

City Council looks to improve drainage on east side of town

BY DAVID LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

As developers prepare to create a residential subdivision off Brown Street, the Lampasas City Council voted unanimously Monday to proceed with plans for a detention pond to reduce drainage problems that officials said have existed for decades in southeastern parts of town.

The motion by Councilman Randy Clark called not just to proceed with a detention pond but also -- in a future work phase -- to seek an engineering analysis of ways to improve drainage in a broad area generally from Crider Lane to Old Georgetown Road to Sulphur Creek between Central Texas Expressway and East Fourth Street.

Lampasas company S2M2 Inc., represented at Monday's meeting by Chris Harrison, is seeking city cost-sharing for the detention pond, which would occupy three lots the company otherwise could have used to build houses in its proposed Brodie Estates subdivision.

S2M2 is asking the city to spend \$125,000 toward the detention pond, Harrison said. That amount, he told city officials, is about half what the water detention structure will cost the company -- when factoring in pond development expenses, the value of the three buildable lots the company will sacrifice and the profit that the sale of three houses could have generated.

The pond is not required for Brodie Estates, and it would help ameliorate drainage problems that began decades before the subdivision was proposed, Harrison and city officials said.

"The water that we're dealing with is not water from Brodie Estates," Mayor

Misti Talbert said. "It's water from across [U.S. Highway] 190."

Councilman Mike White agreed.

"Just so everybody's clear, this has absolutely nothing to do with the developer's property and the property they're developing," White said. "This problem is already there. It's just either going to go underneath it and create an issue where we have to look at it downstream again, or [we put in a] detention pond, basically."

Harrison -- a former councilman -- said drainage has been a problem for years, and he said the problems begin upstream of the Brodie Estates property.

Clark, who retired as the city's public works director in 2013, said drainage problems existed across southeastern parts of town before he went to work for the city in 1985.

A detention pond is just part of the solution needed for the overall area, Harrison said. He said he thinks -- and believes an engineer would concur -- that ultimately, the city needs to pipe rainwater runoff from problem areas all the way to Sulphur Creek.

In May, the council decided not to help pay for a detention pond. Harrison said after clearing the future subdivision property recently and seeing a big ditch that carries water through the property from upstream areas, he contacted Talbert to restart conversations about ways to improve drainage.

The mayor said city officials need to think again about a detention pond. If development of the Brodie Estates subdivision proceeds without a detention pond, that will limit the city's future options for improving drainage, Talbert said.

The mayor said on any future development matter, city officials should consider

minimum standards versus what is most beneficial for the public.

"And if we continue to only do what's minimally required, are we going to be doing the best thing for the city of Lampasas?" she asked. "And that's a trend we've got to get away from in every department, in every aspect."

During a workshop discussion about the water concerns, Clark asked if the city would couple a detention pond with an analysis of additional possible drainage improvements.

"I think we'd be irresponsible if we don't," Talbert said.

In other business, the City Council unanimously approved the purchase of a prefabricated restroom for Campbell Park in an amount not to exceed \$185,000.

The purchase is through Restroom Facilities Ltd. in Marble Falls. The bathroom to be installed in Campbell Park is "almost identical" to what the company made for W.M. Brook Park and the Turner baseball complex, Parks and Recreation Director Chris Eicher said.

Restroom Facilities bid \$166,316, including installation. The additional costs will be for utility extensions, electrical and plumbing services, and sidewalks to the restroom, Eicher reported.

A local contractor is donating the building pad for the restroom.

Eicher said Campbell Park needs a restroom, as the walk trails and Hanna Springs Sculpture Garden in the park attract numerous visitors.

"We've got a minimum of four events that take place in that park every year, and the number-one question is 'Where are the restrooms?'" Eicher said.

The city will fund the facility installation with

revenue from a 2016 debt issuance for utility and capital projects.

Also Monday, the council voted unanimously to allow a lantern lighting event Nov. 9 from 5-8 p.m. in W.M. Brook Park.

