CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – 03/10/03

The City Council of Pelican Rapids met in regular session at 5:30 p.m., Monday, 03-10-03, in Council Chambers, City Hall, 315 N. Broadway. Mayor Wayne Runningen, Council Members Ben Woessner, John Waller, III, Denise Magnusson and Dave Gottenborg were present. No one was absent.

Administrative Assistant Richard A. Jenson, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert, Street and Parks Superintendent Vern Benson, Utilities Superintendent Brent Frazier, Joan Ellison, Cooper Stewart, Paul Johnson, Lyle Nesvold, Nancy Muchow, Rick Gail of the Pelican Rapids Press, Rick West of Otter Tail County, Gary Nansen and Chris Thoreson of Larson-Peterson & Associates were also present.

Meeting called to order by Mayor Runningen.

Engineer Gary Nansen reviewed the Street and Utility Improvements and Bridge Replacement on Mill Ave. and 1st St. NW. Project Status, Design Considerations, Review Requirements and Project Funding are attached. $889,000 is total estimated cost of project. Local costs to the City are approximately $82,000 for Sanitary Sewer and Water Main; $28,000 for Street Lighting on 1st St. NW; $6,000 for City Share of Bridge railing and approximately $5,000 for the City Share of Storm Sewer. Administrative Assistant Richard A. Jenson requested consideration of allowing traffic to use the alley bridge during construction for access to Library, Press Office, Senior Center, and deliveries for The Rapids, Strand Ace Hardware and Johnson Furniture.

Otter Tail County Engineer Rick West said the design practices today encourage lower bridge abutments. This requires the river to be moved south for proper slopes.

County has obtained $225,000 in federal funds to accomplish this project. The project has been moved up to 2003 because the State Department of Transportation intends to improve Hwy. 59 in 2004.

Mayor Runningen and Council Member Magnusson left meeting at 6:00 p.m. for another meeting. They will return as soon as possible.

Acting Mayor Gottenborg assumed the chair. Pursuant to public notice and published notice thereof a public hearing was conducted at 6:00 p.m. to receive citizen input concerning the submission of a grant application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The purpose of this grant application is to request funding that would assist in the development of a public park, playground and recreational facility to be located on 3rd Ave. NE between 1st and 2nd St. NE.

Economic Developer Skip Carpenter provided information on the Project Scope and the type of activities involved for the Implementation Schedule. Estimated cost for the project activities is $126,435. Public information handout reviewed at hearing is attached to these minutes.

No members of the public present commented on this project.

Motion by Woessner, seconded by Waller to close the hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Woessner to introduce the Local Government Resolution. (This resolution is part of permanent public record in the city clerk's office.) Motion passed unanimously and resolution was declared duly adopted.

Returning to discussion of the proposed bridge project, Cooper Stewart said his questions and comments are not intended as criticism of the engineering firm or the county engineering. He distributed pictures of the changes. He is concerned about the wider bridge permitting traffic to move faster. He is concerned about the loss of hundred plus year old trees that will be removed. He has observed wildlife along the river. They will be lost due to the loss of habitat. The new library addition has been planned to take advantage of the river view. Several businesses have decks facing the river. He says for transportation purposes only this bridge would be fine.

Paul Johnson said the plans for riprap and removing the mature trees with this sterile bridge are ludicrous. Johnson stated, "We are trying to encourage businesses and people to enjoy the river."

Stewart said, "This bridge is a sock in the eye to the potential park we could develop."

Joan Ellison asked what the impact of removing 30 feet will do to the library park development. Jenson said it reduces the size of the park from 100 ft. on the west border to 70 ft. The City intends to develop the area after the bridge is completed.

Jenson said the bridge railings have been upgraded on the proposed new bridge to a similar railing on the old Highway 59 bridge. Highway 59 original bridge railings will be used in the park by the Mill Pond building.

West said the bridge was built in 1927. A new bridge is rated at 100 and this bridge is rated at 48 and is eligible for federal assistance. Riprap will extend from the centerline of the roadway about 50 or 60 ft.

Acting Mayor Gottenborg asked about ways to soften the look of the bridge and make it look less sterile.

"My issue is changing the course of the river and the dramatic effect this will have," Stewart said.

West said hand placed rock riprap would be a possibility and a more aesthetic solution. The Phelps Mill Park has some grouted riprap to solve an erosion problem.

Council Member Woessner said the Council already plans to develop the area around the river.

West said they would work with the City and Park Board on the bridge.

Council Member Waller said he feels that with the help of the community members like Stewart and Johnson they can make an attractive park area.

Mayor Runningen and Council Member Magnusson returned to the meeting.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Magnusson to proceed with the bridge project and introduce Resolution Approving County Project Within Municipal Corporate Limits. (This resolution is part of permanent public record in the city clerk's office.)

Council Member Magnusson said she would like to have had more input on the bridge design, but she's unwilling to give up the bridge. Acting Mayor Gottenborg also said he would like to work to make the bridge attractive. Runningen said the City has a responsibility to provide access to the community.

Motion passed unanimously and resolution was declared duly adopted.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Woessner to introduce the Resolution for Parallel Parking Only. (This resolution is part of permanent public record in the city clerk's office.) Motion passed unanimously and resolution was declared duly adopted.

Mayor Runningen resumed the chair at 7:20 p.m. He discussed the Rental Housing Resolution and suggested that a committee be created to discuss the form, payment and inspection process. Council Member Magnusson agreed that a committee is a good idea. Council Member Waller said this document is a good document, but it needs some discussion to retrofit it to the community.   Magnusson said it is an important safety issue to the City. Gottenborg asked when the inspection process would be implemented and who will do the inspection. He also said, "We need to deal with how we're going to defray the cost." Council Members Gottenborg and Magnusson offered to serve on the committee with city staff member Richard Jenson. They asked for questions to be turned in as soon as possible. Nancy Muchow of Codes Plus offered to answer any questions Council might have and to work with the committee.

Motion by Magnusson, seconded by Waller to approve the minutes of 02-10-03 and 02-25-03 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Council reviewed the Chief of Police report.

Motion by Woessner, seconded by Waller to approve the 03-10-03 Accounts Payable Listing as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Utilities Superintendent Brent Frazier reported on his departments' activities and presented a report on West Central Turkeys' water usage over the past three years for November, December, January and February. Mayor Runningen read an award presented by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to the City for a Minnesota Wastewater Treatment Facility Operational Award. Council congratulated Frazier for his efforts in achieving this award.

Street and Parks Superintendent Vern Benson reported on his departments' activities. Mayor Runningen suggested the City have a tornado drill this spring to practice the disaster plan.

Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Waller to increase the shut-off fee from $5.00 to $20.00 when the utilities are disconnected for non-payment. Motion passed unanimously.

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert reviewed the Liquor Store financial statements.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Magnusson to approve renewal of the Pelican Rapids Firemen's Relief Charitable Gambling license for 2003 to permit a charitable gambling operation on the premises at Bridges Bistro & Bar in the City of Pelican Rapids. Mayor Runningen and Council Members Waller, Magnusson, and Woessner voted yes. Council Member Gottenborg voted no. Motion carried.

Rick Gail of the Pelican Rapids Press said the library subcontractor has piled sand and debris on his property "temporarily" and he would like it cleaned up and restored for parking. Council agreed Gail has been patient and Jenson will contact the general contractor to correct the situation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Glenys Ehlert, CMC
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer