

WORK SESSION

The Mayor, City Council and City staff of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska met on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 309 N 5th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska.

The following elected officials were present: Mayor Josh Moenning, Councilmembers Frank Arens, Shane Clausen (4:02). Corey Granquist, Kory Hildebrand, Gary L. Jackson, Andrew McCarthy, Rob Merrill and Thad Murren. Absent: None.

Staff members present were City Administrator Andy Colvin, Assistant City Administrator Scott Cordes, City Attorney Danielle Myers-Noelle, City Clerk Brianna Duerst, City Planner Val Grimes, Finance Officer Randy Gates, Economic Developer Candice Alder, Street Superintendent Will Elwell, City Engineer Steven Rames, Assistant City Engineer Anna Allen, Information Systems Manager Brad Andersen, Communications Manager Nick Stevenson, Director of Administrative Services Lyle Lutt and Jerry Guenther with 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 Council President informed the public about the location of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act accessible to members of the public.

Indoor Water Park and Ta-Ha-Zouka Park Concept Design

City Administrator Andy Colvin said that in 2018, a citizen survey was completed asking citizens what kinds of amenities they would like to see in the community. Some of the top items were an indoor aquatic center and year-round indoor and outdoor recreation and sports. The city does not do a lot of programming but can help provide the facilities for these programs to take place. Through process of reviewing the survey, the City had funding that came through that was used for the design of an indoor aquatics center and Ta Ha Zouka Park improvements. Davis Designs was hired as the lead architect. Also working with Olsson Associates for design of sports complex.

The team has been engaging stakeholders, including the School District, NECC, YMCA and various soccer, baseball, softball and swimming representatives. These groups have all been part of the process to gather input with the goal of presenting what they feel are the needs and wants of the community. The goal is to put the question on the November ballot to ask citizens to approve bonds for some of these projects. As the process keeps moving forward, there will be open houses, town hall meetings and opportunities for the public to weigh in. If this is something the community wants and the bond is approved, we can move forward with construction.

Ta-Ha-Zouka Park Improvements

Doug Burkink, Davis Designs, said there have been multiple sessions with the steering committee and stakeholders. Burkink said, at this point, we only have the schematics, not a final design. This is a result of taking everyone's input to get a design on paper. Will continue to present to public to better determine wants and needs. Davis said, when looking at other cities where tournaments are successful, it is clear it is time to make our ballparks a destination. Tasked with master plan, including camping, a dog park, baseball, softball and soccer fields. Burkink is confident we have a good plan.

Colvin said the Council has been acquiring property over the last several years at Ta Ha Zouka. The first, and most important items, would be to get road work and parking all set up. Everything else can be built around that - rehab of current fields, new turf, fencing and lighting improvements. The whole design was made so we can have multiple uses simultaneously without interfering with one another. The plan includes multi-purpose courts, parking and access and encompasses several sporting aspects. Other improvements – camping addition and improvements. The plan allows council to do as much or as little as they want and focus on getting pavement and parking done for sports complex.

Burkink said concessions and bathrooms have building upgrades and said each group of fields has its own restroom facilities.

Councilmember Clausen asked about the isolated nature of Ta Ha Zouka and if there will be adequate parking for tournaments. Granquist also questioned if there would be adequate parking. Burkink said the current designs shows 800 to 1,000 parking stalls.

Councilmember Merrill asked about ingress and egress. Burkink explained the current design shows an additional road over to 1st Street.

Moenning noted the northern most baseball fields shown on the design, are not yet owned by the city.

Arens asked about the disc golf course and if additional parking could be added to that area. Burkink said they have not designed anything different on that part of the park.

McCarthy asked about the existing dog park and playground.

Seth Lange, Olsson Associates, said the facilities would stay in place for utilization until they can be replaced.

Parks and Recreation Director Nathan Powell said some playground equipment will be replaced and there will be new playgrounds added in the ball field areas. Powell also said work would be done to re-vamp dog park.

Councilmember Merrill asked about phasing/timeline. Colvin said nothing has been broken down in phases yet. What Davis Designs has presented is the whole thing, but we can do as much or as little construction as we want. Focus on infrastructure first and go from there.

Arens asked about the width of the main roads. Lange said the minimum typical roadway section for the city is 31-feet wide. Arens said he feels a wider road would have a nicer feel. Lange said we can start with minimum, and if the space and money were there, the road can be widened.

