

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Budget Workshop of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on October 1, 2018. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m. The following were present for roll call: Mayor Dehen, Council Members Norland, Freyberg and Whitlock, City Administrator Harrenstein, Finance Director McCann, Community Development Director Fischer and City Clerk Van Genderen. Absent: Council Member Steiner.

Discuss Proposed 2019-2029 Capital Improvement Plan

Finance Director McCann reported the discussion would focus on Caswell sports and proposed Caswell Park upgrades and consideration of an indoor recreation facility. The softball complex needs improvements to maintain the international reputation, and because the facility services are statewide sporting and economic needs, a bonding request should be submitted to fund the improvements. Voters approved the extension of the sales tax in 2016 including a new use for indoor recreation. Finance Director McCann reported the statistics for 2018 which included an estimated 34,372 visitors, 23 tournaments/major events at Caswell Park and 5.5 million in economic impact. Caswell Park has had a significant impact on North Mankato with an estimated 850,000 visitors since its inception in 1987, local youth tournaments, the State Girls' High School Tournament since 1994, hosting national tournaments and international tournaments. Finance Director McCann reviewed the timeline for Caswell Park concluding with the development of a draft Master Plan in 2015.

The Caswell Park Master Plan and the North Kato Ideas included a sales tax extension discussion that expanded to include indoor recreation facilities. The expansion and improvement of Caswell were identified as a top use of sales tax proceeds, and the plan identified improved parking, pedestrian access, lighting, and greenery expanding to include indoor ice, aquatic center, picnic areas, and a stormwater pond. Finance Director McCann reviewed specifics of the master plan that included a parkway zone, existing softball zone, stormwater management zone and a community zone which was phased with phase one an ice arena and parking lots, phase two ice arena or aquatic center, sand volleyball courts, and landscaping and phase three a second or third sheet of ice. The estimated cost for the 2015 Caswell Park Masterplan with the aquatic center was \$26,600,500, with only ice, the estimate was \$24,611,000. Finance Director McCann reported that voters approved the extension of sales and use tax for \$15 million in 2016 and legislation approved authorization of \$9 million. In 2018 the Mankato Sports Commission referred facilities development to the Governmental Affairs division of Greater Mankato Growth to work with institutional partners on the pursuit of indoor recreation with local and regional significance. As North Mankato and Mankato sales tax extensions were approved, GMG Sports Commission established a Facilities Development Committee. The committee worked with community members and stakeholders and met with various user groups to discuss indoor recreational options. Finance Director McCann reported the Sales Tax Extension language included regional parks and trails, including construction of indoor regional athletic facilities, TH14/CSAH 41 interchange, expansion of the Taylor Library, Riverfront redevelopment, and lake improvement projects. Voters approved the Sales Tax Extension with 73% (4,991) voting yes and 27% (1,853) voting no. Facility discussions were held by user groups and interested parties. Both Bethany and MSU have identified the need for their own sports dome and are pursuing those avenues. Mankato prioritized Tourtelott Park, Thomas Fields, and Rosa Parks additions. North Mankato continues the discussion of Caswell improvements and an indoor recreation expansion. Finance Director McCann reviewed the current Caswell Park needs with an estimated \$3.5-5.0 Million in upgrades and upkeep to the park.

Finance Director McCann invited the Greater Mankato Growth Vice President and Director of Government and Institutional Affairs Patrick Baker to speak to the Council. Mr. Baker reported

Greater Mankato Growth is interested in this conversation as the population continues to grow. It is important to provide the amenities that will attract talent to the area and sports and recreation are a draw. Mr. Baker reviewed Greater Mankato Growth's efforts including discussions with Minnesota's Amateur Sports Commission (MASC) which provided a preliminary analysis noting that the area excels at bat and ball and field sports and recommends investing in those areas. He noted that the area would be excellent as a regional amateur sports hub. Mr. Baker stated phase one projects in the area would be improving existing facilities and the enhancement of bat and ball and field sports with indoor recreation opportunities, and to not ignore the indoor courts for pickleball and tennis as there are few indoor courts and the community is undersized on court space. He stated suggestions included a community request from both cities for bonding dollars from the legislation in 2019. He reported phase two and three included hockey and aquatics. Mayor Dehen requested clarification on the criteria for a MASC money. Mr. Baker stated the commission's priorities lie with new than improving existing with limited grants they suggested going directly to the legislation.

City Administrator Harrenstein reported he was directed after six weeks on the job to begin reviewing drafts for indoor hockey rinks. He stated Caswell had served the area very well; he reviewed how Caswell Park was able to host an international series while hosting a girls' softball tournament. Caswell was able to provide opportunities for interaction between the two teams and playing time while not losing money on the venture. Areas have been identified for improvements including parking, fencing upgrades, lights, backstops, netting, and a championship field, there have been requests for fields 7 and 8. City Administrator Harrenstein noted Caswell North soccer fields are used with colleges and high schools using the fields. He stated there had been a lot of discussions with user groups and community members on what should happen. City Administrator Harrenstein stated City staff would like direction on if staff should continue discussions with user groups and how to proceed with those conversations. He stated Caswell Park is a regional complex where for the past 25 to 30 years the best girls softball players have played. He indicated it should not be out of the question for the City to request funds from the State and request direction on approaching the legislation in 2019 for bonding. Mayor Dehen noted that Caswell Park started with contributions from the men's softball and it was similar to the United Soccer, and he was interested in partnering with additional groups. Council Member Freyberg requested clarification on how much of the \$5.5 million in economic impact stays in North Mankato. Finance Director McCann stated they were not able to determine those numbers. Council Member Freyberg noted the park is a regional asset and the City should continue to work with Mankato and other regional entities. Council Member Norland stated she agreed with exploring the options and considering a bonding bill. Council Member Whitlock noted the City already owns a world-class facility and we owe it to the community to pursue bonding. Mayor Dehen stated he agreed that it would be a good draw to the region if Caswell were made into a year-round facility.

Mayor Dehen closed the Council Workshop at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk