



# The Phonograph-Herald

## Housing Project Fails For Lack of a Second *Opening of Elm Street Also Discussed*

The primary news coming out of Monday night's meeting of the St. Paul City Council was the failure to get a vote on a 12-unit (six duplex) housing project for people 55 and older who make \$22,800 a year or less. The project would be known as St. Paul Cottages and would be located at two sites: 4th Street between L and M Streets and on 7th Street between Adams and Baxter Streets.

Mesner Development Co. of Central City, the developer, would be the owner of the project, which would be managed by the St. Paul Housing Authority. The St. Paul Housing Authority was seeking \$70,000 in funding from the Economic Development Program (LB840 sales tax money) to pay for the paving in the form of a forgivable loan. The loan would be for \$50,000 of immediate paving of 7th Street from Adams to Baxter and 4th from L to M and \$20,000 for the future paving of L Street from 4th to the alley.

The total project cost would be \$1,862,695 with \$1,516,007 funded with tax credit equity, \$290,188 from State of Nebraska HOME Funds (St. Paul Housing Authority is the applicant) and \$56,500 contributed through St. Paul Cottages LLC, managing member equity. After 15 years, the units would be sold to the St. Paul Housing Authority for \$100 and would go off of the tax rolls. During the 15 years it is on the tax

rolls it would generate an estimated \$215,184 in taxes with the city portion \$68,911.07 and the school's portion \$98,476.53.

The two-bedroom handicapped adaptable units would be 1,100 square feet with attached garages and storm shelters.

A spokesperson for St. Paul Cottages, LLC, said the funding of the project is contingent on receiving forgivable funding on the paving.

St. Paul Mayor Jim Snow strongly supported the project. He noted that not only would there be an economic impact during construction, having 12 more housing units would mean more groceries, gas and utilities purchased, as well as the generation of more taxes. He said he thought it would be money well spent.

Councilman Tracy Howard asked what would happen if there were not enough eligible people to fill the housing units. The spokesperson said if that happened then other low income people could rent the units. She said that would not happen because a survey of St. Paul residents indicated that there was a need for this

type of housing. She predicted there would be people standing in line to rent the units.

Councilman Jerry Solko was against the loan of \$70,000 for the paving. He said it would be a wash for the city and noted that adjacent landowners would have to pay for \$70,000 in paving. He said he would be voting against the forgivable loan.

At the present time there is about \$159,000 in the sales tax funds available.

Solko said the LB840 money is to create jobs and he didn't think this project would do that. He said he thought the project would be developed anyway, regardless of whether the city paid for the paving.

Snow said people 55 and older moving into the new housing units would mean more homes would be available in St. Paul for families to move into.

City council member Kaye Tomlinson noted that the developers are not from St. Paul. She asked who paid for the paving in their other projects and was told that sometimes it was the landowners, sometimes by TIF money, and sometimes by the cities. The spokesperson noted that \$1.8 million will be coming into the city.

At the end of the discussion,

Tracy Howard made the motion to spend \$70,000 of LB840 money on the paving. No one seconded the motion. Before announcing the the motion died for lack of a second, Mayor Snow said he thought it was shortsighted to not approve the paving money.

There was a large contingent of people, primarily farmers and truckers, who were present to discuss opening Elm Street across the railroad track. Fred Meyer represented the Development Corporation. He said that the

overall traffic pattern that has resulted from the closing of the street has not served the community well. He noted that the situation at Howard Avenue and Highway 281 is dangerous and that Howard Avenue was not designed for semi traffic and neither was Custer Street. "Mixing cars and semis is not good," said Meyer. He questioned the information contained in a letter the city received from the State regarding the crossings. Meyer said that St. Paul does not have 14

trains a week passing through town. He said the present owners of the elevator would pay for the paving of their track. Meyer said he thought the state inflated the figures on the cost of paving the crossing.

## City Council—

One trucker said that turning on Custer Street by the bowling alley is very dangerous, especially when children are coming out of the bowling alley.

Jerry Solko said he was on the council when Elm Street was closed. He said Elm Street and the other streets had to be closed before the Howard Avenue crossing was fixed. Solko said he was sure St. Paul would have to pay back the \$13,000 it received for closing the street. He did not object to reopening the street as long as the city does have to pay for it to be done.

Dale Nowak said \$13,000 could be raised to pay back the state. He commented that the city has "had it in for the elevator" ever since it was built by Clarence Southard.

It was noted that the buildings that were so close to Elm Street have been removed and there is no longer a vision problem for approaching traffic. It was noted that the dynamics have changed since the street was closed.

Others speaking in favor of opening Elm Street were Bob Dvorak and Jim Olsen.

Mark Starkey was at the meeting to discuss building on property he purchased. He said he was told by the city before he bought the property that he could put a building on it. Now he is told that he will have to go to the expense of rezoning the property. The council agreed that he was told he could build on the property. Mayor Snow told Starkey that the city would work with him on the matter.

Brian Reetz of Lincoln, Groundwater Foundation Coordinator, said that St. Paul has

been selected for their **Let's Keep It Clean** program, which is a program that educates people on what they can do to ensure sustainable, clean groundwater. He said the educational awareness campaign is funded by a grant and will not

cost the community anything. Other cities selected for the program are Fairbury and Auburn.

The council approved the request of the Historical Society for 2,500 bricks for 75 feet of a 4-foot wide walkway at the Historical Village that would go from beside the church to the metal building. They were told that they could get more bricks from the city if they needed them. The bricks are from the streets in town that are to be paved.

The request from the St. Paul Country Club for \$5,000 for fireworks at the community Fourth of July celebration at the country club was tabled until more information is provided. Eddie Stanczyk of the country club told the council that without the funding they may not be able to have the fireworks display. The request for funding will be put on the agenda of the May 16th meeting.

The problem of people dumping trash at the recycling landfill was discussed. "We will lose our license if it is not controlled," said Chuck Schmid.

The city is getting new non-reproducible keys. The public may check the keys out from the city office when the landfill is not open. The council discussed whether the \$30 key fee for lawn

and tree service providers should be a one-time only fee or a yearly fee. Ann Reams objected to having to pay for a key and emphatically objected to having to pay yearly. The council voted to have the fee be a one-time only fee of \$30.

Cherri Klinginsmith, who works for the county zoning office two days a week, was present to clarify the time and duties of the St. Paul City Zoning Administrator position. The council and Klinginsmith were in agreement on the terms of the job and she was hired for the position.

The city voted to purchase a 2007 International boom truck for \$67,500 from Global Rental Equipment. Most of the money will come out of the sinking fund. It was decided to keep the old truck as a back-up and for use in case of emergencies.

Jim Snow updated the board on the 16-team State Amateur Baseball Tournament that will be held every year in St. Paul. This year's tournament will be August 13 and 14. Two fields are needed on the first day so the field at Cairo also will be used.

Approval was given for Liana Wroblewski to sign signature cards for three of the city's accounts and approval was also given for employees to attend training sessions.

Progress reports were made on nuisance complaints. The Petzoldt, Padrnos and Steffey properties were discussed.