

KINDRED CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING WITH PARK BOARD

04-14-2021 at 6:30 pm

Kindred City Hall

Present: Mayor DuBord, CMs Amerman, Stoddard and Peraza. Park Board Members Kimbra Amerman, Bekki DuBord, Lydia Ronningen, Rob Sahr, Craig Olson.

Absent: CM Spelhaug.

Also present were PWS Rich Schock, City Auditor Tabitha Arnaud, PB Director Mike Brown, PB Accountant Emily Teberg, and Anthony Sommerfeld of Moore Engineering.

Mayor DuBord called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

1. Downtown Vision Plan

Anthony Sommerfeld presented the Downtown Vision Plan (DVP). This study began with the consideration of new sidewalks in the downtown area, which directed attention to the underground infrastructure needs and street improvements as well. The goal is to create a vision of what the future of the downtown area could look like. The preliminary vision plan is a collaboration of the committee considering pedestrian safety but widening sidewalks, shortening crosswalks by adding "bump outs"; adding trees and streetlights; discussing a mix of parallel and angled parking; "Parklets" could be utilized by downtown businesses to provide outside seating for patrons; creating a community green space or "plaza" that could be used for events or leisure, and elimination of 5th Ave S could increase that space. Anthony noted that DVP would likely be completed in phases; the likely first item to complete would be creating the plaza area as it is the easiest and least expensive. Discussion on parking options, pros/cons of parallel, lane/sidewalk widths, use and care of the plaza space. Bekki DuBord said she really liked the open greenspace in the plaza. Dave Amerman noted that the vacant city lot on Elm St west of 5th Ave S is not buildable due to the railroad easement. Lydia Ronningen shared that a gazebo or shelter may be more multi-use friendly than a stage. Rich Schock said he and Mike Brown had discussed a blow-up theater screen to host movie nights. Other uses would be farmer's markets and holiday events. Rich also discussed the specific areas included in the DVP to ensure delivery trucks could still navigate to downtown properties. Discussed a tree line being planted on the West side of the plaza property to add a filter between the railroad tracks and elevator; adding a "berm" to increase overall height, possibly utilizing some of the excavated fill from the new lagoon site?

The next step will be a meeting with downtown property owners next week to get their feedback. A pop-up demonstration, including painting the bump outs and crosswalks on the roads, would be set up during Kindred Days this summer. Vision boards and possible "virtual" views could be set up around downtown as well. This will help the community see the vision plan and get a "feel" for how it could look in the future. Having these plans in place opens up the option to apply for grant and funding opportunities as they are made available, much like the lagoon project plans provided the large funding received from the USACE and state. Another of the next steps will also be televising and reviewing the underground infrastructure: water and sewer services, storm water drainage.

Anthony asked the Park Board if they felt this plan would be something that they would support and collaborate with the City on care and use of the area. The size of the plaza space is comparable to the current size of City Park, about ½ acre if the 5th Ave S are is vacated. Discussed the property ownership and potential uses of the building at the SE corner of Elm and 5th. ***Kimbra Amerman moved to support the Downtown Vision Plan, Bekki DuBord seconded; On a roll call vote all PB members voted yes. Motion passed.***

2. Pool Pre-Season Review

Mike Brown reviewed the current numbers for pre-registered swimming passes and swimming lessons, noting that he expects a big spike the first week of summer. He provided comparisons to the total quantities for 2019, as 2020 was an "abnormal" year and numbers were down. With COVID restrictions being lifted throughout our area, confidence in returning to "normal" operations is increasing. Hoping to open the pool on May 28th, weather pending. Planning a mock rescue with the Kindred Ambulance Service to run through the procedures with staff. Currently have 3 lifeguards hired, looking for 2-3 more. Discussed wages/benefits offered and comparison to surrounding communities. Also discussed the annual pool sub-lease agreement between the City and the Park Board for operations of the pool. With no

noted changes needed to the document from previous years, all City Council and Park Board members agreed both parties could sign the agreement for the 2021 season.

3. Future Planning/Projects

- Beautification: Mike Brown shared that Linda Cose has offered to help with flowers this season. Discussed the budget; City offered the same \$2500 budget as the 2020 season.
- Tree Grant: Discussed an application for a Community Forest Grant for a tree project that would be used to replace trees at City Park. Estimated project cost is \$2000, grant would cover \$1500. Also discussed Council and PB volunteers at a planting ceremony if grant is awarded.

