

**NOTES FROM AN AREA JOINT CITIES MEETING HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 29,
2008 – 5:30 P.M. – ROCKVILLE CITY HALL**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brian Herberg. Roll Call was taken and the following people were found to be in attendance:

Rockville – Mayor Brian Herberg, Council Members Don Simon, & Administrator/Clerk Rena Weber

St. Augusta – Mayor Bob Kroll, Council Members Jim Diehl, Paul Reinert, Robert Laudenbach & Administrator Bill McCabe

St. Cloud – Council Members Carolyn Garvin, Dave Masters & Administrator Mike Williams

St. Joseph – Mayor Al Rassier, Council Members Steve Frank, Renee Symanietz, & Administrator/Clerk Judy Weyrens

Sauk Rapids – Council Member Dave Saunders, Brad Gunderson & Administrator Ross Olson

Sartell – Mayor Tim O'Driscoll, Council Members Dave Petersen, Steve Hennes, Joe Perske, Pat Lynch, & Administrator Patti Gartland

Waite Park – Council Members Chuck Schneider, Frank Theisen, Herm Bartz, Mike Lindquist & Administrator Shaunna Johnson

Also present were: Jane DeAustin (CMBA)

WELCOME - Mayor Herberg welcomed all to the meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS – Introductions were done around the room.

MINUTES OF 11/30/07 – Motion by Steve Frank, second by Bob Kroll, to approve the minutes of 11/30/07 as presented. Motion carried.

JOINT RESOLUTION ON COMMON LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS – Each entity reported on the status of the joint resolution in their city:

St Augusta – passed

Sartell – Is waiting for tonight to determine if there are major changes

Waite Park – Is waiting for tonight to determine if there are major changes

St. Cloud – Is waiting for tonight to determine if there are major changes

St. Joseph – They have concerns and will discuss at a future meeting

Rockville – passed

Sauk Rapids – They discussed it only and have one modification in that the Sauk River Bridge is now 3.5 million shortfall not 3.8 as originally reported

Discussion on issues:

Sauk Rapids Bridge – Ross Olson reported this request is mainly for the Stearns County \$3.5 million shortfall.

Bio-Science Zone - Mike Williams reported the bio-science zone designation was received by the State so the resolution should be changed to reflect that funding for designated zones is still desired.

Local Option Sales Tax – A question was asked if there is discussion on what the tax can be used for and why lift restrictions is in the proposal.

Mike Williams reported St. Cloud voters approved a 17 year tax for the library and the legislature approved only 13 years. The intent is to alert our delegation that sometime in the near future we will be asking for some new authority or changes in legislation to utilize the 17 years and modify what some of us currently have approved for projects. This is not a statement regarding any statewide legislation, but a notice of pending requests for our local sales tax authority.

Shaunna Johnson stated it is not the intention to open it up without voter approval.

Patti Gartland indicated the “previously authorized” statement plays into the fact

Bob Kroll stated that each city voted on what the tax could be used for.

It was determined to change the wording to “modify” instead of “lift” restrictions.

Regional Parks & Trails - Judy Weyrens would like to add the Wobegon Trail to Regional Trails. This will run from St. Joseph to Waite Park. It was reported this is under federal funding not State Bonding.

Patti Gartland reviewed the three primary issues with the group:

Central MN Specific

LGA
Levy Limits
Bio-science
North Star Commuter Rail
Local Option Sales Tax Authority
Sauk Rapids Bridge

Capital Investment/State Bonding Requests

St. Cloud Civic Center Expansion
Regional Parks & Trails
St. Cloud Regional Airport Land Acquisition

Issues of Broader Interest or Concern

Transportation
Growth Management & Annexation
Environment

Tim O’Driscoll reported the St. Cloud Regional Airport was in the Governor’s bonding plan.

Transportation – It was reported that MSA funds projects for cities over 5,000 and the committee recognized that the smaller cities rely on the CSAH so we wanted to include those cities too.

Mike Williams voiced concern that the Civic Center expansion is very important because of the economic impact for the region. The airport expansion is for purchasing land necessary for future airport infrastructure improvements identified in the Airport Master Plan. There are development restrictions in the area, but there is a lot of housing that still could happen.

Al Rassier reported that St. Joseph has their CIP meeting scheduled for Thursday of this week. St. Joseph will do their best to get their concerns on paper.

Tim O’Driscoll stated this is needed by 2/20/08 in order to get to the Legislators. The Coalition of Greater MN Cities will be meeting with their legislators. They would like to have something in hand when they meet with the legislators.

Mike Williams informed the group that a Property Tax Relief and Local Sales Tax Division Committee meeting is scheduled for 2/7/08 at 1:15 p.m. (Whitney Center-St. Cloud). Mike Williams indicated the hearing will consist of a formal presentation by the committee about property taxes in MN, followed by public testimony from local government officials as well as the public.

Tim O’Driscoll asked do we want to have individuals testify. It was determined that the City Administrators will follow up on scheduling time to testify on our behalf with at least one person from each city present.

UPDATES BY CITIES -

St. Cloud – Mike Williams reported on:

- Mayor and 2 council members are in Spalt, Germany
- They also have less council members as it was reduced from 9 to 7
- Working on 2 fire stations
- New Library – a June opening is expected

- New Police headquarters downtown – the design for a 100,000 SF building was approved
- Land development code – reviewing
- Governor is giving the State of the State speech in St. Cloud next week at the Civic Center
- Human Rights Center – office coming to St. Cloud
- Community Aquatic Center – A committee is reviewing and will interview architects

Sartell – Mayor Tim O’Driscoll reported on:

- Fire Station is moving forward
- Golf Course – City is purchasing for recreational facilities and has been appraised
- Road Reconstruction – They are doing a large amount to take advantage of the low bids
- Storm that came through in June resulted in a large number of permits – \$20 million in damage done that day
- Hwy 15 and CR 120 – The property involved in the clear cutting has gone through AUAR last evening and we will see activity here in the near future

Sauk Rapids – