

Ralston City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 21, 2020

The Ralston City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 5:30 PM at Ralston City Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll was called with the following present: Mayor Groesser and Council members Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Council member Sanchez was absent. The agenda was available at City Hall for public inspection and posted prior to the meeting. The legal notice for the meeting was published in the Ralston Recorder. Claims listed are approved and part of these minutes.

Pastor Jim Haack, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, gave the invocation. Mayor Groesser welcomed the press and guests. Groesser said the meeting is subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and a copy of the Act is posted at the rear of the Council Chambers.

The City Council reviewed the following items under the consent agenda:

1. Minutes from the January 7, 2020 regular city council meeting;
2. Claims;
3. Monthly Financial Report; and
4. Department Head and/or Commission Reports.

Krause moved and Kavanaugh seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Freshman reported the Public Works Department is working on clearing the snow and ice. They are also in the process of clearing the sidewalks and hauling snow. Groesser thanked Public Works for all their work.

Bohling reported the monthly financial report is included in the council packets. Also included are the arena's October financials. Spectra has hired a new director of finance and Bohling expects to have the financial statements caught up soon. He is currently reviewing November's financial information. Based on the November financial statements, the arena is doing much better than their budget. Bohling received notification that the November sales tax which the City will receive this month has hit a new high of \$126,000. Bohling reported of a potential Finance Committee meeting on February 12th.

Leonardo thanked the Public Works Department for clearing the streets which helped for minimal accidents. Leonardo reported on the fatality accident last year. That is coming to an end as the suspect has pled guilty to all charges and will be sentenced this week.

Halbur reported on the unscheduled closing on Saturday due to the power outage. There were a few complications including heating issues and internet issues. This fiscal year the Library is focusing on getting the roof replaced. The City's insurance previously inspected it; however, after having several roofers look at the roof, the insurance has agreed to send

an adjustor for a re-inspection of the roof. Halbur reported the monthly report is included in the council packets. She noted a nice increase in circulation.

Krajewski reported on arena events including the metro wrestling held last weekend. Upcoming shows include Chris Janson, Blippi, Dancing with the Stars, Baby Shark, Peppa Pig, Cody Jinx, Hillsong Worship. Hairball was recently announced and tickets will go on sale this week. The Lancers will be hosting a tournament this weekend as well. There will be a Zamora concert on Saturday. Krajewski is working on confirming nine shows. Krajewski commented on the November financial statements. The arena is \$9,000 better than budget for that month.

Russell reported on the federal Tobacco 21 Act and Nebraska law. As of January 1, 2020, Nebraska law provides that the legal minimum age for use or purchase of tobacco products became 19 years of age. As a result, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office advised Nebraska law enforcement and pertinent state agencies that enforcement shall be limited to enforcement of the state law, unless the Nebraska Legislature changes the minimum age from 19 to 21 as suggested by the federal Tobacco 21 Act.

Hoppe reported on city ratings from HomeSnacks.net. This entity rates each state's best places to live. They rate cities on a number of factors such as census, income, crime rate, etc. Of the 32 cities in Nebraska with a population over 5,000, Ralston finished 6th. Ralston is the 6th best place to live in the state of Nebraska.

Groesser opened discussion on the draft parking study. In November, the City hired Walker Consultants to do a parking study. A Parking Steering Committee was also established. Groesser briefly spoke about the parking study. For on-street parking, the analysis showed that 85 percent of the time 44 percent of the spaces were used. For the City parking lot, the analysis showed that 85 percent of the time 57 percent of the spaces were used. Over the entire City, there is existing parking space adequacy to absorb the loss of public parking at the City lot. However, parking behaviors will shift with a likely increase in the usage of on-street spaces along Park Drive. Walker Consultants used data from the City as well as their own data and inserted the data into a model. Groesser commented on the different numbers brought up by different individuals. At the end of the day, the difference doesn't change the percentages significantly.

