

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA  
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL RETREAT  
Saturday, March 1, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Retreat of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted at the Hastings Public Library, Second Floor Conference Room, 314 N. Denver Ave, on March 1, 2025.

The Council Retreat was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mayor Beckby

The following members were present: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong.  
Nays: None. Absent: None.

The following City Officials were present: City Administrator, Mark Funkey; City Attorney, Jesse Oswald; Utility Manager, Derek Zeisler; City Clerk, Tyler Ficken; Police Chief, Adam Story; Director of Development Services, Chad Bunger; Director of Finance/City Treasurer, Roger Nash; Public; Information Manager, Tony Herrman.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited.

Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Michael Anderson to adopt current agenda for March 1, 2025 Mayor and Council Retreat. Roll Call: Ayes: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** - Official Notice of the Mayor and City Council Retreat was published in the Hastings Tribune on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available for public review and a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted and accessible to members of the public.

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**1. Needs of the City.**

City Administrator Funkey provided an overview of the internal efforts to meet the needs of the strategic plan; housing, economic development, and performance innovation. Discussion was had regarding the challenges of competing with other communities for development projects and the importance of marketing Hastings' Utilities and amenities to attract development. The process of economic development with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development was discussed, including the value of attracting smaller economic development that can accumulate to large growth. Development trends are moving from providing spec buildings to attract investment towards community amenities and housing that attract employers. The Schnase 1906 District was provided as an example of an opportunity for growth and development using local talent.

LB840 and a Food and Beverage Tax were discussed as opportunities with the added benefit that visitors to Hastings would be paying the taxes in addition to the Hastings taxpayers. An emphasis was placed on the need to identify specific projects of value for the voters to win support for the tax initiatives.

Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Michael Anderson to recess for seven minutes at 9:55 a.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong. Absent: Brad Consbruck. Nays: Marc Rowan. Motion carried. Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Michael Anderson to reconvene at 10:02 a.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong. Absent: None. Nays: None. Motion carried.

## **2. Discussion Topics.**

Chief Story discussed staffing levels and response times, noting that emergencies are prioritized over non-emergency calls. Concerns were raised regarding the safety of middle school students at crosswalks and the possibility of crossing bridges to improve safety. Distracted driving laws were discussed, and Chief Story provided that cell phone use while driving is a secondary offense. Council highlighted various traffic related concerns.

Utility Manager Derek Zeisler provided information on the state of Hastings' Utilities and the potential for future nuclear energy use. The Utilities contributions to economic development were discussed including the Utilities participation in funding the HEDC.

Discussion included the need to bring back concerts to local parks; the challenges of hosting concerts include the need for big names or sponsors to make the events profitable. The need for indoor facilities for sports was discussed; private donations or

partnerships with schools could be leveraged to address the need. The Council discussed facilities in other communities and highlighted the need for public-private partnership to fund a facility with the goal of attracting local teams and increasing community engagement. The facility could also house a senior center. The value of expanding access to parks and recreation facilities was discussed by highlighting the importance of bike paths and sidewalk construction to provide safe routes to those amenities; there needs to be a special focus on areas with high residential growth.

Community branding was discussed with respect to Kool Aid with examples of other communities adopting community themes; emphasis was placed on the necessary cooperation with KRAFT to explore branding opportunities. Efforts towards updating City code were discussed with an emphasis on code enforcement consistency and discussion on the current building code software limitations.

Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Marc Rowan to recess for nine minutes at 11:38 a.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Absent: None. Nays: Brian Hoffman. Motion carried. Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Michael Anderson to reconvene at 11:47 a.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman. Absent: Matt Fong. Nays: None. Motion carried.

### **3. Council Goals.**

Michael Anderson: Finalizing the Micro TIF process for the 15 applications to live at the property they are applying for – Worksession to be held on March 17, 2025

Larry Consbruck: A review of City investments for competitive bid process; budget and property taxes

Brad Consbruck: Do well by citizens to reduce taxes and make doing business easier

Steve Huntley: South side bike trail and safe way for students to cross the railroad tracks to the Middle School

Maggie Esch: Develop Entertainment District and make it easier to do business in the community

Marc Rowan: A project for a recreation center should include a senior center

Brian Hoffman: additional sales tax revenue sources as discussed should be focused on specific projects with intention and education of the public

### **4. Budget.**

City Administrator Funkey stated that following discussion with the Mayor, a subcommittee including Council Members Larry Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, and Brian Hoffman has been developed for reviewing the budget. The sessions

will include an initial budget overview followed by utilities, and each City department. Notes from the meetings will be forwarded to the balance of the Council.

**5. Summary.**

City Administrator Funkey provided his takeaways from the meeting to include: have conversations with the HEDC/Chamber of Commerce at Worksessions, strategic plan updates, LB840 & ½ cent sales tax, school and pedestrian safety. Council Member Rowan expressed his gratitude for the open communication during the meeting. Brad Consbruck enjoyed hearing the perspectives of the Council.

Moved by Councilmember Steve Huntley seconded by Councilmember Brad Consbruck there being no further business before the Council to adjourn at 12:23 p.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Brian Hoffman, Marc Rowan Nays: None. Absent: Matt Fong. The motion carried.

APPROVED:

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George J.J. Beckby, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tyler Ficken, City Clerk

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