

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Finance Committee of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska met in the Council Chambers, 309 West Madison Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska, on Monday, July 14, 2008, beginning at 7:00 a.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, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke and Wilson.  
Absent: None.

Staff members present were Interim City Administrator Gary Miller, Public Works Director Dennis Smith, City Attorney Clint Schukei, City Clerk Beth Deck, Waste Water Plant Superintendent Todd Boling, Transportation, Building & Grounds Director Jim Koch, Water & Sewer Director Dennis Watts, Solid Waste Manager Gary Lund, Finance Officer Randy Gates, Housing Director Sheila Miller, Information Systems Manager Jim McKenzie and Park Superintendent Pat Mrsny.

The media was represented by 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.

Sue Burns and Nancy Schwertley made a presentation to elected officials of student posters and banners illustrating the importance of **recycling**. Burns stated students are “extremely interested” in recycling. Burns and Schwertley displayed several posters about recycling and stated the students wanted the community of Norfolk to know about recycling and how important it is for the future.

Roland Jensen, Stanton County Historical Society, addressed the elected officials on behalf of the Stanton County Historical Society and the **Pilger Rest Area** Improvement and Advisory Board, of which Jensen is co-chairman. Jensen stated a historical marker is located at the Pilger Rest Area. The Rest Area was closed by Stanton County in January 2008 because of funding shortfalls. Jensen said the State spent approximately \$30,000 to \$32,000 per year on maintenance of the rest area. However, Stanton County was able to reduce that number to approximately \$15,000 annually and used inheritance tax to fund operation of the facility. Jensen stated Stanton County “perceives” there isn’t any economic benefit to keeping the rest area open. Jensen stated the City of Norfolk gave a one-time donation of \$4,000 to the Pilger Rest Area several years ago but the group now requests an annual contribution to re-open the Pilger Rest Area. However, Jensen doesn’t know what amount at this time. Jensen stated the group is planning to form a non-profit corporation which would then lease the 10.4 acres from Stanton County. The group has submitted a grant application to the Transportation Enhancement Program for \$190,000 to develop a Transportation History Museum at the Pilger Rest Area with a theme centering on “barns.” As examples, the museum would detail Old Highway 275, Old

Highway 8, Chicago NW Railroad and predecessors, the Cowboy Trail, wagon train trails and the Indian Battle of 1849. The group has developed a business plan to generate revenue including the historical barn (museum) and a farmers market. Jensen stated the group is planning to have a “kick-off” meeting soon that Norfolk elected officials are invited to attend.

Councilperson Van Dyke has concerns that Pilger, Stanton and Stanton County aren’t supporting the proposed project. Van Dyke said the area is a nice site and “Norfolk may be willing to support” the project but the other entities need to be involved as well.

Jensen stated Pilger provided water management for the Pilger Rest Area; however, the City of Stanton has not “stepped up” to help fund the project. Jensen believes Stanton County will support the project once more detailed plans are in place. Jensen would like all surrounding counties to help with the project.

Councilperson Reeder questioned the biggest expense for the Pilger Rest Area.

Jensen stated the daily maintenance as well as electricity costs and mowing are the major expenses.

Mayor Adams stated the City Council would take the request under advisement.

The final item discussed was a request from the NorthFork **Riverwalk** Development for funding in the FY 2008-2009 budget.

Jim Miller, Chairman of the NorthFork Riverwalk Development Project, spoke in favor of the project. The project was started years ago but never was a high priority. Miller feels such a project needs to be a public and private partnership to succeed. The NorthFork Riverwalk Development Project committee’s mission statement is “To create a recreational, residential, entertainment and retail/business corridor along the North Fork River to enhance the economic opportunities and the quality of life for the City of Norfolk and Northeast Nebraska.” Miller stated “Norfolk is fortunate to have a natural feature, the NorthFork River, as an amenity that should be prized by any progressive community.” The project has 10 standing committees (almost 100 volunteers), 15 board members, 8 exofficials, a chairperson for fund raising campaign and two honorary fundraising co-chairpersons. A few of the project endorsements are the Community Visioning 2026, LENRD, Norfolk Noon Optimists, Norfolk Area Recruiters, Downtown Norfolk Association, EVEDC, NECC, Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce, the governor and lieutenant governor, Senators Mike Flood, Jeff Fortenberry and Ben Nelson. Fund raising activities include “notable contributions” from Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District, Elkhorn Valley Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, NeighborWorks, various service organizations, numerous private citizens and \$25,000 from the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District. Miller stated the funds raised will be used (1) to pay for the architectural design, (2) promote the project to industries and (3) establish a fund to be used for matching grant dollars.

