

INVEST IN WILLMAR BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Approved: June 10, 2020

The Invest in Willmar Board met at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 20, 2020 via GoTo teleconference.

Members present were: Matt Dawson, Mary Sawatzky, Bob Poe, Audrey Nelsen, Tony Amon Denis Anderson, Jon Konold, Shawn Mueske, Mayor Marv Calvin and City Administrator Brian Gramentz.

Also present were: Recreation Director Baumgarn, Finance Director Okins, Journalist Shelby Lindrud, David Leschak from LSE Architects and Janell Sommers, Administrative Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair Dawson. A motion was made by Denis Anderson, seconded by Shawn Mueske and passed to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2020 meeting.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

City Administrator Gramentz opened discussion of review of the City Council's decisions relating to local option sales tax projects at their May 18th council meeting. He understood there to be two decisions made by the Council. First being the Robbins Island Project, which has prior approval of its plans and specifications and authorized to proceed to the bidding process. This project was reduced in scope to remove the alternate options which are the two park shelters. The roadways, paved trails and parking lot aspects of the project would remain. That amounts to just under \$2 million with additional soft costs spending approximately 82% of the \$3 million for flat surfaces.

The second Council decision made was to direct architects and construction managers to suspend all work until revised priorities and funding guidelines are established. The Invest in Willmar Board and its subcommittees should prioritize the remaining projects. They discussed utilizing up to 67% or two thirds of the allocation that was applied to each particular project. This figure is based on the projected sales tax revenues due to COVID-19.

City Administrator Gramentz stated in his conversation with the architects he felt they would need to assist us through this prioritization process and the new calculations to provide options to the City to save money. Council Member Mueske agreed with his comments.

Chair Dawson stressed he felt the Council wants this group in conjunction with the subcommittees to provide prioritization of the projects. He questioned if the consensus of the board is to fund each project 67% or if they may want to fund priority projects at 100%?

City Administrator Gramentz clarified what he believed the Council wants stating each subcommittee was to identify its priorities and come to a conclusion of what their 67% is and the

Council will not dictate each committee's priorities. The Council is seeking feedback from the subcommittees doing the work and advice from the Invest in Willmar Board.

Board member Anderson questioned going ahead without knowing what the funding will be. City Administrator Gramentz recognized that no matter what happens in the next 13 years, the retail sales are not going to be zero. The City is making a conservative expectation of what the sale tax will be. The members of the Board discussed the financing at length and bonding options in stages. There is consideration for proposing a small bond issue in 2020 to include Robbins Island and Swansson Field Improvements, and in time as the other projects develop, they would be bonded for as the money is needed.

The Board discussed a timeline and prioritizing the projects. Chair Dawson brought forth his opinion for consideration to not cut everything down to 33% and to complete the projects with the following prioritization: 1. Robbins Island, 2. Swansson Fields, 3. Recreation Fields, 4. Outdoor Rink, 5. Stormwater, 6. Community Center and 7. Event Center. He requested feedback on prioritizing and the discussion included the subcommittee listing their items and associated costs. Bob Poe also was not in favor to reducing all the projects down and to do them individually and fully as the funding allows. The inclusion of completion of Swansson Field in 2020 was discussed and favored.

City Administrator Gramentz touched on the Stormwater Projects noting they were to be completed in stages as needed. The City Hall/Community Center the Council decision was to place the architect on hold until a funding source can be determined.

Council Member Nelsen stressed considering what needs to be recommended to the Council to reconsider doing Swansson Fields this year.

City Administrator Gramentz commented on the outdoor rink being associated with the event center questioning not to select specific items within a project as to avoid confusion for the other subcommittees wanting to do the same with pieces of their project. The board discussed how the Event Center Project needs to fit together for layout purposes and the rink is part of this bigger relationship. It was the consensus of the board to allow the subcommittees to make these decisions.

Jon Konold gave an update on the Recreation Center to include preliminary discussions of how it fits with the Event Center facility and putting it into one combined facility. Tony Amon stated they took this step to obtain all the amenities the voters approved and be able to stay within budget and simplify staffing. This concept may entertain some cost savings and both committees are interested in pursuing it. There was mention of it becoming complicated as each project has its own architect and it may require further clarification from the City Attorney before the projects can be combined.

Mary Sawatzky provided an update on Swansson Fields stating they are very close to having final design and costs. She overviewed the proposed improvements and noted they are close to presenting to the public.

Audrey Nelsen questioned if Swansson Field is clear to proceed or does it require going back to the Council for approval. City Administrator Gramentz stated if Swansson Field is supported as the next priority item and there is enough funding available this discussion should lead to Swansson

Field being the next project to be allowed to finalize plans and specifications to go forward for public input. This would require Council action to release it from the hold.

Denis Anderson made a motion to recommend to release the Swansson Field Project at the \$2 million allocation set by the voters to continue to work with the architect to complete the plans and specifications and advertise for bids in 2020. Jon Konold seconded the motion.

Bob Poe offered discussion that the total of the six projects will be set in the 67% budget and intend to start the first two at 100% and adjust accordingly later. Following discussion the motion passed.

There was discussion on 100% funding for Robbins Island which the Council acted on at their last meeting. No action was taken by the board. The next meeting is scheduled for June 10th at 4:00 p.m. The meeting schedule and process was discussed along with prioritization of the projects for the Council. City Administrator Gramentz stated the board's recommendation to move forward with Swansson Fields would be brought before the City Council at their June 1st meeting. The project priority list could be submitted at a later date.

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers
Administrative Assistant