

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, March 17, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Worksession Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted at the Hastings Municipal Airport, 3300 W. 12th Street, on March 17, 2025.

The Worksession Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Council President Steve Huntley with the following members present: Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong.

City Officials Present: Mayor Jay Beckby, Mark Funkey, Jesse Oswald, Lori Vorderstrasse, Adam Story, Troy Vorderstrasse, Erik Nielsen, Roger Nash, Jeff Hassenstab, Lee Vrooman, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson, Tony Herrman, Lori Hartman, Chad Bunger, Trent Clark, Samantha Rundle, Joseph Chapman.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Moved by Brad Consbruck seconded by Michael Anderson to adopt the current agenda for the March 17, 2025 City Council Worksession. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong. Nays: None. The motion carried.

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, March 14, 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

Micro TIF: Willis Hunt, 616 Madden Road
Sign, Small Wind Energy Systems, Nonconformities: Shannon Hoff, 1325 Highland Drive

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Presentation of Museum Annual Report.

Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson, Museum Director, began her presentation on the 2023-24 Hastings Museum Annual Report. She reviewed where the Museum's income comes from and stated a fair share comes from property tax, lodging tax and motor vehicle tax. She spoke about the increase in store sales and about steady attendance and memberships. Ms. Kreutzer-Hodson talked about the Hastings Museum Foundation and their support of the Museum. She shared with the Council the increase they have had in School Program participants and the walking and bus tours. She reviewed with the Council the expenses and indicated employee wages and benefits were the largest expense. She discussed what the Museum does as far as exhibits, programs, classes (outdoor classroom also), Kool-Aid Days, tours, and alternative theater uses. She mentioned to the Council that they are an accredited Museum. Ms. Kreutzer-Hodson talked about the Museum's community outreach, communication, marketing and advertising that is done. She spoke about the support system of interns and volunteers and about the Hastings Museum Board that ensures the Museum operates in a legal, ethical and professional manner. She told Council the biggest responsibility the Museum has is to

safeguard the collections held in public trust. Ms. Kreutzer-Hodson spoke briefly about donations, accessioning and de-accessioning and the cost of keeping objects in storage. She also thanked the interdepartmental help the Museum receives. She reviewed 2024-25 goals and spoke about replacing the roof and life safety updates and 2025-26 goals of replacing HVAC systems and expanding compact storage systems. She indicated the Museum is a part of the half-cent sales tax, a part of which went to the compact storage units and for the second floor renovation involving Kool-Aid, the Naval Ammunition Depot and local history exhibit. Ms. Kreutzer-Hodson also made the Council aware that federal grants for the Museum may be harder to come by in the future.

Presentation of Library Annual Report.

Joseph Chapman, Hastings Public Library Experience Supervisor, spoke regarding the Hastings Library 2023-24 Annual Report. He began by mentioning Jessica Brock, Library Advisory Board President, and Shelly Tork, Hastings Library Foundation President. He talked about connecting throughout the community with new services like the new online calendar, new printing software and new 3D printers. He mentioned the programs the Library offers and specifically STEAM Tweens, Teen Underground, book clubs, humanities speakers, Senior Planet, geocache hunt, and a partnership with the Adams County Justice Center. He mentioned the Gold rating from the Nebraska Library Commission that the Library received. Mr. Chapman talked about the Summer Reading 2024 program and that it is instrumental in avoiding a summer months slump. He highlighted the Master Gardeners and their help taking care of the Library green space and National Librarian Day and how it is always nice to receive recognition from the community. He reviewed various Library stats with Council and spoke about funding, with \$227,850.92 coming from County funds and \$1,415,705.57 coming from City funds. He concluded by stating that the Library brings tremendous value to the community. Council President Huntley questioned where they were on the hiring of a new Library Director. Mark Funkey, City Administrator, indicated that the application submission closing date was March 25th and they will go through the interview process shortly after that.

Discussion of Micro TIF (Tax Increment Financing).

Chad Bunger, Development Services Director, talked about what staff had proposed regarding who Micro TIF should be offered to, with that being all qualifying residential properties, all designated blighted and substandard areas, limiting the total number of applications received to 15 in a calendar year, review every six months to determine appropriate workload and program success, begin program on June 1, 2025. He cautioned the Council not to put a lot of guard rails on things until they know what is going to happen. He stated that they were ready to bring back a resolution at the first meeting in April if the Council chooses to do so.

Council President Huntley questioned if it would be a resolution or an ordinance. Jesse Oswald, City Attorney, indicated it would be a resolution. He also asked if this was just residential property at this time. Mr. Bunger indicated that would be his suggestion, but it is up to the Council. Councilmember Hoffman asked about maximums and minimums. Mr. Bunger stated that the state statutes create the maximums and he suggested keeping the numbers where they are. Councilmember Brad Consbruck stated it was his understanding that it could cover either residential or commercial or residential and commercial. Mr. Bunger said it certainly could, but his proposal is just residential. Councilmember Fong suggested starting with residential as a target and he advocated for the six month review. Council President Huntley asked about the 15 per year and questioned if they should divide per month. Councilmember Fong felt they didn't need the additional red tape and to overly complicate the process. He suggested they let staff figure out if it is working and not make restrictions to start with a new program. Mr. Bunger indicated he didn't know how it would go but that he is not necessarily concerned as there are

steps to go through first before applying for Micro TIF. Councilmember Brad Consbruck stated he felt they shouldn't put a limit on it because they will review it in six months anyway and they can address it at that time. Councilmember Consbruck stated he felt this is a great opportunity for homeowners. Councilmember Anderson asked about requirements. Mr. Bunger stated that it has to increase the property value after the project is completed.