Miller believes citizens see this project as “new urbanism” that promotes living, working, shopping and recreating within easy walking distance. Miller stated for the record that communities across the country, including Sioux Falls, SD; Pueblo, CO; Milwaukee, WI; Des Moines, IA; Pella, IA; and Estes Park, CO, have invested in this type of project and have seen “unprecedented returns, both culturally and monetarily” on the investment. Jensen requested the City of Norfolk help “pool resources for the betterment of the community.”

J Paul McIntosh, honorary fund raising co-chairperson, spoke in favor of the project. McIntosh stated there is a “looming labor shortage” across the nation and when employees have a choice in jobs, the quality of life will have an increasing influence on where people locate. McIntosh said Norfolk has good public and parochial schools, excellent medical services and a broad spectrum of social, spiritual, recreational, mental health and work-related opportunities available but, in the near future, it will be the Arts Center, the Lifelong Learning Center, the Carson Theatre, the soccer complex, and the hospital addition and perhaps the ambience of the River Walk that may make the difference when young professionals make the decision to locate to Norfolk. McIntosh requested the City of Norfolk “join in by investing in the future of the city”. The initial goal is to raise \$320,000 to get the project moving. The group is requesting the City of Norfolk allocate \$80,000 for each of the next two budget years. McIntosh stated the funds “will be more than matched by those of us who believe that this project is vital to the future of our city.”

Dan Mauk, President of the Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the project. Mauk stated the project will be a public/private partnership but primarily funded with private donations. Mauk stated the project needs guidance and endorsement from the City of Norfolk. The City will see the benefits of an increase in both property and sales tax collection because of the Riverwalk project. Mauk stated, “the City of Norfolk needs to officially take a leadership role now” in the project. Mauk stated the City needs to “get the best engineering possible to determine how the project will be developed.”

Webb McNally is a member of the Riverwalk Development committee and spoke in favor of the project. McNally is “excited” about the project and “believes in it.”

Mark Hall spoke in favor of the project and requested elected officials’ support of time, talent and treasures. Hall stated the Riverwalk project stemmed from the Visioning 2026 group, especially Stan Staab of the LENRD. The Visioning 2026 web site is [visioning2026.com](http://visioning2026.com). Hall stated the Riverwalk “can be a transforming vision for the community” and it is time for “city leadership” to get involved in the project. The project is over 3 miles of waterway and is a unique opportunity for the City. Hall stated one of the plans is to connect the Cowboy Trail to the Riverwalk.

Mayor Adams questioned how the Riverwalk Project committee arrived at the \$80,000 City contribution and what is proposed to be done with the funds.

Miller explained the \$80,000, or \$160,000 for two years, is one-half of the \$320,000 grant funding and would be the matching funds. The funds will be used for the HDR architecture plan fees, promoting the project and setting up a fund for match money on grants received.

Councilperson Coy questioned the estimated cost for architectural services.

Miller stated the fee is \$320,000.

Mayor Adams questioned whether HDR was retained through a competitive bidding process.

Miller stated the bid was received through the competitive bidding process. Miller stated four firms submitted bids and made presentations. Miller stated “it was unanimous in the selection of HDR.” Miller continues to make presentations to various service organizations for support of the project.

McIntosh made the comment that the initial \$200,000 that Northeast Community College put into the Lifelong Learning Center was the key to the success of that project and that is all the college put towards the building.

Councilperson Van Dyke stated elected officials will be meet beginning on Tuesday, July 15, to review the FY 2008-2009 budget. Van Dyke reminded citizens that the City has spending limitations per state statutes and “there are lots of demands on money.”

Councilperson Reeder commended the Riverwalk Development committee for their hard work.

Councilperson Fauss thinks the Riverwalk project “would be fantastic” if it fits in the budget.

Councilperson Van Dyke moved, seconded by Councilperson Fauss to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 a.m. Roll call: Ayes: Council members Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke, Wilson and Mayor Adams. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

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Gordon D. Adams  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Elizabeth A. Deck  
City Clerk

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