Groesser commented on Walker Consultants' recommendations: consider parking space time limits and a parking enforcement program for the future; explore opportunities for shared parking between public and private; consider installing wayfinding signs to make it easier to find public parking; brand and market public marketing and provide more information on the City website; evaluation distribution of ADA spaces. There is always going to be a time when all the parking spaces are full, which is true in most cities. Walker Consultants recommends that the City not build parking lots that meet the maximum at any one time, that the parking lots be built for the average.

Groesser commented on the AA group meeting in Hillcrest Landing and it being one of the biggest chapters around. This chapter has over 100 people coming into the AA meetings

on Saturday mornings. It is important to remember that AA provides a service to the citizens. The AA group will be moving out of the Hillcrest Landing building on March 1st and that will alleviate many of the parking issues. As part of the Urban Waters project, current parallel parking will become diagonal parking. It is estimated that this would add eight or nine more public on-street parking spaces.

Hoppe spoke with David Garza of Walker Consultants with regard to the parking study and recommended talking about that during the public hearing process so comments can be received.

Groesser opened consideration of the Ralston Downtown/Hinge Design Guidelines. The guidelines have been set forth by HDR with input from JEO. The guidelines are intended to guide the design and construction of all new buildings within the Ralston Downtown/Hinge area. The guidelines have been approved by the Planning Commission and the Hinge Committee and are now before the City Council for acceptance.

Krause moved and Kavanaugh seconded to accept the Ralston Downtown/Hinge Design Guidelines developed by HDR. Krause indicated the guidelines are very broad and allow the developers to select from a variety of frontages and designs but keep the uniqueness of Ralston and complement what is existing. There will certainly be the opportunity for modification as the developments move forward. There being no further discussion, Groesser called for the vote. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Groesser opened consideration of the purchase agreement between the City of Ralston and Zehv's Place LLC for property located at 7630 Park Drive. The purchase agreement is for the purchase of the City parking lot. Krause moved to authorize the Mayor and/or City Administrator to finalize the purchase agreement between the City of Ralston and Zehv's Place LLC for the property located at 7630 Park Drive. Seconded by Kavanaugh. Krause indicated that Urban Waters has formed a new LLC as Zehv's Place. Urban Waters has done several developments within the metro area. They are very well-respected and very well-known. They would be the company that Krause hopes would develop much of the property in the Hinge Project.

Preis commented on the sale of the City parking lot as the starting point of the Hinge Project. He supports the Hinge Project but doesn't know that the parking lot is the place to start. While he is not going to support the sale of the parking lot, the developer should not take it as he will not support what is going to be done on the parking lot site. The starting point of the Hinge Project should have been someplace else in the City.

There being no further discussion, Groesser called for the vote. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, and Krause. Nay: Preis. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Krause introduced Ordinance No. 1245. Russell read Ordinance No. 1245 by title only: AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE SALE OF REAL PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 7630 PARK DRIVE, RALSTON, NEBRASKA; DIRECTING THE CONVEYANCE OF SUCH REAL PROPERTY AND THE MANNER AND TERMS THEREOF; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Groesser opened the public hearing and first reading of Ordinance 1245 at 5:53 PM. Groesser indicated this Ordinance is for the sale of the City parking lot at 7630 Park Drive. David Cotton, 8825 M Street, Omaha and owner of Small Engine Repair at 5705 S. 77th Street, remains opposed to the sale of the parking lot. He agreed with Council member Preis that the City parking lot is not the place to start. In the Hinge Master Plan visioning workshop, the number 4 weakness listed was parking. Cotton said there is no doubt that closing the City parking lot will make parking worse.

Cotton has been at his place of business for 40 years and over that 40 years he has stayed out of City politics for the most part. This is a big deal and a bad deal. It will make it a less attractive place for businesses to come and will affect the consumers coming into Ralston as well. Ultimately it will be the consumers and the people that spend money in Ralston that will decide if parking is a problem and they are going to decide that by not coming to Ralston.