Councilwoman Delana Toups, Eicher, Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Melissa Unger and other community members have been planning the new event, which will feature a release of floating lanterns into Sulphur Creek at sunset. People will be able to decorate their lanterns before letting them float in the creek, Toups said.

The biodegradable lanterns and candles will be picked up at the conclusion of the event, Assistant City Secretary Becky Sims said. Those who wish to release lanterns into the creek will pay \$5, which will go toward the Christmas on the Creek light display, Sims said.

Along with the lantern release, the event will feature live music and food trucks, Sims said.

Organizers plan to keep costs to \$2,000 or less, Sims said. The parks department's requested budget for the upcoming fiscal year includes enough funds to pay for the event, Eicher said.

On another matter, the council voted unanimously to postpone the awarding of a contract for concrete work for sidewalks, a driveway and handicap ramps at the old City Hall building. The city is renovating the building, constructed in 1931, to house Municipal Court and a new City Council Chambers.

Council members said they were confused by information presented about revisions and exclusions related to demolition and excavation work -- which city workers, rather than a

contractor, will perform.

As with a recent item about vehicle purchases, council members said the quotes the city staff presented did not give an accurate comparison of what each company would charge. Talbert said the staff needs to present bids for comparable work -- and provide the bids well in advance of meetings so council members will have time to review the materials before approving expenditures of public funds.

In other unanimous votes, the council:

- agreed to give a total of \$3,836 of hotel-motel occupancy tax funds to the chamber of commerce and Lampasas Association for the Arts to fund a portion of Artober Fest. The chamber and LAFTA are organizing the Oct. 12 event at the Hanna Springs Sculpture Garden.

Newly installed sculptures will be on display during the event -- which LAFTA Board Chairwoman Robin Gradel

said will include music, food, a Shakespeare group, arts and crafts, children's activities and a dog costume contest.

- renewed for another year the Tourism and Visitor Center Agreement between the city and the chamber of commerce.

- approved the chamber's marketing plan for the 2020 fiscal year.

Also at the recent meeting, Assistant City Manager Gary Cox reported the city was back to "fully operational" Monday morning after recovering from an attack by ransomware software. Officials said evidence indicates the attack did not compromise any customer payment information or other personal information held by the city.

Cox and Talbert praised municipal staff members for the night and weekend work they did to ensure the city continued to provide public services as it recovered from the ransomware attack.

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NOTICE OF 2019 TAX YEAR PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX RATE FOR LAMPASAS COUNTY

A tax rate of \$0.712690 per \$100 valuation has been proposed for adoption by the governing body of Lampasas County. This rate exceeds the lower of the effective or rollback tax rate, and state law requires that two public hearings be held by the governing body before adopting the proposed tax rate.

The governing body of Lampasas County proposes to use revenue attributable to the tax rate increase for the purpose of funding Lampasas County.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.712690 per \$100
PRECEDING YEAR'S TAX RATE	\$0.697690 per \$100
EFFECTIVE TAX RATE	\$0.675644 per \$100
ROLLBACK TAX RATE	\$0.747437 per \$100

The effective tax rate is the total tax rate needed to raise the same amount of property tax revenue for Lampasas County from the same properties in both the 2018 tax year and the 2019 tax year.

The rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate that Lampasas County may adopt before voters are entitled to petition for an election to limit the rate that may be approved to the rollback rate.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE ABOVE RATES CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

property tax amount = (rate) x (taxable value of your property) / 100


For assistance or detailed information about tax calculations, please contact:

Melissa Gonzales
Chief Appraiser
109 East Fifth Street, Lampasas, TX
512-556-8058
lampasascad.org

You are urged to attend and express your views at the following public hearings on the proposed tax rate:

First Hearing: September 5, 2019 at 6:30 PM at County Office Building Conference Room, 409 South Pecan Street 1st Floor, Lampasas, TX.

Second Hearing: September 19, 2019 at 6:30 PM at County Office Building Conference Room, 409 South Pecan Street 1st Floor, Lampasas, TX.



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