**MOTION, passed – To approve \$500 contribution to tree grant if awarded;
Peraza moved, Stoddard seconded. RCV; Motion carried unanimously.**

Discussed Tree City USA program, tree ordinances, and need to formalize the City Tree Board. This could add points to grant applications and increase grant funding. Craig Olson volunteered to help with this board. Discussed potentially removing/replacing additional trees in the park.

- City Park Sign: Lydia Ronningen shared a quote of about \$2900 from Hebron Brick to rehabilitate the City Park sign planter/base that is located by the East side walk, just north of the Memorial Building. The base was constructed with landscaping blocks by FFA many years ago and is deteriorating causing the blocks to fall. Requested quote from Swenson's Masonry as well, but no contact back as of the meeting. Discussion: also working on two additional "welcome" signs to replace the current Lion's signs by the cemetery and baseball field; moving the City Park sign to the corner of Elm St and Hwy 15; repairing, replacing, or removing the park base all together. Rich and Mike will work together to remove the base/planter and look at installing new posts for the City Park sign.
- City Park Basketball Court: The basketball court has seen a great increase in use with the installment of new hoops last season, Lydia shared she has been researching different options to resurface the basketball court. The lowest quote was about \$15K, higher quotes came in between \$30K-\$40K. The \$15K quote is for a FlexCourt outdoor system that has an interlocking design that needs to be placed on leveled asphalt or concrete. It is available in a number of colors, and can be moved and reused in a different location if needed. There is approximately 7400 sq ft of court space. Could consider only resurfacing the north half of the court, if there is still potential to expand/reconstruct the Memorial Building. Have already begun requesting community member and business support for potential sponsorship of the project. Also researching grant options, one of which is with Cass County Electric Coop that offers a quarterly grant. Council favored seeking grant funding and continuing research, noting that budgeting for this large of an investment would be needed.

4. Park Board Director/City Employment

Kimbra Amerman shared that the Park Board has been considering hiring Director Mike Brown on as a full-time year-round employee instead of only seasonal. She shared that the Park Board cannot afford FT wages and approached City Council with an option to help with a portion of Mike's wages and sharing his employee hours. His primary hours for PB would be summer months (May-October), primary City hours would be winter months (November-April). Kimbra shared the PB would like to offer Mike a FT position by providing wages/benefits up to \$45K/year, asking the City to pay \$15K/year. Kimbra, Mike, Jason, Ozzie, Rich and Tabitha all met previously to discuss job duties and funding. Job duties for the City would include winter snow maintenance as needed, City Park maintenance, additional groundskeeping where needed, help Community Club with planning and organizing of annual Kindred Days event, potentially helping with Forestry/Tree Board and other miscellaneous items. PB shared they have rearranged some of their funds within the 2021 budget (milage, professional fees, tball/softball coaching) and have determined an unutilized levy they are able to configure into their 2022 budget, in an effort to help fund the additional wages for Mike's FT status. On the City finance side, Tabitha shared the \$15K/year could come from the street fund for snow removal, and the general fund noting there has been portion of funds unused for the Deputy Auditor position since the position has only been part-time but we have budgeted for full-time. Using some of the State Aid or Sales Tax Revenue could be an option as well. Tabitha also confirmed that Mike would be considered a City employee and can take advantage of the NDPERS retirement program. Discussion on the potential future growth of the community and additional

developments/parks. PB members shared they are open to the additional park spaces so long as the option to consider budgeting of equipment and maintenance is feasible ahead of the prior year's budget deadlines. Jason shared that getting and keeping employees like Mike, as well as Rich and Tabitha, is important for our community as the efforts they provide are a great asset.

MOTION – To approve budget up to \$15,000 per year for shared full-time employment of Mike Brown as Park Board Director;

Amerman moved, Peraza seconded.

Additional discussion: Goal is for \$55K per year take home, benefits would include PTO hours, retirement pay in of 8.26% employer paid (estimate \$4730). Emily asked about payroll liabilities and whether the City or PB would be paying those expenses, as well as who would process Mike's payroll (will it all go through the City or the PB and the other entity "reimburses" the other for the appropriate portion of the annual expenses). The details of payroll and budgeting across the two entities will be coordinated by Emily and Tabitha. Council discussed increasing the maximum to help cover the benefits and payroll liabilities if needed.

REVISED MOTION – To approve budget up to \$20,000 per year for shared full-time employment of Mike Brown as Park Board Director;

MOTION PASSED – RCV; Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Jason DuBord, Mayor

Attest: _____
Tabitha Arnaud, City Auditor

Date approved: _____