Cotton expressed his disappointment in the parking study in that only three data points were taken. Based on the parking study, it is unknown if it is the average and he believes it is below the average. He knows the area on 77th Street between Park Drive and Burlington Street has been 100 percent full twice since the study started and feels it was incorrectly stated in the parking study at 74 percent. Cotton believes the consultants missed the peak on all of the data points. Cotton said that both the City study and the Walker study failed to recognize that the City parking lot is full on Saturday mornings. The stated objective of the Hinge Plan is to attract more people to Ralston and the people are going to need a place to park. Having the City parking lot gives the City a lot of options as far as attracting businesses.

Larry Muruse, owner of the building on the corner of Park Drive and 77th Street, indicated that although he doesn't live in Ralston, he appreciates everything that everyone is doing for the promotion of Ralston. It is disappointing that he wasn't included in some of the information. Muruse inquired about soliciting bids from other developers and Groesser indicated a request for proposals was sent out to a number of developers and Urban Waters was the only respondent.

Muruse commented on parking and the four residents that live in the apartments above his business. There is no parking except on the street or the City parking lot, which the City is talking about taking away. There are no laundry facilities in the apartments and people will have to take their laundry and hike blocks away to where their cars would be parked. He bought the building because of the historical aspect as well as the availability of parking. Muruse expressed concern about the parking time limits and asked to be involved when the parameters for parking will be set. He offered a suggestion of having overnight parking

for the residents when the businesses are closed so they don't have to haul their laundry blocks away. If parking goes away, he goes away because he cannot run the business without proper parking.

Krause said that one of the recommendations in the parking study was to look at parking solutions and that Muruse could certainly be involved in trying to come up with solutions. Krause said there are different solutions to include parking time frames, overnight parking, loading zones, and more.

Muruse commented on people parking in the City parking lot during the City promotions. If there is no longer the parking availability during the promotions, he is afraid that the City will lose the participation of the public.

Dave Shively, 8049 State Street, said he would not want to live in that apartment that overlooks the fire station or the back door of a hardware store and listen to a train rumble all day long. He inquired about where the firefighters are going to park and Groesser indicated there are parking spots behind the Fire Department and also at the old post office building.

Lacey Brown, business owner at 5510 Miller Avenue, is very excited to be in Ralston. It is an amazing community. The Hinge Project is one of the reasons why she chose to locate in Ralston. The apartment building will be fantastic and bring a lot of energy to the area. It will bring in new faces and more people. Brown spends a significant amount of time in midtown, Dundee, Blackstone and downtown Omaha and parking is always an issue in any of those places. However, the business owners in those areas are bringing in a lot of money. People don't mind figuring out where to park. Uber and Lyft are huge nowadays and Brown can see a huge amount of traffic coming from the Ralston Arena to downtown Ralston if there were places to go downtown. The apartment building is just the start of huge things for Ralston. Brown said the first few steps are always the hardest. Ralston has a developer and an investor that are willing to take on downtown Ralston. Brown feels the community will figure it out.

Kayla Dixon, Bombshell Beauty owner on Main Street, is concerned how she is going to explain to her employees that they don't have a place to park, especially during events when Main Street is shut down. She commented on elderly women having to walk blocks to go to her salon, which will not happen. She is currently fighting on keeping the sidewalk safe and her clients use the handicap parking space. There is no other handicap parking on Main Street. Groesser said that a recommendation from the parking study was to look at more ADA parking.

Dixon commented on her operating hours and shutting down the road. She also commented on individuals walking a mile from one place to another because there is no place to park. She commented on snow removal and it being an ongoing battle of keeping the area in front of her hair salon safe. Dixon is concerned that the parking study does not cover all of the elements with all of the seasons and all of the events in Ralston.

Keith Kettlehut, 8303 State Street, has been in the downtown area for a long time. There has always been a parking problem downtown. Many years ago, the City decided to buy a car wash downtown and turn it into a parking lot because more parking was needed. Now it has been decided that the parking lot is not needed. Kettlehut commented on the study and feels it is quite incorrect. He commented on the number of handicap stalls indicated in the study and that he counted more. He commented on the parking in front of the fire station being illegal by state law and other parking areas in Ralston that are illegal by state law. In the parking study, a lot of the private parking is actually City right of way. Kettlehut doesn't feel the study is quite correct and it needs to be re-done.

