CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA
AGENDAS AND NOTICE OF MEETING

Regular Workshop Session of Monday, July 15, 2019
Arts Center of St. Peter – 5:30 p.m.
315 South Minnesota Avenue

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. DISCUSSION
A. Arts in our Community
   1. Sculpture Garden Update
   2. Cooperative Efforts with City Recreation and Leisure Services
   3. Other Cooperative Efforts Ongoing
   4. New Cooperative Effort Ideas
   5. Minnesota Square Park Summer Festival Promotion
B. Arts Center Three Visions
C. New Dog Park Development Request

III. ADJOURNMENT

***PLEASE NOTE WORKSHOP LOCATION***

Office of the City Administrator
Todd Prafke

TP/bal
Memorandum

TO: Honorable Mayor Zieman
   Members of the City Council

FROM: Todd Prafke
      City Administrator

RE: Arts Center

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

None needed. For your information and discussion only.

BACKGROUND

The City’s relationship with the Arts Center started many years ago but became a bit more formal about a decade ago with a series of activities or joint actions relating to enhancement of building and use of the downtown. A few years after that we had a joint meeting, like the one taking place at this workshop, as a “get to know you better” opportunity.

A number of very interesting ideas and actions were borne out of that discussion. A few of those were Second Saturday (an event to use locations and businesses to display art for a working tour downtown on the Second Saturday from May through September; provide the Arts Center with some horsepower to do activities as a part of the 4th of July event; the offer of EDA dollars for building enhancements; working with the RTC; a juried art show in Minnesota Square Park; and there were a few others.

Not all were successful or long lasting, but from my perspective all have built on the principles of meeting the priorities set by the Council for activities in your downtown. Your priorities are listed below.

DOWNTOWN PRIORITIES

- Promote projects that improve or are sympathetic to the historic scale and nature of the downtown.
- Business development that promotes a mix of niche retail, food/beverage and entertainment. Promotion of office uses in upper floors is valuable to retail trade in the downtown.
- Building enhancements that are not only historically sympathetic. This should be done while promoting upper floor housing or living in the downtown. This will enhance use of businesses by creating density. This should be done while striving to maintain retail or service businesses on the lower floors of buildings.
- Promote uses, events, activities that set the downtown as a place of destination.
- Use arts and cultural activities to promote the use of downtown as a destination.
• Continue to provide EDA dollars to build and upgrade buildings in the downtown.

We currently have a number of activities that we are working on together including the Granlund Sculpture Garden (working title) in Levee Park as well as recreation programming, activities associated with the Library and others.

Arts Center Executive Director Ann Rosenquist-Fee and I have been talking about a few other opportunities like the possibility of an art fair in the new Minnesota Square Park Pavilion.

The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities tour last year and a couple of other meetings with day trip groups and others in the past 18 months have led me to think more about how to better capitalize on our downtown and the events, activities and businesses that are represented there. A month or two back I visited with the Tourism Board about “hop on” speakers and a few other related opportunities in our downtown. I think we have some great opportunities and similar goals with lots of groups and I believe our chances for success are enhanced by working with partners on a few common goals. One of first steps in that is identifying some of those common goals and then determining how we might take some action to make them happen.

One final thought on this. A lot has changed in your downtown in the last decade. The critical mass of the types of boutique and niche businesses in your downtown has grown. The leadership in the Arts Center has continued to evolve and with their thinking about activities, program partnerships and their vision, so has the City’s. It seems like a great time to get together and share.

So possible goals for the meeting are:

• Enhance the St. Peter Arts Center/City relationship
• Brainstorm some ideas to work together and expand our partnered presence within the community.
• Potentially get some actionable items that we can actively partner on or move to a future small group which may include other groups to bring the idea to fruition.
• Discussion on more immediate wants/opportunities and also discuss longer term opportunities.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this agenda item.

TP/bal
Almost exactly 40 years ago, a building was purchased in St. Peter for $1. It was a sale that would mean more to the community than those involved in the transaction may have ever predicted.

It was the beginning of the Arts Center of Saint Peter, and it meant, over the next four decades, that artists and art lovers from all walks of life would always have a place to call home.
"People were interested in the arts — some artists, some that just appreciated the arts," said Joel Moline, one of the original Arts Center founders, along with his wife, Carol Moline.

So people came together, they found a space, and they made things happen. Artists suddenly had somewhere to work, to collaborate, to be among themselves. And today, as the Arts Center celebrates its 40th anniversary, the organization, though in a new location, still serves artists of all varieties.

Factor in inflation if you like, but regardless, it was a dollar well spent.

As Stephanie Thull, a younger leader at the Arts Center, puts it, "We're all working hard to be happy, and this makes people happy."

**Starting out**

It was 1978, and the artists and art lovers in St. Peter were longing for a home away from home. Well established as an education-based community, anchored by Gustavus Adolphus College, there were plenty of artists already doing their thing in the community. But inspiration may have been harder to come by.

