

City action aimed at improving Prentis Park

By Travis Gulbrandson
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The Vermillion City Council has taken further action to make the Prentis Park Master Plan a reality. At their regular meeting Monday night, council members adopted a resolution authorizing the preparation of a general obligation bond, and approved a professional services agreement for the pool's design.

The first action taken engage Dorsey & Whitney, LLP, as bond counsel and disclosure counsel, and Dougherty & Company, LLC, as underwriting for the general obligation bond documents.

Those documents will be up for consideration by the council at the Aug. 4 meeting.

On May 5, City Manager John Prescott made a presentation regarding funding ideas for the park project, the master plan for which was adopted by the council members in January.

The plan is estimated to cost \$5.25 million.

The solution presented was to adopt a resolution authorizing a general obligation bond for \$3 million, use \$1 million from the general reserve, \$1 million from the second-penny fund and more from grant funding.

The city also is investigating a 5 percent mark-up on malt beverages for further revenue toward the project.

The interest rate on a \$3 million, 20-year bond

would "average out to about 3.72" percent, with an annual average debt service of approximately \$222,000, Prescott had said.

Prescott added that a general obligation bond would not involve an increase in property taxes.

If it is to go forward, the bond must be approved by the voters in November.

If the bond is approved, the project would start in the latter part of 2015, and conclude the next year.

The second action taken Monday was the approval of a professional services agreement with Burbach Aquatics, Inc., for the Vermillion pool design and other pertinent pool information.

The design concept that was approved in January features a new aquatic center, bathhouse and lazy river.

It also features sand volleyball and basketball courts, a new maintenance building, parking lots and a separate entrance and exit point off of Prentis Avenue, along with an aquatic center drop-off.

"After multiple phone conversations, and two in-house presentations from company president Dave Burbach, city staff feels confident that Burbach Aquatics, Inc., will provide a pool design with probable construction costs and detailed information on yearly operation costs," a council agenda memo reads.

Both measures were passed unanimously by the council members.

Citizen input focuses on pool design instead of funding

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Although its intended purpose was to present a funding plan for renovating the Prentis Park pool, most of the conversation at a public meeting Tuesday night centered around the design of the facility.

The meeting, held at the Vermillion Public Library, was meant as a forum for community members to give their input on the proposal to enact a \$3 million general obligation bond. (See sidebar for further details.)

However, most of the discussion centered on the length of the pool, the presence of the parking lot and the inclusion of the lazy river.

"Lazy rivers have become the thing now," one woman said. "What happens in five years when it's no longer the thing? When somebody says, 'The other cities are doing this now.' And we've got another 15 years to pay. ..."

"Is this the best use of money?" she asked. "I don't have any complaints at all about the funding ideas that you have. I think under the circumstances they're extremely reasonable."

Another woman said the design of the facility does not seem to take into account Vermillion's growing number of senior citizens.

"In 2000, the under-18 population in Vermillion was 25.7 percent of the population," she said. "In 2010, it was 15.3. That is more than a 10 percent drop. The census bureau projects that in South Dakota, there is going to be an absolute flatline going to 2030 for those under the age of 4, an absolute

flatline for those between the age of 5 and 17.

"But starting in about 2010, those 65-plus are going to light up like a rocket. Plan for who's going to be here, not for what you just want right now," she said.

One man expressed dismay over the fact that the main pool is not 50 meters long.

"It doesn't seem right in a town that has a Division I swim team," he said.

The cost of using the facility was also a concern for some.

"My kids are on the CHIP program, but we don't qualify for any other aid, and the CHIP program doesn't help me for the 25 percent discount," one woman said. "There's a lot of people in my ballpark, so I'm very concerned about the costs."

Other attendees called for a simple scaling-back of the design, or expressed surprise that the park master plan was already adopted by the city council back in January.

Council member Steve Ward – also a member of the pool committee – was in attendance Tuesday night.

"You all have to remember, two years ago we went through a process of trying to find out what the community wanted for a pool, and we went through kids, we went through Facebook and we went through all types of social media, and the paper, trying to gather information about what the community wanted," Ward said. "The lazy river was the main thing that people wanted. It may not be the greatest feature for some people – it's certainly not my favorite thing to have – but it's what the kids seemed to want, and

seniors also."

For all the audience members who expressed criticism, there were as many who were supportive of the pool's design.

"This plan makes me think that Vermillion could become some degree of a destination for (area) kids to go to Vermillion to the pool, and I think that's a potential revenue boost, and that could help fund some of your lifeguard needs. I don't see any need to scale back," said one woman.