Mr. Bunger indicated he would like feedback from Council on the decision points and if they should do this. Councilmember Huntley asked about a quicker start date. Mr. Bunger indicated they still have some work to do with staff and other entities and they would like to have some time to get the process right. Mr. Bunger stated that the Development Services Department would want to be the first stop to have initial conversations with those interested in the program. Councilmember Brad Consbruck indicated that he felt what the staff came up with was good to get started with. Councilmember Fong stated he agreed. Councilmember Anderson asked how the program would be promoted. Mr. Bunger stated they would promote through engagement pages already created, City of Hastings Public Information Manager, TV, radio channels, fliers and word of mouth. It was the general consensus of the Council to move forward with offering the program. Mr. Bunger stated it would come back before Council at the first meeting in April.

Discussion of the draft of Zoning Regulation updates including a rewrite of Section 34-309. Signs, Section 34-314. Small Wind Energy Systems, and Article VI - Nonconformities.

Mr. Bunger stated they are working on three code updates and hoping to make things simpler. He started with Section 34-309. Signs. He indicated they worked hard on getting feedback. He said that the purpose of the sign code is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction through a comprehensive system of reasonable, effective, consistent, content-neutral, and non-discriminatory sign standards and requirements. He hit the highlights of the sign code: standards for nonconforming signs, signs exempted from regulations, regulated signs exempt from sign permit requirements, specific sign type standards. Mr. Bunger explained that they went through each district reviewing standards.

He began the review of Article VI - Nonconformities. Mr. Bunger stated that a nonconformity is uses, lots, structures, or other site improvements that were lawful at the time they were established/built, and continued in generally the same fashion since that time, and some element of the zoning regulations changed to make it nonconforming to the current regulations. Mr. Bunger indicated to the Council that staff will not actively search for nonconformities. He stated that draft regulation intentions are created to allow nonconformities to continue to exist and be used productively. He reviewed with Council nonconforming uses (most problematic), nonconforming structures, nonconforming lots, and nonconforming site development.

Mr. Bunger began the review of Section 34-314. Small Wind Energy Systems. He spoke regarding small turbines on private property and discussed current code setbacks and height and proposed code setbacks and allowed heights.

Councilmember Anderson asked about permanent signs on the sidewalks and removing lights for signs. Mr. Bunger stated they don't get too involved with the sidewalks since it is public property, however, for downtown they did write in some standards. Mr. Bunger indicated that with the sign downtown that is being referred to, city staff went with the use of public right-of-way permit through the Engineering Department and they spent months reviewing the request and he indicated that the process is open to anyone. He said that they try to be accommodating to businesses and they would do it for that owner or any other owner. Councilmember Hoffman asked if the Planning Commission has been involved in this process and helped vet these

codes. Mr. Bunger told Council that they started this process last April and met with the Chamber of Commerce, HEDC, BID, staff researched and met with Planning Commission as well as an ad hoc committee of the Planning Commission. He indicated that attendance wasn't huge at meetings. Councilmember Fong asked Mr. Bunger to speak to the process moving forward. Mr. Bunger said that Council can talk more about it, Council can provide feedback, the code changes are drafted and ready to go if Council is ready. Councilmember Huntley asked about the recodification and would these changes affect that. Mr. Oswald indicated it would not affect it all. Councilmember Huntley asked if the recodification was coming to next month's worksession. Mr. Oswald indicated it would be on an agenda next month at whichever meeting the Mayor and Council chose. Councilmember Rowan asked about the removal of a light downtown in front of a sign and do we have rules. Mr. Bunger indicated that is an Engineering Department topic. Lee Vrooman, City Engineer, indicated lights are on a case by case basis and that they need to make sure the system or infrastructure is still functional, whatever the system might be. Councilmember Rowan stated he was just concerned about the ambiance downtown. Councilmember Esch stated we sometimes need to look at the big picture because our downtown is really an asset to our community and businesses appreciate the city being flexible and figuring out how to get to yes, rather than putting up more red tape. She stated they need to focus on what an asset those businesses are to our community and that they are turning into destinations for Hastings. Council President Huntley asked what Mr. Bunger was looking for from the Council. Mr. Bunger stated that the Planning Commission has reviewed the changes so they can bring the changes forward for adoption or can pause if the Council needs more time. Councilmember Hoffman stated he felt they are ready to move the revisions on to the Planning Commission. Mr. Bunger stated he would proceed with putting the revisions before the Planning Commission for adoption in April.

Moved by Marc Rowan seconded by Maggie Esch there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong. Nays: None. The motion carried.