Work Session of the City Council, City of Farmington, New Mexico, held Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room at City Hall, 800 Municipal Drive, Farmington, New Mexico, in full conformity with the rules, regulations and ordinances of the municipality.

At such meeting the following were present, constituting a quorum:

MAYOR
Nate Duckett

COUNCILORS
Linda G. Rodgers
Sean E. Sharer
Jeanine Bingham-Kelly
Janis Jakino

constituting all the members of the Governing Body.

Also present were:

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
Julie Baird

CITY ATTORNEY
Jennifer Breakell

CITY CLERK
Dianne Smylie

PRESENTATION/REGIONAL BROADBAND SERVICES PLAN

Former Mayor Tom Taylor introduced Miriam Gillow-Wiles, Executive Director for the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments ("COG"), noting that he met her at a Four Corners Future Forum where broadband issues were being discussed. He stated that she will be providing a brief overview of the work being done by her office and then asking the Council to consider financial participation in a regional broadband project.

Ms. Gillow-Wiles reported that she is based out of Durango, Colorado and assists the five counties located in the southwest part of the state by focusing on aging, the environment, housing, telecommunications, transportation and tourism. She explained that her office is working to develop a regional broadband plan that will stretch from Cortez to Shiprock to Farmington to Aztec and back to Durango for the purpose of creating redundancy which will improve reliability and increase opportunities for economic development (such as data centers). She reported that she has requested $15,000 from San Juan County and is seeking an additional $15,000 from the City of Farmington to assist with the engineering costs, noting that the entire project is slated to cost $74,000 with the State of Colorado contributing $39,000 and the local internet providers contributing $6,000. She advised the Council that she will submit a formal request for consideration at a later date.

Councillor Sharer expressed his support for the proposed project.

In response to inquiry from Councillor Jakino, Ms. Gillow-Wiles reported that she has been discussing this project with the Ute Mountain Ute and the Southern Ute Indian tribes and both seem interested in the project but noted that she has not yet made contact with the Navajo Nation.

In closing, Mayor Duckett expressed his support for engaging in regional projects with the State of Colorado for economic development purposes.

SAN JUAN WATER COMMISSION UPDATE

Jay Burnham, the City’s representative to the San Juan Water Commission, provided a historical overview of the Animas-La Plata ("A-LP") project that was initially started in 1908 with the idea of diverting water from the Animas river valley to the La Plata river valley. He stated that nothing happened with this project until 1968 when Congress passed the original legislation authoring the A-LP project which included storage on the Animas River with diversion to the La Plata River through canals, aqueducts and tunnels. In 1979, the definite plan report was created which identified numerous environmental concerns and resulted in the project being halted. During this time, he pointed out that changes in legislation prohibited federal water projects from being...
released to local entities without payment so in 1986 the San Juan Water Commission ("SJWC") was created for the purpose of providing a mechanism to reinforce the federal government for our portion of the A-LP project. He explained that SJWC was created through a Joint Powers Agreement ("JPA") executed by the Cities of Aztec, Bloomfield and Farmington, San Juan County and the rural water user associations and consists of five voting members and alternates (one from each entity). Mr. Burnham reported that in 1990, the voters approved a referendum which authorized SJWC to enter into an agreement with the federal government to pay a portion of the A-LP project with monies from a county mill levy. Furthermore, he noted that an iconic contract was negotiated whereby SJWC would pay its share up-front in an effort to reduce the interest costs with an adjustment being made after the project is completed. He explained that in the year 2000, Congress passed a bill amending the original A-LP by removing the La Plata River from the project. He noted that construction of the modified project was completed in 2002 project with the construction of Lake Nighthorse located in Durango, Colorado. Mr. Burnham also pointed out that requests for water from Lake Nighthorse can be made in times of drought by members of the association and the beneficiaries of the project and stated that SJWC is responsible for paying for our share of the operation, maintenance and repair of the A-LP project.

Continuing his presentation, Mr. Burnham reported that the priorities of the SJWC have changed over the years due to the A-LP project being completed, noting that their current mission is to protect the use of future and existing water rights and water resources of its member for the purpose of ensuring that every citizen of San Juan County has access to an adequate water supply. He explained that SJWC owns Permit No. 2883 from the State Engineer’s Office for the A-LP project water which has three sub-permits known as A, B and C. He noted that sub-permit A relates to the water that is necessary to operate the A-LP project while sub-permit B refers to 10,400 acre feet of water rights that were original to the project and allocated to the member entities as set forth in the JPA. He noted, however, that sub-permit C contains water rights that were originally allocated to the A-LP project but were not used because the modified project was constructed. He reported that SJWC has acquired these water rights (approximately 6,300 acre feet) through litigation with the State Engineer’s Office and holds them solely in their name. He stated that he has argued that those rights should be returned to the member entities but noted that the effort has been voted down since San Juan County and the rural water users are opposed. He reported that currently, he is working with SJWC to establish written policies for requesting water releases from Lake Nighthorse during times of drought and noted that funds have been budgeted in Fiscal Year 2020 to pay the adjusted costs that are still owed by the A-LP project. In closing, he noted that SJWC is currently monitoring invasive species and working on regional water planning efforts and water quality issues.

With regard to the regard, Public Works Director David Sypher reported that a preliminary study completed two years ago indicates that it will cost between $150 million to $250 million to construct a pipeline from Lake Nighthorse to Lake Farmington. He noted, however, that it is critical that such a project be constructed in order to ensure that the water released is not stolen, contaminated or subject to evaporation while traveling down the Animas River. He stated that he believes that this project can be accomplished within the next 50 years.

Mayor Duckett agreed that it is important to provide redundancy when talking about telecommunications and water resources and stated that one option could be the expansion of Lake Farmington or the construction of a shared storage facility for SJWC member entities.

PRESENTATION/PROJECT SEARCH

Human Resources Director Tom Swenk introduced Chelsea Chairion and Rogerann Leith, Skills Trainers for the public schools, and reported that Project Search is an internship program for students with disabilities, ages 18-22, that prepares them for integrated, competitively-paid work. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, he noted that Project Search started in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1996 and he proudly reported that the City of Farmington is the first municipality in the nation to implement this type of program. He explained that the interns complete three 10-week internships where they gained practical employability skills at the Human Resources Department, the Recreation and Aquatic Centers, Sycamore Park
Community Center, the Farmington Museum, Four Corners Regional Airport, the Regional Animal Shelter, the Parks and Recreation Administrative offices and the Bonnie Dallas Senior Center. In addition, he stated that the interns also spent time working at Home2Suites and the Farmington Municipal Schools bus barn. He proudly reported that during their time in the program, they were also taught independent life skills such as opening a checking account, purchasing grocery items based on a budget and preparing a meal utilizing the items purchased. In closing, he announced that this has been a collaborative effort between the City, the local school districts, Presbyterian Medical Services, University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. He reported that the interns will be graduating on May 8, 2019 at the Farmington Civic Center and he invited the Mayor and Council to attend.

Mr. Swenk asked the interns who were present in the audience to introduce themselves. Kayla Baca announced that she worked at the Farmington Museum, Aquatics Center and the Parks and Recreation Administration office. Anna Alvarez reported that she spent time cleaning rooms at Home2Suites and Randy Griffith announced that he served food at the Bonnie Dallas Senior Center.

In response to inquiry from Councilor Rodgers, Mr. Swenk reported that there are 12 candidates being considered for next year’s program and stated that he can assist private businesses with participation in the program.

ICONIC PARK/FARMINGTON MUSEUM

Outdoor Recreation Industry Initiative (ORII) Director Cory Styron introduced Bob Oberdorfer and Andrew Bernard, Environmental Planner and Landscape Architects for Sites Southwest.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Oberdorfer provided a project overview of the proposed iconic park to be located on the east side of the Farmington Museum along Main Street. He pointed out that there are some development constraints with the property since it is long and narrow, fronts a busy road and is surrounded by commercial properties. However, he pointed out that the site also provides high visibility, is adjacent to the museum, overlooks the Animas River corridor, has direct connection to the Animas River trail and is the existing location of the Grower’s Market. He noted that the aspects that make a space “iconic” are its ability to 1) accommodate a range of events from small performances to festivals and festeas; 2) allow for different uses of the park for various groups; 3) balance functionality and form; 4) offer places for people to sit and watch other people; 5) provide opportunities for art and regional expression; and 5) offer a memorable experience. He reviewed the public involvement component of the project, noting that four open house presentations for the three initial concepts (Central Plaza, Flowing and Node) were held in November, 2018 with 30 participants and an online survey was released in March, 2019 with 233 responses being submitted. He reported that there was a strong preference for Concept 2 (Flowing) with some desirable features from Concept 1 (Central Plaza) along with favorable support for rustic or rustic/modern hybrid styles and natural materials.

Mr. Bernard reviewed in detail the three initial concepts and reported that they are now recommending the Final Combined Conceptual Master Plan that incorporates features from Concepts 1 and 2 and includes a terraced berm with recreational-themed sculptures and a “selfie” sculpture.

Following the presentation, Mr. Styron reported that staff is seeking direction from the Council on the types of features to be included in the iconic park design.

Mayor Duckett stated that he sees this as a great opportunity to showcase the river and encompass and promote the mission of outdoor recreation. Discussion followed concerning the development of the area to possibly include botanical, pollinator and butterfly gardens that could be used by children’s groups and master gardeners for educational purposes. Other ideas included the creation of a “destination” park that incorporates sponsorship and community buy-in.
Assistant City Manager Julie Baird pointed out that the Connie Gotsch Art Foundation has made a monetary donation for construction of a theater at the Museum which will create additional elements to support the park. Museum Director Bart Wilsey expressed his support for the project but pointed out that the Final Combined Conceptual Master Plan eliminates one of the egress points which, he believes, will create traffic congestion. Ms. Baird pointed out that the purpose for today’s discussion is to provide direction on the overall plan, noting that the exact details will be decided as the project progresses.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to proceed with the conceptual design of the iconic park and Mayor Duckett asked them to provide their “wish list” of items to include (e.g. a botanical garden).

OPEN MEETINGS RESOLUTION – REGULAR WORK SESSION DAY, TIME AND PLACE

In accordance with the State Open Meetings Act, City Attorney Jennifer Breakell presented and read by title a resolution setting and establishing the regular day, time and place for City Council Work Sessions as the third Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the Municipal Building, 800 Municipal Drive, Farmington, New Mexico.

Thereupon, a motion was made by Councilor Rodgers, seconded by Councilor Jakino to pass and adopt the resolution as presented. The roll was called with the following result:

Those voting aye: Linda G. Rodgers
Sean E. Sharer
Jeanine Bingham-Kelly
Janis Jakino

Those voting nay: None

The presiding officer thereupon declared that four Councilors having voted in favor thereof, the said motion carried and the resolution was duly passed and adopted.

There being no further business to come before the Council, a motion was made by Councilor Rodgers, seconded by Councilor Sharer to adjourn the meeting at 11:01 a.m., and upon voice vote the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVED this 14th day of May, 2019.

Nate Duckett, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dianne Smylie, City Clerk

SEAL