Another woman agreed, saying, "I have small children ... and we regularly pay to go to Brookings, and we spend money at Brookings, and we have to stay at a hotel in Brookings, because they have a nice pool. They have a pool that our kids want to go to and don't get tired of."

Ward said the renovation of the pool is part of an overall plan to help Vermillion grow in population.

"In order to do that, we have to attract businesses, we have to provide amenities that are going to attract people to the community, that makes it an attractive place to live," he said. "So, we're taking different tracks in this community to do all of those things, and I see this renovation of the pool in a more modern fashion as one of those investments in this community to allow it to grow and to attract younger people."

"People my age and younger, 30s and 40s, are dwindling in this community, and so we have to find a way to attract them," Ward said. "We have to attract them economically and socially ... so we can diversify our economy and help solve

our poverty problem that we have in this community, that allow people to get decent jobs that pay them well, beyond simply working retail or working in a low-paying job in the university. This is a part, I think, of a bigger plan to improve our community."

Ted Muenster said he felt Ward "hit it right on the head."

"Nobody hates poverty more than I do, and if we're going to throw the towel in to poverty and say, 'Oh, well, we can't afford to have good quality amenities for the people of our community,' then we're surrendering to poverty," Muenster said. "I think we need to defeat poverty by making Vermillion an attractive place for people to come and live, invest their money and start businesses."

City Manager John Prescott said that if the general obligation bond fails, he does not envision any work on the pool beginning next year.

Parks & Recreation Director Jim Goblirsch said the alternative is to keep the current 50-year-old pool running as-is until it runs into a major operation issue.

The city council will then have to decide the next step, Goblirsch said.

The *Vermillion Plain Talk* has covered this issue from the beginning, with stories appearing on the following dates, including:

- 2012
- Aug. 17
- 2013
- Jan. 11, June 28, Aug. 23,
- Sept. 6, Sept. 20, Nov. 22,
- Nov. 29
- 2014
- Jan. 24, May 16, May 23

OBITUARIES

Enrique Ollivier

Enrique Ollivier, 86, of Clovis, CA, passed away peacefully on Monday, July 14, 2014, in Las Vegas, NV,



Ollivier

surrounded by family.

Enrique was born on Dec. 13, 1927, in Saultillo, Coahuila Mexico of French and Italian descent to Jean Ollivier and Elvira Rincón.

In 1962, Enrique migrated to Vermillion, and joined the Modern Language Department at the University of South Dakota teaching Spanish and French for the next 30 years. In 1963 he married Concepción (nee Ramos) and began raising his family.

Although he had dedicated his professional life to teaching, his passion had been painting and drawing. During his lifetime, he returned to Mexico annually for months at a time. There, he produced much of his work and over his career had staged more than twenty five solo exhibitions. Aside from his artistic achievements, Enrique published a total

of eight books. His academic achievements include a Bachelor's degree in Humanities, Masters in Law in Mexico, Doctorate in Philosophy, and a Doctorate Summa Cum Laude in Spanish and Latin American Literature.

After retiring from the University of South Dakota in 1992, Enrique continued to travel and was fortunate to have called Miami, FL, Las Vegas, NV and Clovis, CA his home.

He leaves behind his wife of 51 years, Concepción; daughters, Elizabeth (Alvaro) De La Espriella of Las Vegas, NV, Lucy (Russ) Fike of Clovis, CA, Sandra Ollivier of Clovis, CA, and Conchita (Sam) Syed of Bendigo, Australia. So grateful for having had such a wonderful grandfather are Isabella, Alvaro, Emily and Sofia De La Espriella, Giavanna Fike, Alexandria Ollivier, and Adam and Ollie Syed.

Private family memorial was held in Las Vegas, NV on Tuesday, July 22, 2014, and a "Celebration of Life" mass will be scheduled at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Clovis, CA at a later date.

Library will host Green Living Festival Saturday afternoon

The Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library will host The Green Living Festival on Saturday, July 26, from 1-2:30 p.m.

This event will begin with a short presentation by Meghann Jarchow, sustainability coordinator from the University of South Dakota, followed by an open house where tables will be hosted by area vendors and participants.

Visitors can learn about new sustainable products, sample homemade foods using local produce, and gather information about plants, herbs and beekeeping. Participants include God's Green Earth, Greening Vermillion, Heikes Family Farm, Hy-Vee, Irish Twin Soaps, Prairie Moon Herbs, Sharing the Dream,

Vermillion Community Garden and the Vermillion Farmers Market.

The event will be held in the Kozak Room in the

library, located at 18 Church St. in Vermillion.

For more information call the library at (605) 677-7060.

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