Deb Groesser, resident at 7770 Park Lane and business owner at 5615 S. 77th Street, indicated that of all the buildings and businesses in downtown Ralston that will be directly physically affected by the loss of the City parking lot, none is greater than her building. She will be losing her classroom entrance and delivery entrance. The development of the parking lot eliminates any possibility of them being able to rent out the back offices in their building to anyone else due to visibility and accessibility. Having a building eight feet away from the back of her studio eliminates half of the natural light in her studio which is a pretty important necessity for artists. However, being part of a community sometimes individuals have to give up individual wants and needs and conveniences for the good of the community at large. Mrs. Groesser thinks this is one of the instances. When she and Mayor Groesser bought their building 23 years ago, they invested \$150,000 to renovate the building and restored it to resemble what it looked like when it was built in 1923. Now, 23 years later, there is just one additional retail business in the downtown. A handful of other businesses have come and gone.

Mrs. Groesser said there has been a lot of conversations about what types of businesses residents would like to see come to Ralston. The Hinge Project gives Ralston a plan and a vision on how to make it happen. Ralston has to start somewhere and she commented on the LaDonna Johnson donation which was donated with the specific direction of using it for the Hinge Project. There is a developer willing to invest millions of dollars in Ralston. The developer believes in Ralston, LaDonna believed in Ralston and Mrs. Groesser said she knows that everyone else believes in Ralston as well. She urged everyone not to throw away the opportunity and voiced her complete support for the apartment project and the sale of the parking lot.

This is going to affect Mrs. Groesser's business as well, but she thinks the greater good is far more important. This is the step that is not only possible but necessary and if this doesn't happen, she wondered when there will ever be the opportunity again. This is an investment by other people in Ralston into the City that everyone loves. Sacrificing the convenience to her business is something that she is willing to do for the City that she loves.

Larry Muruse inquired if there has been a study that tells what the net gain is for Ralston. Groesser commented on Ralston's total valuation and that adding \$200 million to the valuation which will improve property taxes. Bohling indicated that the U.S. Census expects that every new resident in Ralston will generate roughly \$2,300 in taxes for the

taxing entities. They have looked at the preliminary construction costs for the building and expect that to generate well over \$100,000 in real estate taxes.

Mark Norman, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, indicated that the Chamber of Commerce is a seven-county economic development organization and he works with redevelopment projects throughout eastern Nebraska. Redevelopment is never painless and involves change. He commended the City and the City Council for taking all the necessary and right steps to make sure they are looking at this from a perspective of if it is going to generate income for the City and making sure it is going to be a quality development for the entire Hinge Project. Ralston is land-locked so there is really no new ground that can be developed. Therefore, the City really needs to look at what can be done to increase the revenue on the existing properties in town.

Ralston is doing the right thing by doing the parking studies that is going to give the information to make appropriate decisions and going through the bid process and speaking to multiple developers. Urban Waters has an excellent track record and has done great work throughout the community. It is an awesome opportunity for Ralston to work with them. Norman commented on the design guidelines that will ensure that there will be quality developments. Starting with the smaller developments will bring more opportunity down the road.

Amy Roeder, Chamber President, commented that the biggest concern with the businesses in town is to try to make sure the line of communication is open. It is important to have the communication with businesses to come up with solutions. She asked the City to keep that in mind and to the forefront.

Groesser and Hoppe have been talking about putting together some town hall meetings to educate the community on the Hinge Project. That will be in the forefront to give everyone an opportunity to hear about the project.

