

CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MINUTES – 09-27-00

The City Council of the City of Pelican Rapids met in regular session on Wednesday, 09-27-00, at 3:30 p.m. in the Pelican Rapids Public Library meeting room. Present: Mayor Wayne Runningen, Council Members Denise Magnusson, Paulette Nettestad, Dave Gottenborg and John Waller III. Also present: Administrative Assistant Richard A. Jenson, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert, Street and Park Superintendent Vern Benson, Utility Superintendent Brent Frazier, Gary Nansen of Larson-Peterson & Assoc., Tom Trowbridge of Larson-Peterson & Assoc., Larry Svare, Jerry Oliver, Gary Peterson of Pelican Rapids Press, Dennis Haiby, Duane Haiby, Dwight L. Maach, Arlys Johnson, Carol Haiby, Maureen Wahlstrom, Harold Wahlstrom, Cooper Stewart, Elaine Knutson, Daren Berube, Gene Miller and Dave Weaklend.

Meeting called to order by Mayor Runningen.

There were no items to add to or delete from the agenda.

Mayor Runningen explained that Project Engineer Gary Nansen is presenting a Project Memorandum on the Hiking/Biking Trail to the Council.

Nansen explained that project began about three years ago when the Friends of Maplewood State Park applied for a federal grant to develop a hiking/biking trail from the City of Pelican Rapids to the State Park. Subsequent to that the Friends applied for a \$250,000 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources grant for the project. The federal grant will not pay for engineering or acquisition of property.

Nansen discussed various routes explored by the committee including T.H. No. 108 across Stoney Bar, Twelve Lake Trail and C.S.A.H. No. 3.

Otter Tail County is actually the lead agency on the project because the City of Pelican Rapids does not meet the population basis of 5,000.

There are some concerns on the route selected, C.S.A.H. No. 3. One is wetland mitigation. Another factor is that C.S.A.H. No. 3 is scheduled for reconstruction sometime during the next few years and the project plan needs to address this.

Mayor Runningen reported on the committee's actions since the Twelve Lake Trail was abandoned. They moved the proposed trail from the south to the north side of C.S.A.H. No. 3 due to environmental requirements. The consensus of the committee is:

1. There is support by the Pelican Rapids business community.
2. Federal and state governments have set aside funds for the project.
3. In addition many people have worked diligently on the project.

Therefore, the committee decided to present the Project Memorandum to the City Council for their consideration.

The Project Memo will be considered by Otter Tail County and if approved it will be presented to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MDOT). If approved by the DOT the next step is the corridor route and acquisition.

Mayor Runnigen said the Council would take questions and comments from the public.

Dennis Haiby - Cost of project incurred so far. Nansen said project expenses have been about \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Duane Haiby -This is the first the council has considered project? Mayor Runnigen said the trail has moved around and the committee waited for the Project Memo to bring council up to date.

Dwight L. Maach – Trail needs maintenance and needs space for snow removal. Mayor Runnigen said these expenses would be the responsibility of the City as owners of the bike path.

Jerry Oliver - Will there be a future assessment to property owners for trail maintenance and replacement? No, property owners outside the city limits cannot be assessed. The county and state may be willing to assume responsibility for the trail.

Arllys Johnson asked if 20 ft. is the easement needed? Nansen said that is proposed.

Johnson also asked how property is to be acquired. Property will be assessed by category and property in the same category is reimbursed equally.

Council Member Waller arrived at 4:00 p.m.

Duane Haiby questioned why the federal government is for this project but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife has refused to permit the trail across their land. Mayor Runnigen said that there has been a law change that limited use of Fish and Wildlife land.

Johnson asked about keeping the trail clean. Mayor Runnigen said Friends of Maplewood State Park or other community groups would help.

Trail Committee Member Dave Weakland said he has talked with mayors of other cities to check on litter, dogs, crime and maintenance. The people he spoke with report that there is very little litter. Community groups, church groups, schools and youth groups have been volunteering to help with litter and fundraising for maintenance.

Maach spoke about the danger of abduction occurring on a rural trail.

Mayor Runnigen asked Council if they have any further questions.

Motion by Nettestad, seconded by Gottenborg to forward the Project Memorandum to Otter Tail County and other agencies for their review and approval. Mayor Runningen announced that Council Member Waller will not vote on this issue because he has a brother living on the proposed trail route. Gottenborg requested that Council be kept informed during process and about plan for snowmobile use. He also asked about cost of liability insurance. Voting yes: Mayor Runningen, Council Members Magnusson, Nettestad and Gottenborg. Voting no: none. Abstaining: Council Member Waller. Motion carried.

Mayor Runningen thanked everyone for coming and said they would keep everyone informed.

Regarding the wastewater treatment facility, Administrative Assistant Richard A. Jenson said the scum withdrawal system on one clarifier has been a concern since 1987. Utility Superintendent Brent Frazier said a valve on an activated sludge return line to correct the problem could be installed at a cost of approximately \$11,700.

Council Member Gottenborg asked if these types of items could be prioritized as part of the budget.

Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Waller to approve Frazier's request. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Runningen said a citizen, Tom Voight, is concerned about traffic in the area of the high school in relation to crosswalk issues and speed. He says southbound traffic is not aware that there is a school located along the highway. Possibilities include a flashing amber light at the curb in front of the high school administration office, a reduction in speed to 20 miles per hour and cones in the roadway. Jenson reported that new street lights will help at night and the flashing light will be the City's cost.

Motion by Gottenborg, seconded by Magnusson to request that the Minnesota DOT review this high traffic area on T.H. No. 59 in front of the High School regarding speed, traffic count, pedestrian count, use of safety cones, no passing signs and use of overhead or curb side flashing light. The City of Pelican Rapids further requests a written recommendation from the DOT on how best to correct problems. Motion passed unanimously.

Representative Robert Westfall and Senator Keith Langseth have both contacted the DOT and are supportive of city and state efforts to deal with this problem.

Council considered a request by a resident of 3rd St. NW for a "Children at Play Sign". Council discussed concerns. No action taken.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Glenys Ehlert, CMC

Deputy Clerk-Treasurer