

Forum

From Page 1

As part of the Nov. 4 general election, Vermillion residents decidedly passed a \$3.1 million bond issue for Prentis Park improvements. The project carries an estimated \$5.25 million price tag, with the lion's share — an estimated \$4 million — for constructing a new swimming pool with modern features. The new pool will replace the current structure which is nearly 50 years old.

The new amenities include a lazy river, water slides, floatable water walk, basketball hoop, one-meter diving tower, shade structures and zero-depth entry, water features, bench and shade.

The funds raised from the malt beverage tax would go to pay half of the interest and principal on the bond estimated to be approximately \$220,000 per year. The malt beverage tax is estimated to raise \$116,000 per year.

Mat Zeman, owner of Carey's Bar and Jesse Jastram, an employee of Dakota Beverage, spoke against the tax, while City Council member Steve Ward and Director and municipal pool committee member Shane Nordyke spoke in favor of the tax. The Malt Beverage forum was moderated by Craig Thompson.

Zeman stressed that those opposed to the tax are not against the pool project, but rather a special tax that targets a small portion of the population of the community.

"There have been several community members that have stated to me directly, that we, malt beverage license holders are against this community and the new pool park project," he said. "This couldn't be further from the truth. We are very much for improving our community and this project will do just that. It will be great for Vermillion. Our contention all along is that it should be paid for in a responsible way. To which this responsibility lies with the entire community not just a small portion."

He went on to say that malt beverage users are already taxed at a higher rate than everyone else in town.

"Sales of my establishment have gone down consistently from 4-7 percent in the five years I have been operating," Zeman said. "I can see sharp decreases in sales that directly coincide with the two times I have had to raise prices. The price raises were due to the rise in cost of wholesale, surcharges for deliveries and several other factors that any other business in town can point to on their invoices."

Stating that the only other option malt beverage license holders have, rather than passing the costs on to the consumers, is to pay the tax themselves, and reduce their profit margins, which Zeman said does not seem fair.

He also said he has issue with the city passing a tax, when they have said they have the money to pay for the project without the tax.

"The mayor himself, along with other council people have stated, definitively, that the city can pay for this pool without a new tax," Zeman said. "Construction will not cease, and all plans will go ahead if this tax is repealed. Our community development will go



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
A full house turned out to ask questions and listen to the issues regarding the upcoming June 30 election.

on without this extra taxation on a small minority of people."

However, Ward, in response to a question about the city's ability to pay for the project with the funds on hand stated:

"I think it is important for everyone to think about how \$125,000 could be taken out of our current budget," he said. "This is not a small amount. We fund things like the National Music Museum, WH Over Museum, all precious things that would be on the chopping block if we have to cut into our budget. The only other recourse would be to raise property taxes."

Ward said that Vermillion community members are already paying a higher property tax level than most in the state and he does not feel that is a viable option for this project.

Nordyke added that the community of Vermillion agreed that this was the way to go when they approved the bond in November.

"The idea that the city currently has the money to pay for this project is only if we cut things already being paid for, not sitting in excess — it could equal one or two people's jobs," she said. "Yeah, we have it if we are willing to cut the things we already have."

In response to a comment made during the forum that the pool project has not been delayed and is still on schedule by the June 30 election she said that is simply not true.

"The project has already been delayed and is about a year behind schedule," Nordyke said. "They are waiting to see what happens before moving forward on the project. The pool was scheduled to close at the end of July in order to allow construction to begin. It will now wait until the following spring to begin. Every delay we have is an increase in costs; every delay with contractor adds cost."

Daycare Ordinance Debate

Ordinance 1326 which requires registration of private, in-home, daycares with the city was approved by the City Council vote of 7-2 on April 13.

The ordinance requires a pro-

vider to register with the city. In order to obtain city certification the daycare provider will need to demonstrate safety items such as having a fire extinguisher, smoke detector, two ways out of basement space used for a daycare, safe electrical wiring, closets that prevent a child from being locked inside and other basic safety requirements, such as having a fenced in yard.

The ordinance allowed that a daycare which registered prior to July 1 would not require an inspection moving the first inspection of the property to 2016.

Moderated by Matt Fairholm, City Council member Parker Erickson and parent Laura Wiemers spoke against the ordinance, while Gera Jacobs, USD Professor and Council member Kathrine Price spoke in favor of the ordinance.

Wiemers said the issues that the ordinance raises are varied and cause undo hardships for in-home daycare providers in Vermillion.

"It is concerning to me, that at the April 6 council meeting, City Council members were asked questions regarding the ordinance and were unable to answer without the assistance of the city manager or the fire chief regarding what the ordinance actually said," she said. "When asked several questions regarding different portions of the ordinance it became clear to the audience that no one what sure what the ordinance actually contained, yet they passed it anyway."

She stressed that if the ordinance stays in place Vermillion could lose a significant portion of their providers and that the costs incurred would be passed on to parents, making affordable daycare unavailable for many.

However Price said that many of the providers who are threatening to close their doors are close to retirement and the ordinance would assure that the next generation of providers meet basic standards.

The panel all agreed that they did not believe there are any unsafe providers currently operating in Vermillion.

Price also said that the registration should be a comfort to parents in that, while they are not experts in fire code safety rules and regulations, the ones inspecting the day-

cares would be allowing the parents to focus on the provider and if they are a right fit for their family.

"Even after all the discussion, I don't understand how parents would not want their daycares locatable by fire and rescue crews or to have periodic fire inspections," she said.

However, Weimers questioned, if the ordinance is retained, will Vermillion lose daycares and what will happen if they do. Stating that she believes it will negatively affect the care options in town.