"Artists need somewhere to bump up against each other," said Carol Moline.
Joel Moline added, “There wasn’t too much going on at the time, and a group thought we could have an artist cooperative or artist center. A group coalesced and the art center idea came to the fore.”

The group used its connections. With Barb Almundson on their board and Don Almundson, her husband, on the School Board, there was an opportunity for collaboration. The school district had a building for sale — it was the original high school building at 320 South Fifth Street built in 1870.

Originally constructed in 1870 as the first high school, this building was used in later years as the Arts and Heritage Center until its destruction by a March 1998 tornado in St. Peter. The building was located at 320 South Fifth Street. (Photo courtesy of Nicollet County Historical Society)

In July of 1979, the group made the $1 purchase and the Saint Peter Arts and Heritage Center was born. Starting off as a hybrid between heritage and arts, the building included studio spaces in the upstairs, including a dance room. There were two rooms for a gallery just down the stairs, plus a heritage room and a board room on the bottom floor. A ceramics area also developed in the basement.
“It was a place where artists could meet and greet, challenge each other,” Carol Moline said. “It didn’t feel like artists knew each other; I think that came with the organization.”

For Gretchen Koehler, who joined as a member soon after the center started up, the draw was the space itself.

“I love old barns and old building, so I went to all the socials,” she said. “It was gorgeous. The building is gorgeous.”

Joel Moline added, “There was always rubbing shoulders within one another in the kitchen. We had turned a coat closet into the kitchen and during the holiday fair; we’d have soup and a Christmas tree, and it was festive.”

“We did a lot of things — just a ton of fun things,” Carol Moline said.

Post-tornado

While the group was always happy with its situation at Fifth Street, making any organizational process was a challenge.

“Money was always a trick,” said Carol Moline. “It was particularly a trick because we had one board member who was very much against going after grants. He felt it should be raised from within the organization. That would’ve been the prime time to get funds. Could’ve done so much more, so much faster.”

Rather than growing exponentially, the Arts Center just kept ticking along for its first 19 years. And then changed was forced upon it.

The tornado hit in March 1998, wreaking havoc across the community and devastating hundreds of structures, including the old Arts Center building. The damage Mother Nature did to the 1871 building was nothing short of spectacular, and the organization soon realized that salvaging the space was not an option.
The remains of the Arts and Heritage Center at 320 South Fifth Street are shown after a tornado damaged many structures in March of 1998 in St. Peter. The building was constructed in 1870 as the community's first high school. This photograph shows the west side of the building. (Photo courtesy of the Nicollet County Historical Society)

"Everybody, of course, was sad," Carol Moline said. "It took them a while to realize they couldn't possibly bring back a building like that. It would've cost so much. The writing was on the wall, but it was tough for people to accept that."

While the nonprofit searched for a new home, leaders aimed to keep things going and not let the organization disappear entirely.

"I was on the board about the time we were doing the looking for buildings. It was a matter of trying to decide what to do next — locate a new place and so forth — while maintaining some organizational activities," Joel Moline said. "We had gallery shows at Chestnut Tree Coffee Shop, where Third Street Tavern is now."
They found their salvation right off the highway, the main drag. The organization leaders had never pictured the Arts Center as a storefront offering, but there was little for sale anywhere in the city, and the location at 315 Minnesota Ave. was undoubtedly a good one.

Ann Rosenquist Fee is the current executive director at the Arts Center of Saint Peter, and founding members credit her, along with former Executive Director David Goldstein, with moving the center into the future. (Philip Weyhe/St. Peter Herald)

Arts Center Executive Director Ann Rosenquist Fee, who started in her position five years ago, noted that the change may have been positive, even necessary, as the organization moved into the modern day environment.

“This is a more standard, professional gallery space,” she said. “And we’re on people’s list of places to shop on the main drag.”
Carol Moline added, “We’re reaching a broader scope here than the old place. We’re reaching more of the younger folk.”

**Into the future**

Today, the Arts Center offers a ceramic studio, painting studio and fiber arts studio. It hosts classes in all of those areas, plus creative writing and drawing. People host parties in the space, and the organization hosts live music and literary events once per month. In addition to all that, the building features a large gallery space, where the artists can show off whatever it is they’re working on.

On a given day, the center might be crammed with people working at their crafts, including young people.
Mary Traxler, front, works on details, while Caitlin Heyer and Shawn Bagley, back, spin the wheel in the ceramics studio at the Arts Center of Saint Peter. They young artists are helping to keep the center going 40 years after it started.

Caitlin Heyer has been coming for three years. She does ceramics for the most part, but she’s branching out into weaving and does some teaching. She sees the center as a platform for what she loves to do.

“The community here (in St. Peter) really supports art,” she said. “It’s connected with the gallery. The people, despite having dozens of bowls, will come back for another one.”

Mary Traxler has been coming since she was in high school in 2014, and she’s now a clay center member, a teacher and an occasional performer. She loves it.

