

An arboretum in Ehmen Park?

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Council supports designation to attract more tourists.

A boost in tourism, that includes attracting botanical enthusiasts to town, is what an arboretum could do.

And that's what the Gothenburg Gardennaires have in mind for Ehmen Park in their quest to make the greenspace part of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.

At the Feb. 18 meeting of the Gothenburg City Council, Gardennaires president Nancy Fisher asked the city to support the designation and pay a \$130 annual fee to the arboretum in addition to what it costs to publish brochures for visitors.

Council president Jeff Kennedy, who is also an arborist, said the designation would be a plus and could be included on entryway signs into town.

"Ehmen Park has always been mentioned for its tree diversity this far west," Kennedy said.

During the last tree walk at the park, in the fall of 2012, a Nebraska Forest Service arborist said Ehmen Park was one of his favorites. He said at least 20 species of trees in the park can't be

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found anywhere else in Dawson County or the region.

Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce president Anne Anderson also spoke in favor of the designation, noting that the Chamber has a list of all the trees in the park for visitors at the Pony Express Station. The station is located in the park.

“If we can keep people here a little longer, they may eat at our restaurants and stay overnight,” Anderson said.

Other state arboretums in western Nebraska are in Alliance, Bassett, Chadron, Curtis, Gering, Halsey, Kimball, North Platte, Scottsbluff, Potter and Sidney.

The council unanimously agreed to pay the fees so the the application process can begin.

Following a five-minute public hearing, the council reconvened and changed the Goshen subdivision and second subdivision from R-2 (residential) to R-3 which allows construction of multi-family homes.

STILL WAITING FOR LAKE PERMIT
A permit to start excavation of Lake Helen is still in the hands of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. And until officials receive it, reconstruction and reconstruction of the lake cannot proceed. One of the holdups, according to city administrator Bruce Clymer, was the type of permit needed even though city engineers have submitted both an individual and maintenance permit. Corps officials now have a reworked maintenance permit in hand, Clymer said. "All hurdles have been cleared and we're waiting for a signature," he said. Although the initial plan was to excavate and construct in August of 2013 with the lake filled in March 2014, Clymer said officials hope to receive the permit in 30 days. That should allow for excavation and reconstruction to begin this summer and the lake to be filled in the spring of 2015.

The city’s planning and zoning commission had earlier approved the request so that Dana Point Development can build three duplexes on the west end of the area if the firm can obtain funds.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said the zoning change makes sense since there are several multi-dwellings in the area.

Clymer said the duplexes would be for seniors and based on income.

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On another matter, council members are considering a resolution that would make police chief Randy Olson the agent to approve special designated liquor licenses.

Currently, the council approves requests from caterers or non-profit organizations for businesses to offer or sell alcohol during certain times or in public places.

Members made no decision about the agent but did approve two special designations for the following businesses to serve alcohol during two events—Horizon Ag on Feb. 21 and McMeen Physical Therapy on March 14.

In other action, the council decided to settle \$18,181 in outstanding liens against property at 1804 Ave. C owned by Connie (Waller) Brestel of Lincoln.

The house was condemned by the city, tested for asbestos, removed and mowed several times.

CITY LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWALS	
Owens, Business	License
Moore Kenney, Q&K Bottle Shoppe	Package
Gothenburg Pit Stop, Inc.	Off-sale beer
Chad Kolko, Lakeside Bowe	Bottle club
Pete's Lounge	Bottle club
Western Steak, Inc., Pizza Hut	On-sale beer
R & C Petroleum, Time Saver	Off-sale beer
Steven Walker, Walker's Steakhouse & Lounge	Bottle club, off-sale beer
Shopko HomeTown	Package

On-sale beer is sold and consumed in the business. Off-sale beer is bought and taken from the business. Bottle club means the sale and consumption of alcohol in a business while package is when alcohol is bought and taken from the store.
The Star W Lounge has a license to operate as a bottle club and sell off-sale beer under the name of its previous owner, Norman Lambertus. The business can sell liquor until April 30 unless someone re-applies for a license.

Clymer said the city probably won't get the full amount owed but should attempt to go through the court system to recover liens so the lot could be sold for housing.

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