

Facade improvements top list for downtown rehabilitation

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 14 March 2014 14:16 -

| BUDGET BREAKDOWN | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| If awarded a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant, the Gothenburg City Council has budgeted that downtown rehabilitation funds be spent as follows: | |
| Commercial rehabilitation | |
| Facade improvement..... | \$125,000 |
| Energy efficiency..... | \$75,000 |
| District financial assistance to for-profit businesses | |
| Business revolving loans..... | \$45,000 |
| Public improvements | |
| Ugly Corner (Lake Avenue & Highway 30)..... | \$40,000 |
| Parking lot paving (north of RTI)..... | \$30,000 |
| Grant administration..... | \$20,000 |
| Dawson Area Development..... | \$20,000 |

Council decides how grant funds would be spent.

Taking the lead from downtown business owners, the Gothenburg City Council gave them what they want most—funds to improve their facades.

However the \$125,000 allocated for storefronts, and money for other projects, is contingent on whether or not the city receives \$350,000 in downtown revitalization funds.

The council approved a budget at their March 4 meeting that shows how the money would be spent if given Community Development Block Grant funds (see chart).

Money designated to make businesses more energy efficient (\$75,000) was the next top vote getter followed by fixing up the Ugly Corner on the northwest corner of Lake Avenue and Highway 30.

Because some of the categories, like facade improvements, involve a match by business owners or the city, council members talked about trying to use dollars set aside for sewer improvements for a match but decided not to do it.

Dawson Area Development director Jen Wolf noted that city in-kind labor, like having city employees do paving, would work.

Wolf suggested that the city could put off doing public improvement projects to the end of the two-year implementation part of the grant to see how much money had been generated in matching funds.

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When the city spent money from a downtown rehabilitation grant in 2008, the match dropped because of matches met or exceeded by business owners.

A hearing for public comments on the downtown revitalization plan and budget is scheduled at the next council meeting on March 18 at 7 p.m. in city council chambers.

The grant application will also be up for approval.

On another matter, the council agreed to mow the Legion baseball field for two years as the Legion ball program reorganizes and raises enough funds to be self supporting.

The city will be paid \$2,000 per season to mow the outfield, outside of baselines and property beyond the fence.

City police chief Randy Olson now decides which caterer or non-profit organization gets a special license to serve alcohol during certain times or in public places after council members unanimously approved a resolution.

Previously, the council granted requests and will continue to do so if a new caterer wants such a license.

The council decided not to help pay for a traffic study being done by Gothenburg Public Schools but would offer members to be part of a committee looking at the issue.

In other business, the council:

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approved, on second reading, an ordinance that rezones Goshen, Goshen Second Subdivision and Reynolds Subdivision from R-2 to R-3 residential to allow for the construction of multi-family homes.

A development company wants to build income-based duplexes for seniors.

approved a draw down of \$8,000 to pay for administration of the downtown revitalization planning project.

granted Katie Beth Kauffman's request to host a Women's Resource Center Walk for Life in Ehmen Park on May 3, from 8 a.m.-noon.

Money raised at the two-mile walk will support the Women's Resource Center in North Platte that serves women with unplanned or crisis pregnancies.

heard the city is accepting proposals for a new self-propelled street sweeper. The council has budgeted \$160,000 for the equipment.

learned that city employee Dick Parsons, in the street, sewer and water department, will retire at the end of March.

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