There being no further discussion, Groesser closed the public hearing at 6:30 PM. Krause moved and Konwinski seconded to approve Ordinance 1245 on first reading. Krause said he liked Mrs. Groesser's comments because this is Ralston's chance to flourish. The City did send out RFP's for developers and Urban Waters was the developer that responded. The parking lot was the first property chosen because the developer needs a "proof of concept". If the Hinge Project is going to be successful and if development in Ralston is going to be successful, there needs to be something that shows that development in Ralston is going to work. The developer preferred to start with a smaller project to prove it can work in Ralston and the parking lot is the ideal place to start that. The developer wants to know that their future money can be well-spent because there is something that will work.

Krause commented on the future for Ralston and that for the young people that will make Ralston the place they want to be, the project is something that needs to be done. Something needs to be done to make Ralston grow. Ralston is land-locked and if there is no development or redevelopment, how will the City do what needs to be done to improve the infrastructure. Krause said there needs to be income coming into the City so that

residents can enjoy what he has enjoyed the past 40 years. Ralston is a great place to live and raise a family and a great place to send the kids to school. Krause pleaded for everyone to look ahead at what the development can be and what it can't be. He asked people to work with the City to solve the parking problems. This project has to be done and if this developer walks away, he wondered who else will step forward.

Preis supports the Hinge Project and has full faith that the developer will do a fantastic job and is more than capable with the project. He is just hung up on the parking issue. Preis commented on the development project and that the apartment complex will need on-street parking. He commented on the no parking from 2:00 AM to 6:00 AM and that will have to be worked on. Preis also commented on the recent snow emergency and there being no parking on the streets during that time.

There being no further comments, Groesser called for the vote. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, and Krause. Nay: Preis. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried. Groesser indicated there will be two more readings on this ordinance and thanked everyone for their comments and for attending the meeting.

Groesser open consideration of Resolution 2020-01 – a resolution to authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to borrow \$700,000 for the purchase of the Arena Side Room. Krause moved and Preis seconded to approve Resolution 2020-01.

Groesser commented that during the building of the arena, the City needed an extra \$700,000 that the City was not able to borrow or bond. A private investor bought the portion of the arena called the side room. The City has been paying a monthly lease payment for the last seven years. Since it is privately held by a private individual, the City has also had to pay property tax. The City is now in a better financial situation where the City is able to borrow the \$700,000. This will save the City over \$250,000 over the next seven years.

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR)
DIRECT BORROWING FROM A) RESOLUTION 2020-01
FINANCIAL INSTITUTION FOR THE)
PURPOSE OF REPURCHASING THE)
ARENA SIDE ROOM.)

WHEREAS, on the 25th day of June, 2013, the City of Ralston entered into a Purchase Agreement for the sale of the Arena Side Room, legally described as Lot 6, Independence City Center 1st Addition, an Addition to the City of Ralston, as Surveyed, Platted and Recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska, to WA Enterprises, LLC for the sum of \$700,000, said Purchase Agreement subsequently being ratified by Ordinance No. 1189; and

WHEREAS, said Purchase Agreement provides in paragraph 9, Repurchase Rights and Obligations, that the City shall have an option to repurchase the property from the Buyer for the sum of \$700,000; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ralston has been approved for a loan for \$700,000 through First State Bank, located in Ralston, Nebraska, at 5.0 percent interest for a 7-year amortization with monthly payments; and

WHEREAS the total amount of the City of Ralston's indebtedness attributable to any year from direct borrowing, including the above listed loan, will not exceed ten percent of the municipal budget of the City; and

WHEREAS, on the 21st day of January, 2020, the Ralston City Council held a public meeting in conformity with Neb. Rev. Stat. §18-201 and determined it to be in the best interest of the City of Ralston to exercise its option to repurchase the Arena Side Room but that financing the repurchase of the Arena Side Room through traditional bond financing would be impractical;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Ralston City Council that the Mayor and City Administrator be and hereby are authorized to execute all necessary documents to obtain said loan to repurchase the Arena Side Room.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 21st day of January, 2020.

