

**Community Services Meeting**  
**Douglas County, Nebraska**

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

The meeting convened at 2:05 p.m. in Room 903 of the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68183. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is located near the entrance of the room. A notice of the meeting was published in the September 16, 2014 issue of The Daily Record. County Commissioner Clare Duda was present at the start of the meeting. Others present at the start of the meeting were Diane Carlson, Joe Lorenz, Marcos San Martin, and Kaieva Williams of Administration; Kent Holm of Environmental Services; Dan Esch of the Clerk/Comptroller's office; and Sheila Miller of the Douglas County Housing Authority.

**1) Discussion on provision of environmental assessment services on properties owned by Douglas County Housing Authority.**

County Commissioner Chris Rodgers arrived at the meeting during this item, as well as Patrick Bloomingdale of Administration. Ms. Williams left the meeting during this item. Speaking to the item were Mr. Holm, Commissioner Duda, Ms. Miller, and Commissioner Rodgers. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Holm said there is a need for Douglas County Housing Authority (DCHA) to have environmental assessments done on their properties.
  - Ms. Miller said the environmental assessments are required in order to have a grant from the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
    - Mr. Holm said this grant is used to request money for rehabilitating houses.
- Ms. Miller said DCHA has 38 homes and one rental housing complex with 40 units.
  - Ms. Miller said most are in Omaha, but a few are in Bennington, Valley, and Waterloo.
- Mr. Holm said DCHA had approached the City of Omaha Planning Department (City Planning) about doing these assessments since City Planning already does these assessments for Omaha Housing Authority (OHA), but City Planning said they would not do the assessments since some of DCHA's properties are not in the Omaha city limits.
  - Ms. Miller said City Planning put DCHA in touch with Brian Norton of Environmental Services.
- Mr. Holm said he is looking for guidance from the County Board on whether or not Environmental Services should seek compensation for doing the environmental assessments for DCHA, or if Environmental Services should do the assessments at no charge.
  - Mr. Holm said City Planning does the assessments for OHA at no charge.
  - Mr. Holm said from what he can tell so far, it shouldn't be too much work.
    - Mr. Holm said environmental concerns on residential properties are limited.
    - Mr. Holm said these assessments in most cases will probably be a one-time thing, and that shouldn't be a strain on Environmental Services' budget.
    - Commissioner Duda said if Environmental Services has the wherewithal to do the assessments at no cost, he's okay helping DCHA with this.

- Mr. Holm said he doesn't want to commit Environmental Services' resources until he gets a better feel for the environmental assessment reporting system from HUD, but it seems that it's okay for Environmental Services to do the assessments as long as its minimal work.
  - Mr. Holm said once he can quantify the amount of work, he'll follow up with the County Board and DCHA.
    - Ms. Miller said that sounded fair to her.

## **2) Update on stormwater-related projects and funding**

Speaking during this item were Mr. Holm and Commissioner Duda. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Holm said projects being done at Extension's property are primarily complete.
  - Mr. Holm said there will be some planting that will be done in the coming year, and some of Extension's master gardeners will be involved.
  - Mr. Holm said there will be new signage with quick response (QR) codes put in.
    - Mr. Holm said people will be able to scan the QR codes with their phones and link in to the stormwater information on Environmental Services' website.
    - Mr. Holm said the signage is being paid for with an Extension Foundation grant.
- Mr. Holm said in the next week or so a project near the southeast corner of the Midtown building will be underway.
  - Mr. Holm said part of the retaining wall that is there now will be excavated, then a secondary retaining wall will be put in.
  - Mr. Holm said there will be a small plaza created with seating and picnic tables.
  - Mr. Holm said there will be pervious paving to enhance the stormwater piece of it.
  - Mr. Holm said this project should help address the erosion that has occurred due to stormwater running of the roof, and also beautify the area.
  - Mr. Holm said this project should also help reduce the icing that occurs during the winter in front of the employee entrance to the building in this area.
  - Mr. Holm said stormwater funds will be used on this project.