“It’s one of the best learning environments I’ve ever experienced,” she said. “It’s kind of incredible.”

For Shawn Bagley, who has been coming for three years to spin the ceramics wheel, the joy of the Arts Center is the people inside.

“All 15 renters are always talking about what we’re working on and we help each other
out,” he said. “We inspire each other.”

And that’s exactly what the founders envisioned 40 years ago — artists rubbing shoulders.

For the future, Traxler pointed to the center’s reach and how that might grow. She said she wants to see the center become a spider web, touching on other larger organizations in the community — like what it does now, teaching classes at the Regional Treatment Center or working with the city on a sculpture park.

Rosenquist Fee, who is delighted to leave all the power in the hands of the artists, agrees.

“What’s going to drive our growth is staying a small and nimble organization, but partnering with larger organizations that have art needs,” she said. “I would like to do more of that and then just see where it takes us.”

The Arts Center of Saint Peter is destined to change, even more than it already has. And while the space might not be recognizable from the one created so organically 40 years ago, one thing has never changed.

“It feels like home,” Carol Moline said.
Memorandum

TO: Todd Prafke
    City Administrator

FROM: Pete Moulton           Joey Schugel
      Public Works Director    Recreation and Leisure Services Director

DATE: July 11, 2019

RE: Approval of an Additional Dog Park Site Location

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

None needed. For Council review and discussion only.

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2018 a group of community members requested an additional dog park be created as the existing dog park facility, which is located on land leased from Le Sueur County on Highway 99 east, is frequently inundated with flood waters. The group formed and identified themselves as the River Valley Dog Park Association (RVDPA) and stated their goal was to identify sites that could accommodate additional dog facilities and amenities in Saint Peter. Discussions with City staff on possible locations were initiated at that time.

A draft list of possible sites was evaluated by staff with the list ultimately narrowed down to three options. The City’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met with RVDPA in May to review the proposed sites and at their regular meeting in June the Board recommended consideration of the City owned property located directly west of the wastewater treatment plant at 1125 North Swift Street.

Some of the benefits of this particular site include grown trees for shade, the property already being owned by the City and the availability of water. The size of the area is also sufficient in meeting the needs of the group.

An estimated budget for the project is attached.

If you have any additional questions on this workshop agenda item, please feel free to contact either of us.

PTM/JS
## Dog Park Costs

### Swift Street Location

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Units Needed</th>
<th>Cost / Per Unit</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>RVDPA</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Fence 5' Vinyl Coated - includes 2 - 12' gates and 4 - 4' gates</td>
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Memorandum

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  DATE: June 6, 2019

FROM: Pete Moulton  Joey Schugel
        Public Works Director  Recreation and Leisure Services Director

RE: Approval of Additional Dog Park Site Location

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION

Approve the location for an additional dog park site at 1125 Swift Street.

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2018 a group of community members came forward and initiated discussions with City Staff on possible site locations of an additional dog park. The group formed and identified themselves at the River Valley Dog Park Association (RVDPA). Their goal was to identify sites that could accommodate additional dog facilities and amenities in Saint Peter.

The existing dog park facility located in LeSueur County continues to be frequently inundated. Multiple sites were evaluated and from the list of approximately seven sites the acceptable sites were narrowed to three. In May the RVDPA came to the Parks Board and discussed narrowing the site options to one. This past month that is what has happened and that site is located at 1125 Swift Street which is site H on the attached map.

Some of the benefits include grown trees for shade, the availability of land (city owned for wastewater) and the availability of water.

It is requested that the Parks and Recreation Board approve of the recommended site and that staff be authorized to take the Swift Street to the City Council for authorization to begin construction when $32,000 in funds have been raised to complete Phase 1 improvements.
CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

RESOLUTION 2019-01

STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF NICOLLET)
CITY OF SAINT PETER)

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING AN ADDITIONAL DOG PARK SITE ON SWIFT STREET

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Peter currently has a dog park located east of Saint Peter and south of HWY 99, and

WHEREAS, the existing site is located in the Minnesota River flood plain and has been underwater frequently; and

WHEREAS, the River Valley Dog Park Association has formed and are currently raising funds to assist with the development of an additional location; and

WHEREAS, after careful evaluation the Saint Peter Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommends an additional dog park site be located at 1125 Swift Street which lies directly east of the City's compostable drop off site; and

WHEREAS, the future dog park would be located on City property at the Wastewater Treatment Plant site; and

WHEREAS, the construction of the additional dog park would take place in phases; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Peter would work with the River Valley Dog Park Association to provide land, labor and capital improvements; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF SAINT PETER, NICOLLET COUNTY, MINNESOTA, THAT: the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board hereby recommends the additional dog park be located at 1125 Swift Street.

Adopted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board of the City of Saint Peter, Nicollet County, Minnesota, this 17th day of June 2019.

Michael Looff, Chair

Sarah Nielsen, Recording Secretary