CITY OF RALSTON, NEBRASKA
BY: /s/Donald A. Groesser, Mayor

Attest:
/s/Rosemarie Russell, City Clerk

Approved as to form:
/s/Donald F. Ficenec, City Attorney

On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fideline, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Groesser opened consideration of Resolution 2020-02 – a resolution approving a purchase agreement for the repurchase of the Arena Side Room. Groesser indicated that in addition to the borrowing of money for the purchase of the side room, there needs to be a purchase agreement for the repurchase of the Side Room. Kavanaugh moved and Preis seconded to approve Resolution 2020-02 to approve a purchase agreement for the repurchase of the Arena Side Room.

Ficenec commented that the current owners of the Side Room have requested some stylistic changes to the agreement. Therefore, he recommended the resolution be tabled until the next meeting. Kavanaugh moved and Preis seconded to table Resolution 2020-02. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fideline, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Grosser opened consideration of Resolution 2020-03 – a resolution employing the City Attorney and providing an hourly rate for services and authorize the Mayor to sign the engagement letter. The former City Attorney, Mark Klinker has retired and the new City Attorney has submitted an engagement letter as well as his rate for services. Krause moved and Konwinski seconded to approve Resolution 2020-03.

RESOLUTION EMPLOYING)
CITY ATTORNEY AND PROVIDING) RESOLUTION 2020-03
HOURLY RATE FOR SERVICES)

WHEREAS, the City Attorney for the City of Ralston serves as the chief legal advisor to the City and is responsible for providing legal services to the Mayor and City Council, the City Administrator, all departments, employees, and City boards and commissions; and

WHEREAS, the City Attorney represents the City as legal counsel in civil and criminal matters, including administrative and court proceedings; and attends all City Council, Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment meetings and other board and commission meetings on request of the Mayor and/or City Administrator;

WHEREAS, the City Attorney provides legal advice, written legal opinions, and consultation on all matters affecting the City to the City Council, City Administrator, boards, commissions, committees, officers, and employees of the City as requested by the Mayor, City Council, and/or the City Administrator in accordance with such policies and procedures as may be established by the City from time to time all pursuant to the Nebraska Revised Statutes and the Ralston Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, Donald F. Ficene was appointed as the City Attorney for the City of Ralston on December 16th, 2019, and proposes to continue such service pursuant to an Engagement Letter dated January 17th, 2020, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit “A” and by this reference incorporated herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Ralston City Council that the City of Ralston, Nebraska, hereby accept the terms of said Engagement Letter and authorizes the Mayor to execute same on behalf of the City.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2020.

CITY OF RALSTON, NEBRASKA
By: /s/ Donald A. Grosser, Mayor

Attest:
/s/Rosemarie D. Russell, City Clerk

Approved as to form:
/s/Donald F. Ficene, City Attorney

On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Grosser opened consideration of a request for a Shriner's parade on September 2, 2023. Don Perry, 6433 S. 102nd Street, Omaha, and owner of Hillcrest Landing, spoke on behalf of the Tangier Shrine Association. He is the president of Central States Shrine Association in 2023 and they would like to have a Shriner's parade in Ralston on Saturday morning, September 2, 2023. Their provosts have agreed to assist the Police Department. They are proposing the same route as the Independence Day parade and will stage in the same areas as the Independence Day parade. Grosser commented on Shriner's parades and this being a "mega-Shrine" parade consisting of a combination of different Shrine clubs.

There being no further discussion, Fidelity moved and Krause seconded to approve the request for a Shriner's parade on September 2, 2023. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Grosser opened consideration of his reappointment of Sam Mandolfo to the Board of Adjustment. Krause moved and Konwinski seconded to approve the Mayor's reappointment of Sam Mandolfo to the Board of Adjustment. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: Sanchez. Motion carried.

Public comment: Heather Hansman, 6805 S. 81st Street and a business owner in Ralston, also supports the Hinge Project. Parking is always going to be an issue. As a business owner, she thinks it is amazing to have other opportunities to bring people into the community. The Hinge Project is great and she asked the City to make sure to communicate.