How To Vote

"Absentee voting can be done at the City Hall Finance office Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.," said city finance officer Mike Carlson. "The sample ballot has been approved and is available here at City Hall and are also available at the website. We have the absentee ballot application on our website, so if you are out of town you can download that, fill it out, have it notarized or send in a copy of a S.D. state identification card and we will send you a ballot. They have to be a registered voter within the city of Vermillion."

See a copy of the sample ballot on page 11 of this issue of the Plain Talk.

"Voting on the 30th will be held at the National Guard Armory," he said. "Voting will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Absentee Voting ends at 5 p.m. on June 29. In encourage everyone to bring a valid form of identification, however if they do not have it they can fill an affidavit out at the voting site."

An affidavit will consist of filling out a piece of paper certifying that you are the person you say you are, even though you do not have your identification with you.

To watch the video of the forum go to <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/64657622>.

For more information about the election go to <http://tinyurl.com/po89cgx>.

For election day results, follow the Plain Talk on Twitter at @plaintalk2 or on Facebook when editor, Shauna Marlette will be live reporting results from the National Guard Armory beginning at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 30.

Johnson

From Page 1

(Haacke) has been an employee for more than five years. She is very responsible. She just has the right attitude for the job. She took an interest in movies, not just about the job, which you have to have, because you are going to get asked questions about the movies: 'What did you like? Did you like this movie? Would you recommend this for kids?'"

Johnson also said he will miss opening nights of big movies the most.

"The last one of the big, big ones was 'Avengers,'" he said. "That anticipation the week before where you get phone calls, kids are excited, you can just tell when they come in the theatre. It makes your employees excited."

He added that he has many favorite movies that will remain favorites.

"My favorite movie is 'Star Wars Episode 4', the first one that came out, easily," he said. "Any of the 'Indiana Jones', sports movies like 'Rudy', 'Remember the Titans', 'Field of Dreams' — there are just so many good movies. I have seen a lot of bad movies, too. But, you just remember the good ones."

"Titanic" was the longest movie run like the old days. We ran it for 13-weeks, which in this day and age you just don't hear that. Even the week we came off we had one show where we almost sold out, but we only have two screens and it was time to move on."

As for favorite poster, it again went to a "Star Wars" film.

"My favorite movie poster is 'Revenge of the Jedi,' which didn't turn out to be the name of the movie, it was actually "Return of the Jedi" but it doesn't say that on the poster," Johnson said. "They sent out about 1,000 promotional posters with 'Revenge' on them. They asked theatres to destroy them, but I have two of them. I keep my favorite posters. All my collection includes all of the 'Star Wars.' I have all my favorite movies, the Disney's, award winners."

Johnson said the strangest moment will be when he returns to the Coyote Twin as a paying customer, but don't expect it anytime soon.

"It is going to be strange the first time I pay to go to a movie in Vermillion," he reflected. "I am going to have to wait awhile because in Vermillion I am checking what the employees are doing, is it warm enough in here, too cool. It is going to be a very good weird."

He also added that he is excited about the sale of the theatre to local owners.

"(The owner) wJack is 82 and is not going to put the investment back into the building, nor should he," Johnson said. "So for the new owners to be Vermillion people, my employees get to keep their jobs, all that is a huge plus."

Looking forward, Johnson has already began his next career.

"I am working at the high school as the head custodian," he said. "It is a full-time job but I don't bring my job home with me. My wife and I get to slow down a little bit. We have five grandchildren, with one on the way, so we are going to be able to go visit them more."

THE POWER OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

Whether your home uses natural gas or not, you may have buried natural gas pipelines under your property. Transporting natural gas through pipelines is a safe and reliable means of delivery to customers. MidAmerican Energy Company regularly tests our pipeline system to ensure the safety and reliability of our facilities. While we work diligently to monitor and maintain our delivery system, we rely on you to follow all natural gas safety rules and report any suspicion of leaks. Because of the importance of natural gas to our economy and everyday life, we all have a stake in the safety of the natural gas pipelines.

Signs of a natural gas leak:

- A hissing or whooshing sound
- Dirt being blown into the air
- Water bubbling or shooting into the air from a pond, creek or puddle
- A peculiar odor or dying shrubs or grass, perhaps near healthy plantings

If you observe any of these signs:

- Extinguish smoking materials and other small flames
- Do not attempt to extinguish a burning gas leak
- Turn off and abandon equipment; do not attempt to move any machinery
- Eliminate other sources of ignition (e.g., a nearby car with the engine running, cellphones)
- Leave the immediate area
- From a safe distance, call MidAmerican Energy at 800-595-5325 and/or call 911. (MidAmerican Energy will investigate the gas leak at no charge to the caller.)

Do not re-enter the area until you have been advised that it's safe.

Potential hazards of natural gas:

Fire or Explosion

- Extremely flammable — easily ignited by heat, sparks or flames
- Will form explosive mixtures with air
- Vapor may travel to ignition source and flashback

Health

- Leaking natural gas is a health hazard; it can cause loss of coordination, dizziness, and headache

Prevention measures:

- Regular inspections and maintenance of your gas appliances
- Keep the area around gas appliances and gas piping free from obstructions and combustible materials
- Provide access to the meter and equipment when necessary
- Never store flammable liquids in your home or near fuel-burning appliances
- Have gas appliance connectors checked for defects by a qualified plumbing and heating dealer



CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

To make sure you follow the law and don't strike underground natural gas and electrical lines, dial **One Call at 811** at least two business days before digging. **One Call: It's the law!**



Para obtener más información sobre seguridad con el gas natural visite nuestra página de Internet; y para obtener más información sobre las tuberías comuníquese al 888-427-5632. Tenemos representantes que le pueden asistir en español. Paid for by the customers of MidAmerican Energy Company.

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