

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING - WORK SESSION, JULY 13, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following Council Members present: Scott Nelson, Diane Graber, Larry Janssen, Mike Harmon, Rod Sankey. Honorary Council Member: Clyde Hoffman.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Janice Oberloh, City Clerk.

Others present: Julie Buntjer, Daily Globe: Justine Wettschreck, KWOA.

PRAIRIE VIEW GOLF COURSE DISCUSSION

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, said he had received a response back from the DNR regarding their interest in Prairie View Golf Course. Referring to a memo presented to Council from him, Mr. Robinson noted that in November of 2015, Council had taken official action to close and defund the course. A Committee established by Council to determine the best use of the property recommended that the City retain ownership of the property and convert the entire area into a nature area with the intent to improve water quality of Lake Okabena. Approximately 53% of the drainage into Lake Okabena comes through the course property.

The greens at the course have been maintained in the event they can be sold, and number of fairways have also been maintained so sod can be harvested and used in reconstruction of the soccer fields. The Okabena-Ocheda Watershed will be applying for a grant through the Minnesota Legacy Fund, once Wenck Engineering finalizes their plans to enhance treatment of storm water flowing through the course and on to Lake Okabena. Staff also looked at the opportunity of selling the property to the DNR for conversion to a wildlife management area. According to Mr. Robinson, a proposal received from the DNR contained the following guidelines:

- The City would issue a letter of intent to the DNR requesting an appraisal
- Nobles County Pheasants Forever would purchase the property from the City at 50% of the appraised value
- The City would undertake reconstruction and conversion of the property including storm water improvements and preparing the area for planting of native vegetation
- Once the area is ready for native vegetation, the DNR would purchase the property from Pheasants Forever at the previously agreed upon price

Mr. Robinson said this option would provide for a one-time infusion of funds through the sale of the property.

Council Member Sankey said he did not understand giving up ownership of the property at half the value. Council Member Janssen asked about the possibility of buildable lots there. Mayor Kuhle responded that we've been down that road before and it was found not feasible. Council Member Janssen said he thought the City should continue to own the property. Mayor Kuhle said he does not want us to own it for a long time.

Council Member Graber said the City had previously, as a group, committed to changing it to a wildlife area - either us or the DNR, and we should not be complicating it by discussing other options like housing. We've already made that decision. Council Member Sankey asked if Council had made that decision. Council Member Graber responded they had. Council Member Nelson thought the decision was to maintain water quality. Council Member Sankey said it was to close the course and maintain water quality. Council Member Graber said it was also to make it into a nature place.

Council Member Harmon, who was part of the Prairie View Committee, said he concurred with Council Member Graber. Council Member Graber said she was insulted by the DNR's offer. Mr. Robinson noted that any appraisal provided by the City would not be honored by the DNR - we would need to request that they provide an appraisal.

Council consensus was to obtain additional information, and an informal appraisal, and to get a larger group together for an additional work session. Staff will also find out what Pheasant Forever's position is on this if the DNR is not involved. Mr. Robinson also noted that the November action by Council regarding Prairie View is available on the City's website.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Janssen, seconded by Council Member Nelson and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 p.m.

Janice Oberloh, MCMC
City Clerk