

By Jan Schultz The Imperial Republican

Jared Knobbe, a 2012 graduate of Chase County Schools and now a UNL sophomore, has some bold plans for redefining Capital Mobile Home Court along East 12th St.

A plan of his for turning that area into a “new neighborhood” with apartments and single family homes received support from the city council Monday.

“I’m excited to see him do this,” said council member Chad Yaw.

The planning is in the very early stages. It was brought before the council, said City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland, to find out now if anyone had a problem with it and before more money potentially is expended.

While Knobbe, 20, has talked to city officials about infrastructure needs if his plan became a reality, he has not purchased the property at this time, Leyland noted.

Knobbe hired a land surveying company to do some preliminary designs, which were reviewed by the council Monday. The design shows two apartment buildings and potentially 14 homes.

If the plan would proceed, zoning would need to be changed from its current mobile home park designation to R-2, or multi-family housing.

The Planning Commission has also looked at Knobbe’s project and gave it their support. The council took no action Monday

Knobbe is a sophomore at UNL, where he is studying agriculture and finance/entrepreneurship.

Sales tax funds to curb block of Holland St.

In another area related to economic development, the council voted 3-0 to use city sales tax funds to pay for the curb and gutter between 2nd and 3rd Sts., on Holland.

The one-block strip runs in front of the four new homes being built for sale by Dana Point Development.

After direction from the council last month, Supt. Pat Davison sought quotes on the cost of the work. He acquired a \$7,125 quote from Heisler Concrete, the firm now working in Cornerstone on other streets.

While the council approved the project using community development sales tax funds to pay for it, there was considerable discussion first.

Assessing the property owners for the work normally comes after a Street Improvement District is created.

Leyland said due to the lengthy legal notice requirements and hearings needed to do that, it could pose a problem getting the curb and gutter laid in conjunction with the laying of driveways to the abutting homes.

If the curb and gutter doesn’t go in, running water underneath will damage Holland St., Leyland said.

In the end, the council voted 3-0 to proceed using the sales tax funds.

Due the council vacancy created with the death of J.D. Reeder, only three council members were present.

An agenda item Monday also officially gave notice of that vacancy.

City residents interested in possible appointment to the council have been asked to submit of letter to the city office that includes their reasons for seeking the appointment.

Reeder's term runs through December 2016. He was elected in November 2012.

Other council business

The April 21 meeting will include the lease auction for the city-owned light dam section. It will again be bid for a two-year lease. The section includes about 500 acres of usable grass when removing the lake and road areas. No changes were made to the current lease details, including that public access will continue.

Mike Harris, the interim administrator, at the Imperial Manor and Parkview/Heights, gave a report after completing three weeks in the administrative post. Regarding the position, he said RHD received five applicants for administrator, two of whom were in Imperial Monday for interviews. "We have some promising applicants," he told the council. A decision on the position is expected in the next week or two, he said. Harris came on board after the abrupt resignation last month of former administrator Melissa Larson. He also updated the council on the facilities' new health insurance policy that went into effect April 1 with 29 employees on board. That's up considerably from the previous participation. While it is costing the facilities about \$40,000 per year more, Harris said it's a better policy for the employees. He noted they have a \$199,000 bond payment due April 15 and will be using CDs to make that payment. Because of that, one of the priorities for the new administrator, he said, will be to build up the cash reserves.

After a public hearing, formal approval in support of a grant being sought by Dana Point Development for five additional rental homes planned for construction on the north side of East 3rd St. was given. Owner Matt Thomas will be purchasing the lots at current prices in Cornerstone for those potential rentals, Leyland said. He is seeking a \$679,000 Nebraska Affordable Housing Grant to help build five, three-bedroom, two bath homes for rent. Occupants will have to be at or below 80 percent of the area's median income. The city is actually the applicant for the grant on behalf of Dana Point Development, but will have no financial commitment in the project, according to Leyland. Dana Point itself is ineligible to be a grant applicant.

Wages for the Council and Mayor are part of two ordinances that went through second reading Monday night. The ordinances, if eventually approved, would reinstate salaries for the four council members and mayor. The council members each would be enumerated \$2,000 per year, while the mayor would receive a \$5,200 annual salary. Attendance at meetings will not have an effect on those salaries. Council members chose not to waive the third reading so it could be further discussed and possibly passed at the April 21 meeting. The council and mayor previously received salaries, but a vote in 2010 eliminated them.

A suburban Fire District will be further discussed at the request of the rural fire board, which asked for formation of a committee to meet with them and work out details. Council members John Arterburn and Dan Thompson will represent the city on that committee.

One Bid was received for a used 1994 city public works department pickup for \$400, but the council chose to reject it. It was suggested that the pickup could still be used by summer help and for other tasks, then later sold for scrap for at least the bid amount. The city is also advertising its used bucket truck for sale at a minimum bid of \$15,000, but has yet to receive any bids. Supt. Davison said he will continue to advertise it, but will drop the minimum bid request.

A resolution closing Streets for car and truck shows from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Aug. 16 during

the fair was passed.