Tanya Prokup, 7704 Sunset Drive, supports the Hinge Project. She commented on Wayne, Nebraska and the redevelopment project that helped to increase businesses and the quality of life for residents in Wayne. She thinks that what was done in Wayne can be done in Ralston.

Gordon Whitton, one of the investors of the Urban Waters project. He is very excited about the project as an investor and excited for all of Ralston. Ralston was given some gifts from above. One of the gifts is that someone had the foresight to get Ralston designated as an opportunity zone. Being an opportunity zone is extremely significant from an investors standpoint which puts Ralston at the top of the list of many other places that the investors can put their money. That means that many people will be excited about investing in Ralston that wouldn't have done so otherwise. The second gift is that Ralston has the good fortune that someone that loved Ralston so much wanted to give such a substantial amount of money to make the community better. Whitton has spent his life solving problems and he is excited about this project because the investors are going to come into Ralston and try to help solve problems and not create them. Some of the money that was given to the

City is going to be a fantastic help in solving some of the issues. Whitton said this isn't a meeting about solutions yet, there will be plenty of time for that and it will be figured out. From an investor's standpoint, Whitton said they are here to listen and to help. They want it to be successful just as everyone else does.

Deb Groesser, 7770 Park Lane, really appreciates how passionate the citizens are about Ralston. She really appreciates honest and constructive criticism, conversation, healthy debate about matters such as the ones discussed at this meeting. Mrs. Groesser said people can disagree without being disagreeable or disrespectful. Being an elected official or the spouse of one, it is a given that not everyone will be happy no matter how hard one tries. She is really disturbed and disappointed by the increasing divisive, negative comments and personal attacks that a number of people in Ralston are posting on social media. Personal attacks that are aimed at not only the Mayor, but at Mrs. Groesser as well. Some of the people are long-time residents of Ralston that seem to think that just because they have lived in Ralston a long time they have the right to disparage and discount people who haven't. This year marks 50 years that Mrs. Groesser has lived in Ralston and nearly half of those 50 years she has been a business owner in Ralston. The length of time that someone has lived in Ralston has nothing to do with how much they contribute to the greater good of the community. There are a number of people who are not from here but have adopted Ralston as their own and serve the community in a number of capacities.

The ugliness of some of these conversations has gotten to be inexcusable and reflects poorly on the City that the people claim to care so much about. So much of what they are saying is based on rumor, assumption, and very small bits of factual information but not on truth. In the process, people are getting spun up on things that are not close to being true. Mrs. Groesser commented on the personal attacks, amounting to bullying and said it needs to stop because that is not who Ralston is. This is the time period for people to file for office and there are three council seats and the Mayor's seat up for re-election. Over the years, Mayor and Mrs. Groesser have tried to encourage people who would be incredible assets to the City to run for office and nearly all of them have said no because they don't want their families or themselves subjected to the kind of scrutiny and criticism and personal attacks.

Mrs. Groesser said the good news is that this can be changed and she commented on the many good things happening in Ralston. She thanked the people who have come forward and personally supported them and the other city officials and thanked all the City Council members for serving. They want what is best for the City and for everyone who lives in Ralston. The future of Ralston is in really good hands and Mrs. Groesser asked everyone to focus on the positive and focus on the incredible opportunity and to be kind to each other.

Council comment: Fideline said the City is going to move forward and thinks the City is on the right path. Kavanaugh said when he ran for council in 2018, one of the two main things he campaigned on is the only way the issues facing the City is going to be solved is to lower the tax base. Businesses need to be brought to Ralston and the Hinge Project is the way to do that. The way to get the Hinge Project going is to get a developer who is

interested in doing the work in Ralston. His biggest worry is that if the City passes on this, the City will not have another chance. The parking concerns can be solved and everyone needs to work together to come up with the solutions that are needed. This will go along way to solving the fiscal problems that the City faces and will make this a better place for all of Ralston. Groesser commented on Ralston being a family community and supporting each other. Ralston is a small town in a big community and the Hinge Project is a phenomenal opportunity. Groesser commented on the press conference that was held and that he has been extremely busy talking to people as a result of the press conference. There are so many benefits in Ralston and Ralston needs to move forward.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

The next regular meeting is Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 5:30 PM.