## **3) Update on Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (ISWMP) implementation.**

Speaking during this item were Mr. Holm, Commissioner Duda, and Commissioner Rodgers. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Holm said there was an initial task force meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Holm said this task force was identified in the original ISWMP plan.
- Mr. Holm said Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) is going to be the convener and facilitator for the task force.
- Mr. Holm said this task force includes members from Douglas County—himself, Mr. Norton, and County Commissioner Marc Kraft; City of Omaha; Sarpy County; City of Bellevue—as the municipal representative from Sarpy County; Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ); and MAPA.

- Mr. Holm said the intent is to have this task force be responsible for the planning and implementation, as well as engage with a number of different stakeholder groups to get input on specific topics and issues.
  - Mr. Holm said stakeholders would include groups such as haulers, recyclers, composters, waste generators, community environmental advocates, corporations, and chambers of commerce.
  - Mr. Holm said there will be recommendations coming out of those discussions, and some of those recommendations will be brought forward to the local governing entities.
- Mr. Holm said at the initial meeting there was a discussion about establishing funding for a source reduction leader, who would serve as the coordinator to help administer and implement some of the things in the plan.
  - Mr. Holm said this person would be an employee of MAPA.
  - Mr. Holm said there could be some grant funding available.
  - Mr. Holm said the task force also discussed approaching the DEQ about increasing the \$1.25 per ton fee and being able to rebate that back.
    - Mr. Holm said most of the \$1.25 fee funding that the DEQ receives comes from this area.
- Mr. Holm said the task force also discussed developing a resident survey to gather additional information on solid waste issues.
  - Mr. Holm said the task force would use this to get a better idea of what issues residents want addressed, as well as find out what residents are willing to do.
- Mr. Holm said the task force will probably meet again sometime in October.

#### **4) Other business**

Speaking during this item were Mr. Holm, Commissioner Duda, Mr. Lorenz, and Commissioner Rodgers. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Holm said BioResource Development should be able to get started soon on their landfill gas beneficial use project at the State Street Landfill.
- Mr. Holm said DEQ has allowed the County to reduce the State Street Landfill trust account from about \$1.7 million down to about \$256,000.
  - Mr. Holm said the balance of that was transferred the previous week and credited to the County's escrow liability fund.
- Mr. Holm said an application was submitted to the Nebraska Environmental Trust for a food waste composting pilot project, and Environmental Services should know by February if the application is accepted.
  - Mr. Holm said this would involve getting food waste from various generators in the Omaha area, and taking that waste to the State Street Landfill to mix it with wood chips in a static pile composting operation.
  - Mr. Holm said compost such as this is very valuable, particularly to organic farmers.
- Mr. Holm said there is an invasive pest called the Emerald Ash Borer that is gradually working its way across the country.

- Mr. Holm said the Emerald Ash Borer is likely several years away from having an impact on Douglas County, but it will have a substantial impact on the tree canopy in the area.
  - Mr. Holm said ash trees make up about 30% of the trees in the area.
- Mr. Holm said this will have a substantial negative impact on stormwater because losing trees means losing the value those trees provide for mitigating stormwater issues.
- Mr. Holm said one of the things the County has done proactively, particularly at the Health Center, is selectively remove lesser quality ash trees and plant other types of trees.
- Mr. Holm said the next Stormwater Management Plan Program Grant that the County receives annually from DEQ will be about \$9,000 - \$10,000 less this year than what it was last year.
  - Mr. Holm said the grant amount that the County will receive this year will be around \$147,000, instead of around \$156,000.
    - Mr. Holm said the reason for this is because Grand Island was moved from the non-urbanized category and into the urbanized category, and Grand Island will now get to share in the money allocated to the communities in the urbanized category.
  - Mr. Holm said the County will be modifying its stormwater management plan, focusing less on demonstration projects and more on addressing the bacteria issue in some of the streams.

The meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.