



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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Memorandum

Date: December 13, 2023
To: Finance and Planning Subcommittee
From: Mike Sousek, General Manager
RE: Finance & Planning Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

The Finance and Planning Subcommittee met in person at the District Office on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 12:10PM. There were two agenda items for consideration. Directors on the committee in attendance included Chelsea Johnson, Ken Vogel, Luke Peterson, Deborah Eagan, Ray Stevens, and Bob Andersen. Directors absent included Christine Lamberty and Melissa Baker. Chair Landis, Corey Wasserburger, Dave Potter, Chris Barber, and Mike Sousek were also in attendance. Guests from the public included Stephen Henrichsen and Nicole Fleck-Tooze.

A. Land Purchase Negotiation with Solidago Conservancy [Action]

As discussed at the previous Finance & Planning Subcommittee meeting on November 7th, the City of Lincoln has been trying to acquire a parcel of ground containing approximately 154 acres north of current city limits. The city is planning for a community park at the location with an active park site and 85+ acres of conservation land. The City Parks and Recreation Department approached the NRD on a land proposal. There is approximately 11.0 acres set aside for a public agency office site in the proposed parkland development and the city wants the NRD as a neighbor.

This parcel of ground has long been sought after by the city but has been out of reach until recently. The family is now considering selling the property. It has been appraised and the city would like to have a public agency on site to serve as a permanent resident. With our interest and work in the Little Salt Creek Watershed and Saline Wetlands, and with our current property/maintenance yard located at 9600 N. 27th, the city has presented a land opportunity to LPSNRD for future construction of a new office building/complex. Arbor Road is hard surfaced and there is city water and sewer near the property. City Parks and Recreation has drafted up a conceptual plan illustrating ball fields and trails.

LPSNRD has a growing need for expansion – office space, meeting space, parking, maintenance and operation facilities, and storage. If LPSNRD was to purchase the 11.09 acres, the site could be used for a new office building with room to expand and consider another tenant agency. There could be other buildings constructed on the site, including an educational building that would possibly be leased out with plenty of parking.

At their meeting on November 17th, with interest in pursuing the land opportunity, the Board of Directors authorized the general manager to negotiate a land purchase agreement with Solidago Conservancy. Solidago would be the purchasing agent for the city and the NRD.

One concern raised by the Board at that meeting was whether the land will be annexed and provided city utilities. Steve Henrichsen with the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department was present to discuss logistics regarding the property and future utilities. Steve also described the process needed to annex the property into city limits. The concerns that were brought up during the Nov. 17th meeting were discussed with satisfactory outcomes on all fronts.

Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Executive Director with Solidago Conservancy, and her team prepared an agreement for the purchase of 11.09 acres from Solidago. The Conservancy will negotiate and purchase the ground and allow the NRD to buy the specific tract of land and the City of Lincoln to purchase the remaining acres. The city will also utilize other funding sources to assist in the purchase, including donors, Union Bank & Trust, Section 6 USFW Endangered Species Acquisition Funds, and the Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership. Nicole Fleck-Tooze was at the subcommittee meeting to present the proposed agreement.

It was motioned by Director Vogel, seconded by Director Eagan to recommend to the board of directors to commit to entering into a contingent purchase agreement consistent with the draft agreement presented to the board with Solidago with final purchase agreement to be entered into once Solidago has a contract to secure the said property. Motion passed unanimously.

B. BRIC Grant Agreement [Action]

Lower Platte South NRD approved an update of the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2020. The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) details LPSNRD and participating community actions in the event of various natural disasters. Having a HMP is a requirement for a community to take advantage of grant funding from FEMA for mitigation projects. The HMP is updated every five years and LPSNRD has a principal role in its development. The 2020 LPSNRD Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan can be found at <https://www.lpsnrd.org/publications/lpsnrd-plans-studies>.

With the HMP update required in 2025, LPSNRD prepared a proposed timeline for the project in the fall of 2022 and then applied to the Building Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program through Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in December 2022, anticipating a nine-month review period. The BRIC grant would provide Federal funding of 75% cost-share for the update by FEMA. The application went through review and staff worked with NEMA to provide additional information required with changes in the program after the application was submitted to FEMA.

LPSNRD received notice on December 6th that our BRIC grant application has been approved by FEMA (see attached agreement). The estimated total cost of the HMP update is \$120,000, with 75% or \$90,000 coming from FEMA and 25% or \$30,000 from LPSNRD. The BRIC Grant Agreement will also include management reimbursement up to \$6,000. Once the agreement is approved by the Board, LPSNRD will begin the procurement process to get a consultant hired. Since the grant application was just recently approved, the HMP timeline will be adjusted, with a consultant selected in January and the HMP update beginning in February 2024.

It was motioned by Director Vogel, seconded by Director Stevens to recommend to the board of directors to approve the BRIC Grant Agreement between Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the LPSNRD for the LPSNRD Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan update and have the General Manager sign said agreement. Motion passed unanimously.

C. 2024 Board Planning Retreat *[update]*

The LPSNRD Board Planning Retreat is scheduled for February 2-3, 2024, at the Lied Conference Center in Nebraska City.

MJS

cc: Dave Landis
Dave Potter
Chris Barber
Donna Reid