Rosemarie D. Russell
City Clerk

Donald A. Groesser
Mayor

CLAIMS – 1-21-2020– AA Wheel and Truck Supply Inc., 244.28, Parts; Access Systems Leasing, 2,208.09, Printers/Copiers; Agrivision Equipment Group, 461.79, Parts; Ameripride Services, Inc., 106.23, Building Maint/Rugs; Athletico Excel Nebraska LLC, 50.00, Services; Black Hills Energy, 919.10, Utilities; Caselle, Inc., 1,151.00, Contract Support; Cengage Learning Inc., 113.99, Books; Center Point Large Print, 89.28, Books; Century Certified Services, 68.00, Pest Management/Control; City of Omaha Cashier, 707.01, Shared Signal Cost; CompChoice, 142.00, DOT Testing; Cornhusker International Trucks, 1,554.74, Parts; Cox Business Services, 1,887.10, Telephone; Demco, 103.01, Label Protectors; Eakes Office Solutions, 350.20, Office Supplies; EBSCO Information Services, 26.40, Magazines; Engineered Controls, 316.00 Trip Charge/Testing; Fleek, Brianna, 240.00, Janitorial; Global Spectrum, 100,000.00, Funding Shortfall; Great Plains ADA Center, 117.00, Books; Great Western Bank – Jackpot, 3,172.33, Jackpot Funding; Great Western Bank-Pension, 15,877.92, Pension Funding; Great Western Wealth Management, 11,643.61, Pension; Great Western Bank-Visa, 2,830.63, Miscellaneous Supplies/Services; Halbur, Bailey, 98.76, Reimbursement; HDR Engineering, Inc., 15,674.08, Professional Services; HyVee Accounts Receivable, 77.22, Supplies; Integrated Solutions, Inc., 4,731.00, Backup/Firewall/Services; Klinker, Mark, 2,765.00, Legal Services; Leads Online, 1,758.00, Online Investigation; Lueders Lock & Key, Inc., 129.00, Service Call; Menards-Ralston, 226.29, Supplies; Michael Todd & Co., Inc., 707.64, Parts; Mid-American Benefits, Inc., 43.50, Cobra Administration Fees; Minitex, 185.00, DVD Cases; Murphy Tractor & Equipment Co., 979.33, Parts; Nebraska Air Filter, Inc., 1,794.00, Ice Control Salt; Nebraska Department of Revenue, 130,410.00, Sales Tax; Nebraska Iowa Supply Co., Inc., 2,138.62, Fuel; Nebraska Salt & Grain Co., 3,571.75, Ice Control Salt; Nebraska State Library/Publication Office, 65.35, 2019 Supplement; Omaha Compound Company, 191.34, Janitorial Supplies; Omaha Douglas Publ Bldg, 19.25,

Parking; O'Malley, Margaret, 206.25, Janitorial; Omni Engineering, 135.00, Cold Mix; One Call Concepts, Inc., 43.05, Locate Fees; Publishers Prime, 326.09, Books; Quality Tire, Inc., 32.50, Parts; Ralston Area Chamber of Commerce, 60.00, Luncheon; Ralston Automotive, 1,007.79, Services/Supplies; Ralston Public Schools, 5,030.00, Liquor License and Parking Ticket Fees; Ralston-Byers Insurance Agency, 175.00, Bond Policy; Ridder, Justine, 28.65, Reimbursement; Sign In, 136.00, Business Cards; Suburban Newspapers, Inc., 516.87, Publications; The Daily Record, 32.20, Publications; Unique Management Services, Inc., 35.80, Placements; Voya Institutional Trust Company, 750.00, Pension; Walker Consultants, 14,000.00, Professional Services; Woodhouse Lincoln-Mazda-Porsche, 1,222.92, Services.