city looked at the area and decided that a sewer lift station would service a large area eventually. Currently everything in the area is fed into a sewer lagoon system, and she said that may not always be viable. She said the city is looking to protect their interests and are looking further down the road.

Mayor Karin Fischer said installing the sewer system might provide an incentive for companies that might want to relocate to the area. She said she liked the idea of having a uniform sewer system already installed as the property is developed as opposed to all 10 future landowners doing what they want later on down the road and then the city trying to clean things up later.

The council voted in favor of proceeding with the plans, specifications, and notice for bidders 3-1 with vice mayor Levi Grant abstaining and Gamby opposing. The council took no action on the right-of-way easement with landowners Robert and Joyce Hardy until another paragraph can be added that fully explains and recognizes the city's agreement with them.

The council also voted 4-1, with Grant the opposing vote, in favor of approving plans, specifications, and authorization of notice to bidders for a sanitary sewer extension from Linden Street to Stockade Road. They also voted the same in favor of proceeding with right-of-way easements for the installation of a lift station and sewer line across the property of Scott and Malena Richardson and LeRoy and Linda Pettie. Public works director Milo Rust says the current sewer system is leaking and is in need of repair. He also explained that he has spoken with the property owners about crossing their property and everyone is in agreement with the current plan.

(Questions? Comments? E-mail roxie@chadrad.com.)

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