Councilmember Jackson asked about the 5th Street entrance and connecting the trail system. Burkink said we need to review city's master plan to look at connecting other neighborhoods. Moenning said the park needs to be more accessible to users and there is an opportunity here to connect directly to neighborhoods that could utilize the park.

Councilmember Hildebrand said he likes what was presented but noted there is a lot going on. Hildebrand asked how many additional staff members would be needed to maintain the park to keep it at the standard we would expect.

Powell said the Parks Department is well-staffed right now. The need would be continued training on field maintenance. The improvements would mostly affect summer help and noted there likely would need to be more staff added to keep up on the maintenance.

Hildebrand asked about the Elkhorn River, specifically where it bottlenecks and asked if any issues with the river itself have been addressed. Burkink said they have taken into consideration the elevations. Lange noted a lot of the area is floodplain.

Councilmember Jackson asked about other users of the park facilities and financial contributions. Burkink said there have been conversations with other users about the potential for funding.

Merrill asked if the Visitor's Bureau had anything to add. Traci Jeffrey, Norfolk Area Visitor's Bureau said not at this time but said the Visitor's Bureau supports the plan and noted an economic impact study will be done. Jeffrey also discussed the need for additional camping spots and ability to host large tournaments.

Aquatics Center

Burkink said a concept has been put together for recreational aquatics and competition swimming at one facility. What will it take Norfolk to host aquatics tournaments? After looking at multiple locations, the proposed location is Winter Park. Winter Park is centrally located, city owned and is close to the library and high school. Norfolk Public Schools has indicated they would be willing to coordinate schedules.

Colvin said the competition pool is further along in the design process. The recreation pool will probably see changes added to it. The competition pool would be 25 yards by 25 meters with seating on the upper level. Can be shifted so lanes can go the other way. The facility would also have office space for Parks and Rec staff, community rooms and locker rooms. It would be

designed in a way where you can have recreational swimming and competition swimming simultaneously without interfering with one another.

Merrill asked about staffing needs. Powell said the management structure is already in place because of Aquaventure. Most impact will be on lifeguards.

Jackson asked if the indoor and outdoor water parks would be open at the same time. Powell said they would and explained that the standard in the industry is that they do not compete with one another as some people cannot or do not want to be in the sun.

Colvin said it is important to note that what has been presented is pretty unique. It is not competing with Lincoln or Omaha, and there are not a lot in of these types of facilities in our area close to this. Colvin noted we need to be careful about the sizing as we want to ensure we will be able to meet demand. Norfolk serves a large area; we want to make sure we are accommodating residents and visitors.

Granquist said committees have met to discuss every aspect of the proposal. Through the process, people in the community have been highly involved to come up with the design.

Moenning said there is a clear need for this type of facility. Norfolk Public School swimmers need a better facility. The 2018 community survey showed there was desire for these things. This is and has been a long runway of discussion on this process. This is just the start of public discussion process to determine where we go from here.

Clausen noted that this is community driven, not Council driven.

Colvin said Winter Park makes a lot of sense for this facility as there is a lot of room. Impact on neighborhood is minimal. Colvin discussed the removal of the tennis courts to add parking for the facility and said the pool at Liberty Bell was recently removed. The idea would be to locate tennis courts/multi-purpose courts at that location. Want to have as minimal impact as possible on neighborhood around there.

Arens asked about an indoor aquatic center and outdoor water park all access pass. Arens also said to consider covering the bridge from the parking area to the facility. Powell said staff can explore a dual pass as an option.

Colvin discussed next steps. Staff will continue working with Davis and Water Technologies and will be scheduling a series of open public meetings to start generating public discussion. Ultimately leading to bond issue, upon council approval with a local option sales tax. That issue is up to Norfolk citizens if this is something they would like to see. Ultimate design will be based on public input.

Clausen asked about a hockey rink. Colvin said that can be part of it, if Council chose. Council's role is to determine if this is something that might need more discussion or bring to citizens. Can throw out as an option and would be up to council to make that determination.

Moenning said a local option sales tax was used to make improvements to the City library. These improvements will be up to the voters. Need to determine what the community needs that is worthwhile of utilizing.

Colvin also discussed a story walk and incorporating playground at the library, which is across the street from Winter Park. The Library has some left over funds that must be used on that site.

Murren stressed the importance of getting the information out to the public so people can come to the meetings and get invested into the idea.

Colvin said public discussions will begin in the next 30-45 days.

Adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Josh Moenning
Mayor

ATTEST:

Brianna Duerst
City Clerk
(S E A L)