

Council Proceedings

Special Meeting/Work Session

December 13, 2004

Pursuant to due call and notice, a Special Meeting/Work Session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, December 13, 2004, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call the following Council members were declared present: Downs, Erickson, Zachman, Lehmann, Hellquist, Johnson.

Absent: Meuers

Staff Present: Minke, Sherman

BSU: Bill Maki, Jon Quistgaard, Leo Morgan, Tom Koehnlein

Mayor Lehmann called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of the meeting was to hear a proposal from Bemidji State University regarding redevelopment of the old high school site.

Jon Quistgaard noted that BSU is very interested in acquiring the old high school site for the purpose of constructing a hockey arena in such a way that would be suitable to enable future expansion to include a multipurpose events center. Priorities include:

- ◆ Entering into negotiations with the School District to acquire the property as quickly as possible
- ◆ Immediately remove the existing buildings

Bill Maki provided BSU's perspective on advantages, which include:

- ◆ BSU is currently landlocked – no room for expansion.
- ◆ BSU would have more room on campus to do things that would otherwise have to be relocated if the arena is built on campus.
- ◆ BSU would have the opportunity to generate revenues from the private sector – necessary to support Division I hockey.
- ◆ ISD #31 would no longer have to insure the unoccupied structures and liability issues would be resolved
- ◆ ISD #31 would have the opportunity to relocate the maintenance facility to the new high school property.
- ◆ Collaboration between ISD#31 and BSU would be strengthened.
- ◆ BSU Division I hockey could serve as an anchor tenant for a future multi-purpose events center.
- ◆ Multi-purpose center would enhance Bemidji's quality of place as a regional center.
- ◆ Economic impact to the region.

Tom Koehnlein provided a layout plan for the proposed site and expressed the need for sufficient pre-planning if the facility is to be a multipurpose events center.

Johnson expressed concerns about the ice being used for practice and questioned the availability of the facility for other uses. He suggested that optional locations should be explored if the facility will be multipurpose. However he agreed that a single use hockey arena should be located near the university campus.

Erickson was concerned about traffic flow and parking. She suggested that a traffic study be done.

The next steps – based on the School Board's acceptance of BSU's proposal:

- ◆ Begin immediate negotiations with ISD #31 on a purchase price and immediately begin the process of removing existing buildings.
- ◆ Work through the legislative process to pursue land acquisition support and design funds.
- ◆ Create an advisory committee consisting of neighboring landowners, city and county representatives, and university representatives to provide input into the design and location of the facility and amenities.

Lehmann noted that this issue will be presented for further Council discussion at the December 20th Council meeting.

Minke noted that Metro Plains had some specific financial requests associated with their housing proposal. He asked whether there would be any scenario in the BSU proposal under which BSU would request a financial commitment.

Quistgaard responded that there would be none in terms of acquisition and demolition. At a later date, however, the City could have the option to work with BSU in developing a multipurpose facility. If the facility were just a hockey arena, there would be no financial commitment requested from the City.

Minke suggested the Council's position might be that if BSU is successful in acquiring the land, the City will work cooperatively with the planning committee to bring to the table the needs of the City for an events center, advise what the City thinks the citizens will support, and then generate as many partners as necessary.

ADJOURN

There being no further business presented for discussion at this time, motion by Zachman, second by Erickson, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Sherman, City Clerk