

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Finance Committee of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska met in the City's Conference Room, 309 West Madison Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska, on Tuesday, May 22, 2007, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Gordon D. Adams called the meeting to order.

Roll call found the following Committee members present: Mayor Gordon Adams and Councilpersons Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange (5:04 p.m.), Reeder, Saunders, and Wilson. Absent: Van Dyke.

Staff members present were City Administrator Mike Nolan, Public Works Director Dennis Smith (via telephone conference call), City Attorney Clint Schukei, City Clerk Beth Deck, Transportation, Building & Grounds Director Jim Koch and Prevention Manager Scott Cordes.

The media was represented by Matt Meyer, US92; Jim Curry, WJAG/KEXL; and Greg Wees, Norfolk Daily News.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Norfolk Daily News, and notice of the meeting was given to the Mayor and all members of the Council prior to the meeting.

The Mayor presided and the City Clerk recorded the proceedings.

The Mayor informed the public about the location of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room and accessible to members of the public.

City Administrator Mike Nolan said a landscaping plan is not unique to Norfolk. Grand Island is also working on such a plan and Omaha and Lincoln have master landscape plans in place. Nolan stated the City budgeted \$60,000 in FY 2006-2007 for a landscape plan. Nolan stated a Master Plan for landscaping is important for Norfolk. It is anticipated the plan will project landscaping needs for the next 15-20 years for the City. In the past, landscaping was done as projects were implemented. However, some of the areas are completed by the State and landscape is not a priority for state projects. The proposed landscaping study will create a planning document for the future and allow wise use of funds.

Steve Oltmans, Mary Ann Wells and John Williams, representatives for Olsson Associates, gave a presentation of the proposed Landscape Master Plan for the City of Norfolk. The Landscape Master Plan will provide the City of Norfolk with design guidelines for future landscape projects. The Plan will identify existing conditions; recommend landscape improvements; identify priority projects; phased implementation of landscape improvements; and future improvements consistent with the overall theme. The proposed Master Plan corridors include: U.S. Highway 81 – TaHaZouka Park to Eisenhower Avenue; Highway 275 – 49th Street to Hwy 24; Norfolk Avenue – Highway 275 to Victory Road; North 4th Street & Riverside Boulevard – Norfolk Avenue to Highway 81; and North 5th Street – Norfolk Avenue to Walnut Avenue.

Landscape recommendations for corridor improvements includes:

Street trees to create rhythm, pedestrian scale and provide shade

Screening to improve corridor aesthetics and eliminate unpleasant views

Medians to create buffer between traffic lanes, break up large expanse of concrete, low maintenance plant materials and limit height to 30" in sight distance lines
Accent plantings to add color and texture, create interest, focus at intersections, and use to enhanced entry way signage
Corner treatments and entry ways at major intersections or entrances to city and pair with accent plantings

Olsson Associates will visually survey corridors and photograph; look at adjacent properties (commercial, residential, etc.); identify existing landscape treatments (street trees, shrub masses, medians, etc.); local right-of-ways from existing plans; review Transportation Plan 2030; and review the Nebraska Department of Roads and City design standards. Olsson Associates explained current landscaping in Norfolk from the sidewalk to property line varies with turf, perennials, shrubs, and concrete and also varies in the use of rock, brick and turf.

Olsson recommends maintaining a consistent planting bed width from the sidewalk to property line and planting with recommended shrubs, perennials, and ornamental grasses along Highway 81. This will create a cohesive design by use of one paver style and color. Olsson Associates also recommends the use of unified treatment of rights-of-way, buffer parking and maintenance of business visibility for Highway 81 (13th Street). It is recommended the City investigate the potential to expand landscape treatment at the intersection of Highway 81 and Highway 275 since this intersection is a gateway into Norfolk.

Oltjens stated the Master Plan will include a corridor survey and analysis and make recommendations for corridor improvements. The Plan will list plant materials for specific areas throughout the corridors (commercial, residential, median, corner treatments, etc.). Olsson will recommend priority projects which could serve as an example for surrounding property improvements with preliminary cost information for projects that allow the City of Norfolk to budget for projects. Oltjens stated a Master Plan in place will help the City obtain grants for projects.

Councilperson Saunders questioned who can provide grants to the City for landscaping projects.

Oltjens stated highway funds are not easy to obtain but funding may be available through the Nebraska Arboretum Foundation or the Environmental Trust Funds. Oltjens feels a Master Plan will help influence the Department of Roads on projects in the City of Norfolk.

Nolan stated the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission may also be a source for funding. The State of Nebraska is now interested in round-a-bouts and also understands landscaping needs.

Public Works Director Dennis Smith stated the City may receive federal funds for the Highway 35 project.

Councilperson Reeder questioned whether Downtown Norfolk is included in the Master Plan Landscape Study.

Nolan stated the Vehicle Parking District Board of Directors worked with an architect for the downtown improvement project. The Downtown area is not included in the Master Plan Landscape Study.

Oltjens stated a Master Plan Landscape Study works best with public and private partnerships.

Jerry Huse feels the Master Plan Landscape Study will be a good planning tool for the City of Norfolk.

Reeder questioned whether private property owners will need to pay for improvements to their properties.

Nolan explained the City has the statutory authority to assess property owners for improvements. However, Nolan feels the best solution is to persuade property owners to work with the City and donate rights-of-way for the City to implement the landscaping.

Reeder questioned whether changes to the Master Plan will incur additional fees.

Oltjens stated Olsson Associates will compile the plan from information gathered as well as dialogue with City staff and elected officials. Oltjens stated there may need to be adjustments to the Plan over the years.

Cordes briefly explained elected officials had RDG Crose Gardner Shuker prepare a Comprehensive Development Plan for the City of Norfolk. The Plan was adopted by Ordinance No. 4548 on August 20, 2001. The Plan establishes a picture of Norfolk's future, based on the participation of residents in the planning of their community. The plan presents a unified action program that will implement the City's goals. The plan is designed as a working document that both defines the future and provides a working program for utilizing the City's potential.

Reeder questioned whether the Plan includes provisions for maintenance of the landscaped areas.

Smith explained there will be more maintenance and probably more Parks Division staff will be needed to complete the work. However, low maintenance plantings will be used as much as possible.

Saunders questioned the timeframe for implementation of the Landscape Master Plan.

Oltjens stated the Norfolk Landscape Master Plan can probably be in place within six months after a contract is in place.

This item was for informational purposes only and no action was taken.

Councilperson Saunders moved, seconded by Councilperson Brenneman to adjourn the meeting at 5:56 p.m. Roll call: Ayes: Council members Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange, Reeder, Saunders, Wilson and Mayor Adams. Nays: None. Absent: Van Dyke. Motion carried.

Elizabeth A. Deck
City Clerk