

**APPROVED MINUTES  
OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND FORKS  
TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2018 – FOLLOWING THE SPECIAL SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

*The Work Session of the East Grand Forks City Council for Tuesday, May 22, 2018 was called to order by Council President Olstad at 5:01 PM.*

**CALL OF ROLL:**

*On a Call of Roll the following members of the East Grand Forks City Council were present: Mayor Steve Gander, Council President Mark Olstad, Council Vice President Chad Grassel, Council Members Clarence Vetter, Tim Riopelle, 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; Megan Nelson, City Clerk; Jeff Olson, Distribution Superintendent; Jason Stordahl, Public Works Director; and Luke Welle, City Intern.*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:**

*The Council President determined a quorum was present.*

**1. Presentation on Survey Results – Paul Gorte & AE2S**

Mr. Gorte said the results were available from the survey which had already been shared with the EDA Board and Ms. Taylor Corbett from AE2S was going to give a brief presentation on the findings. Ms. Corbett told the Council to ask any questions they had while she was reviewing the information from the hand out. She explained it was decided to conduct a survey for this project to engage the community, they wanted an understanding on the quality of life issues, and to know what the residents are proud of in the community. She said they also wanted to have an understanding of what the housing needs were to help form the plan for the EDA. She continued saying there were around 200 responses, it was close to a 50/50 split of female and male respondents, and the main demographic responding was between the ages of 26 to 65 which was the target demographic.

Ms. Corbett informed the Council that a large majority of those responding to the survey grew up here, 50% were employed in Grand Forks, and 30% were employed in East Grand Forks. She said most were not looking at building a new home, around 78% had purchased their home, and a main reason why most lived in the community was because they either grew up here or they had family connections here. She added a positive note was how this was the most cost effective city to live in. She reviewed how if people are not staying in their current home it is because they grew out of it, are needing to downsize, and how more starter homes are needed. She commented those surveyed said more town homes are needed. She said some people really took their time when answering the open-ended questions based on the answers they gave. She stated how the greatest challenge for homeowners is affordability and that taxes are an issue when someone is moving here. Ms. Corbett continued saying the greatest asset is that this is a

family-friendly community with a small town feel. She added another big asset are the schools, when they rated amenities all options received a three or higher with medical receiving the lowest number. She went over the word clouds and explained how the more often a word was used the larger the word was and how only one person used the term good old boys club but it was repeated many times by the same person so it was based on that one person's use of the phrase.

Ms. Corbett told the Council this information helps with the plan for the EDA because it helps them understand what is important to the homeowners, it was stated how Minnesota has the best regional incentive for veterans, most loved living in Minnesota, and had a strong desire to raise kids here. She stated how most people get information from social media, many were getting information from Facebook which is why a Facebook page had been started for the EDA, and the city website was ranked the lowest when trying to find information because it is hard to find. She added how the different age groups use different sources for finding information with the older demographic using the newspaper. She said this will help with branding and help develop an authentic message. Mr. Gorte said there were 201 responses, 200 were positive and only one that was negative. Council President Olstad thanked them for the information.

## **2. Discussion on Annual Report from Red River R/C Flyers – Tom Stennes**

Mr. Stennes said part of the agreement required them to give an annual report. He stated they have done well in the current location, there is a good group of people using the area, and they are continuing to grow. He said based on the report that was just given they are hoping to add another reason for people to want to live in the community. He commented the little things can make a difference so they should continue to strive to do the little things well so people will want to continue to live here. He stated how this activity can have an economic impact, how there could be an opportunity to work with the base or drone companies, and that this industry is still growing.

Mr. Stennes told the Council they had found a site that would be viable for the group which can really range in ages because they recently had a training session with an 11 year old which was tied to a STEM project. He said they would like to move to this new space which would be adequate for them, it would allow for more development of the site itself, and how they would like to host a regional event. He commented they are co-hosting an event down by the Twin Cities and there are people coming in from five states and Canada to participate in the event. He added how a new field would allow for them to host events in this area and how at this time they haven't asked for any money but are asking to see if the City does see a benefit if there is something that could be done in-kind. He stated they are looking for a commitment from the City for the use of the new location.

Council member DeMers asked if there were any required hours when having certain licenses. Discussion followed about how the license needs to be renewed every two years but currently there is no requirement for flight hours and how there this is expanding in the military, in the private sector, and even expanding use by fire departments using infrared to determine where hot spots are. More discussion followed about the possibility of a five year agreement with a five year renewal option because of the time and money that would need to be spent setting up the property. Mayor Gander asked if there was any need for this property by any of the departments. Chief Hedlund said training space was needed but the property would be big enough for both activities. Mr. Stennes stressed again how beneficial this space would be since it is wide open, there were no obstructions, and they are trying to work with the Park and Recreation Department. He stated how people will need to following the rules, they want people to fly legally, and this space is far enough away from the eagle nest so that shouldn't be an issue.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

### **3. Discussion on Updated Paving Estimates – Megan Nelson**

Ms. Nelson stated there was updated estimates for concrete and asphalt paving of the lot next to the VFW building. She said the information about crushed granite was not available but Mr. Emery was present and handing out an estimate on millings. Mr. Emery said the idea to consider bituminous millings is because it could create a durable surface that was more weather resistant. He reviewed the estimate for millings and said it may be hard to stripe so bumpers may need to be used. Ms. Ellis stated the City requires parking lots to be durable, dustless, striped, and have drainage. She said the City will need to meet these standards as well. Mr. Emery said the millings would have drainage and would be approximately four inches thick but it couldn't be stripped. Council Vice-President Grassel asked what the difference is between now and changing the parking lot surface. Ms. Ellis said it was already existing and if changed it would need to meet current standards. Discussion followed about how millings would make for a smoother surface, the estimate for millings did include stripping, and parking spots would need to be identified.

Mayor Gander asked if there was any place in the city where millings have been used. Mr. Emery said they have been used as a base on projects. Discussion followed about what funds were available to use on a project like this and how staff would need to look to see what was available in TIF funds as well as CDBG funds. Council member DeMers asked for clarification on the different funds, what has been going in, what has been taken out, and how much was used for the development of the building across the street. Mr. Gorte said he knew that there were several hundred thousand available in TIF dollars because of a report that is filed each year but both funds are decertified and not receiving any more revenue. Ms. Ellis said it was much more defined on what TIF dollars can be used on, infrastructure is something they can be used on, and this would be a good opportunity to utilize those funds. Council member DeMers asked for the history of each fund. Mayor Gander commented on durability and how concrete would last over 25 years, asphalt may need some maintenance after about 10 years, and asked if anyone knew what kind of maintenance would need to be done with millings. Mr. Emery said there may be maintenance each year and added how there are no utilities directly under this parking lot.

This item will be brought back to a future work session.

### **4. Request to Plant Trees – Keith Mykleseth/Jeff Olson**

Mr. Olson stated they have been looking into tree development to help with the spillway and reduce the amount of sediment that ends up in the ditch on the north side of town. He explained they were still working with Polk County on numbers but are asking for approval from the Council so they can continue moving forward with this project. He said it was a 75/25 in kind split and they would be in charge of maintenance after the trees had been planted. Council President Olstad asked if the trees were moved. Mr. Olson said they were moved from the south side of the ditch to the north side of the ditch to help reduce the sediment that would blow into the ditch. Council member Tweten commented how this project will help sell lots, help with the snow drifting, and improve aesthetics to the overall area. Discussion followed about how the neighboring property owner is on board with this project and this is evidence of a good partnership between the City and the Water and Light Department. Council member DeMers said he applauded the work that was being done, more trees are needed, and encouraged everyone to look for bigger projects. He commented how the City might be able to start a nursery once the ponds are

decommissioned and that use of the area would be beneficial. Council member Riopelle said his neighborhood is excited about this project.

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

#### **5. Use of BCEZ Tax Credits to Benefit Smaller Businesses – Paul Gorte**

Mr. Gorte explained when smaller businesses in Grand Forks make improvements the city has a program where they are given a check. He said East Grand Forks does not have that program but there are tax credits. He stated by trying to stretch out tax credit dollars he worked with the EDA Board and a lawyer from Kennedy and Graven to develop a policy that would allow for a one-time tax credit for improvements to the business and how the policy has the criteria that needs to be met to receive this tax credit which could be offered to smaller businesses. There were no questions.

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

#### **ADJOURN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER RIOPELLE, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GRASSEL, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 22, 2018 WORK SESSION OF THE EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA CITY COUNCIL AT 5:50 P.M.**

*Voting Aye: Olstad, Grassel, DeMers, Vetter, Riopelle, and Tweten.*

*Voting Nay: None.*

*Absent: Pokrzywinski.*

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David Murphy, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer