Special Work Session of the City Council, City of Farmington, New Mexico, held Monday, May 13, 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:

MAJOR
Nate Duckett

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

constituting all members of the Governing Body.

Also present were:

CITY MANAGER
Rob Mayes

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
Julie Baird

CITY ATTORNEY
Jennifer Breakell

CITY CLERK
Dianne Smylie

STRATEGIC PLANNING/FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET/COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION & ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION FUND (CTED)

Providing opening remarks, Mayor Duckett reported that the purpose for today’s meeting is to provide direction to staff regarding the projects to be budgeted in the Community Transformation & Economic Diversification ("CTED") Fund for Fiscal Year 2020. He suggested that for the next two years, monies from the CTED Fund be earmarked for improvements to existing facilities instead of bonding for new projects.

City Manager Rob Mayes directed the Council’s attention to a handout titled, “CTED Activity Listing” and he asked the Council to score each of the projects listed alphabetically based on their level of interest and return it to staff within the next week. He explained that this will help staff determine which projects are of the most interest. He also reviewed in detail the handout titled, “204 Economic Development and ORII Expenditures - FY2020 Project Budget,” and noted that $307,142 of revenue is currently unallocated. He also directed the Council’s attention to a handout titled, “14 Year Fund Projection” for CTED and pointed that this sheet offers scenarios for bonding half of the revenues available in the CTED Fund beginning in the year 2022.

Noting that 20 percent of the salary, taxes and benefits associated with the Public Affairs Administrator have been allocated to the CTED Fund, Mayor Duckett stated that he believes that communication is key to making the outdoor recreation industry initiative ("ORII") successful and suggested that staff consider allowing amateur and/or professional drone and GoPro footage on the City's social media outlets. Discussion followed concerning the efforts being made by the Convention & Visitors Bureau ("CVB") to market the outdoor recreation activities and the permitting requirements of the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") regarding commercial and organized groups filming on federally-owned property.

At the request of Councilor Rodgers, Economic Development Director Warren Unsicker explained the efforts that are being made to attract new business to the area. Mr. Mayes reminded the Council that the City’s contribution to Four Corners Economic Development is proposed to be reduced from $155,000 to $80,000 this year in an effort to more directly focus on Farmington’s economic development while still contributing to the regional efforts.

Mr. Mayes reported that, at this time, staff intends to transition the meeting to the presentation portion and he asked ORII Director Cory Styron to address the Council.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Styron reminded the Council that the outdoor recreation industry employs 6.1 million
individuals and is the fourth largest economic sector when comparing annual consumer spending. He also noted that it is possible to do all 10 of the outdoor recreation sectors within 90 miles of Farmington, but pointed out that New Mexico is currently ranked sixth with respect to the outdoor recreation economy. Mr. Styron provided the Council with a copy of the Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence Accord adopted by the States of Colorado, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming and stated that he believes that it is important to keep the seven principles of conservation, stewardship, education, workforce training, economic development and public health and wellness at the forefront as the outdoor recreation industry progresses in our community. He displayed a video that was developed by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism that showcases the mountain bike trails that have been developed in the area and their economic impact.

Mr. Styron introduced Doug McKim, Outdoor Recreation Specialist for the BLM. Addressing the Council, Mr. McKim reported that the BLM will be celebrating the opening of the Brown Spring campground and off-highway vehicle (OHV) training area this Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and he invited them to attend. He also noted that the BLM has 1) partnered with San Juan county for the recreational trails grant to enhance existing trails and provide better parking areas; 2) is installing a double-vault toilet, a shade structure and doing road improvements in the Bisti wilderness area; 3) is installing a double-vault toilet and has expanded the parking area at the Alien Run Mountain Bike trail; and 4) has received additional grant funding in Fiscal Year 2021 for additional improvements in the Glade area to include directional signage, parking and access.

Mayor Ducckett expressed his appreciation for the amount of money that has been invested in the trails programs over the past five years and stated that he is pleased that the federal, state and local governments are working together for a common good. He suggested that the City include a link on its website for access to the interactive maps being offered by the San Juan County Geographical Information Systems Department.

RECESS

Mayor Ducckett called a recess at 10:55 a.m.

The meeting was reconvened by the Mayor at 11:05 a.m. with all members of the Council being present.

Bicycle Connectivity

Public Works Director David Sypher introduced Traffic Engineer Isaac Blue Eyes and reported that staff has identified 32 dead-end bicycle pathways with regard to the north-south connection and access to the Animas River. As a result, he noted that staff was tasked with the responsibility of trying to resolve some of the issues and has identified 12 solutions that will cost less than $25,000.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Blue Eyes reported that staff has identified opportunities for new bikeways through the use of signs, shared lanes, restriping and a couple of road diets. He noted that the first part of the presentation will focus on improving bikeways to the Animas River with the second part focusing on City facilities and the Main Street Complete Streets project. With regard to connectivity to the Animas River, Mr. Blue Eyes recommended that Miller Avenue between Murray Drive and Broadway be restriped to include four-foot bicycle paths on each side (estimated cost of $2,700); that two flashing beacons be installed at the intersection of Main Street and Tucker Avenue to provide direct access to the All Veterans Memorial Park on the Animas River trails (estimated cost of $11,000); and that a bicycle/equestrian trail be constructed along the Echo Ditch from Southside River Road to Animas Park located on Browning Parkway on property owned by Pifen Hills Community Church (cost to be incurred by the Church). He also reviewed a plan to create a bikeway along Broadway by removing the concrete medians from Cedar Street to Ivie Street and installing asphalt for restriping. However, he noted that the cost to complete this project is $161,300 so staff is not recommending completion at this time. Moving to the second part of his presentation, Mr. Blue Eyes recommended that North Sullivan Avenue between 20th Street and 30th Street be reduced to two lanes with six-foot bike paths being developed on each side (estimated cost of $3,100); that the four driving lanes on South Sullivan Avenue between
Main Street and San Juan Boulevard be reduced to two with six-foot bike paths on each side (estimated cost of $850); that 20th Street between Sullivan Avenue and Carlton Avenue be restriped to add two, four-foot bicycle lanes (estimated cost of $1,600); that a connection from 20th Street to Bisti Bay at Brookside Park water park be established by restriping Cooper Street, 15th Street, Boyd Avenue and 18th Street to create shared lanes (no cost since the markings and signs will be absorbed in the Streets Division budget); that Main Street from Auburn Avenue to Court Avenue be restriped to include two, eleven-foot travel lanes, two six-foot parking assist lanes and two, eight-foot parking lanes (this cost is also being absorbed in the Streets Division budget); and that the number of travel lanes on Main Street from Fairgrounds Road to San Juan Boulevard be reduced from seven to five with two, five-foot bike lanes on each side (estimated cost of $4,000). He also recommended that Main Street from Court Avenue to Fairgrounds Road be widened by five feet on both sides to allow for four travel lanes and two bike lanes, but noted that this option is not being recommended at this time due to the $1.4 million cost estimate.

Mr. Hayes highlighted the potential political ramifications that the Council should carefully consider before approving staff’s recommendations to reduce traffic lanes.

Following a detailed discussion concerning the political ramifications balanced by the safety improvements of reducing the number of travel lanes on Sullivan Avenue and Main Street, a motion was made by Councilor Rodgers, seconded by Councilor Sharer to direct staff to immediately proceed with staff’s recommendations to increase bike connectivity utilizing $27,000 from the CTED Fund.

RECESS

Mayor Duckett called a recess for lunch at 11:44 a.m.

The meeting was reconvened by the Mayor at 12:19 p.m. with all members of the Council being present.

Acknowledging that there is not adequate time to discuss all of the projects listed in today’s presentation, Mayor Duckett suggested that the projects not discussed at today’s meeting be scheduled for consideration at future regularly-scheduled meetings of the City Council.

Aerial Adventures

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Styron reviewed the proposed aerial adventure projects being proposed at Lake Farmington, noting that the estimated cost to construct the twin tower system on the north end is $1.5 million. He also pointed out that two operational models have been analyzed, one where the City operates the facility and a second where it is operated by a professional partner, noting that the cash flow projections and operational analysis is more favorable with the second model. He also pointed out that an over-the-water challenge adventure at Lake Farmington and an aerial adventure at Berg Park have also been proposed but are not being recommended at this time.

Following further discussion and consideration, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to proceed with a request for proposal to determine whether there is private interest in the construction and operation of the twin tower aerial adventure at Lake Farmington.

Cabins at Lake Farmington

Mr. Styron presented a proposal to offer cabins at Lake Farmington, noting that this will also be a public/private partnership whereby 10 to 20 cabins are installed, maintained and serviced by a private partner with the City providing electricity and rough site development. He also pointed out that the cabins would be subject to lodgers tax.

Following further discussion and consideration, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to proceed with a request for proposal to determine whether there is private interest in installing, maintaining and servicing cabins at Lake Farmington.

All Abilities Park
Mr. Mayes reported that there is a stakeholder group interested in partnering with the City for the purpose of developing an all abilities park at the former Tibbetts Middle School located at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Butler Avenue, noting that the Farmington School District is seriously considering transferring the ownership of that property to the City. Mr. Styron explained that an all abilities park is designed to accommodate all levels of disability from autism to physical mobility and noted that statistics indicate that 16 percent of the population have some type of disability. He showed videos of all abilities parks located in Clark County, Missouri, Round Rock, Texas and Rio Rancho, New Mexico and stated that these parks now serve as destination playgrounds for those communities. He also noted that the Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation and Special Olympics have expressed interest in this project.

Mayor Duckett questioned whether the Farmington Museum would be a better location for this park since staff has been discussing the development of an “iconic park” at that location. In response to inquiry from Councilor Rodgers concerning the existing track at the Tibbetts property, Mr. Mayes assured her that plans envision some type of track being maintained at the all abilities park once it is constructed.

Councillor Sharer expressed his support for the project at the Tibbetts location.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to proceed with scheduling the stakeholder group to make a presentation to the Council which could result in a request of $75,000 for the conceptual design of an all abilities park. Furthermore, staff was directed to proceed with negotiating the property transfer from the Farmington School District to the City.

Pickleball Courts at Brookside Park

Noting that pickleball is an emerging sport, Mr. Styron recommended that one of the tennis courts at Brookside Park be resurfaced to create two pickleball courts.

Mayor Duckett questioned whether two courts is enough when there are three tennis courts at Brookside Park.

After further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to obtain a bid for converting all of the tennis courts at Brookside Park to pickleball courts.

Ricketts Park Artificial Turf

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Director Shaña Reeves reported that a company provided the City with a quote of $1,503,321 to remove the natural turf and install artificial turf at Ricketts Park. She stated that the artificial turf will reduce annual maintenance costs by $50,564 per year; will need to be replaced every 8 to 10 years at an estimated cost of $100,000; will require the “wear spots” to be replaced every three years at a cost of $8,000; will require policy changes with regard to rental use, sunflower seeds, saliva and footwear; is versatile for softball, baseball and other stadium events but will require the purchase of additional netting at a cost of $40,000; and will require the purchase of event flooring for graduations at a cost of $350,000. She noted that other proposed improvements at Ricketts Park include retrofitting of the lights at a cost of $255,000 and amenity updates (such as bullpens and chain link fencing) at a cost of $48,500. She recommended that the multi-step bid process be pursued for the artificial turf, noting that this will ensure that the best product is selected for the facility.

Mayor Duckett announced that the condition of Ricketts Park has been a concern for the Connie Mack players for the past few years. In response, Ms. Reeves reported that she is confident that the field will be in good shape for this year’s season since staff has laser-graded the infield, replaced the dirt and added soil conditioner, purchased new equipment to drag the baselines and provided training to the employees.

Mayor Duckett noted that Farmington Municipal Schools has committed $300,000 to either offset the cost of the turf or to provide additional maintenance to the natural turf and stated that he is seeking direction from the Council on how to proceed with this project in Fiscal Year 2020. In response, Ms. Reeves assured him that staff will make wise decisions
when maintaining the natural turf knowing that all of the stakeholders are urging the City to install artificial turf in the near future.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to proceed with the multi-step bid process for replacing the natural turf with artificial turf, as recommended by staff. There being no further business to come before the Council, a motion was made by Councillor Rodgers, seconded by Councillor Sharer to adjourn the meeting at 1:32 p.m.

APPROVED this 28th day of May, 2019.

Nate Buckett, Mayor

SEAL

ATTEST:

Andrea Jones, Deputy City Clerk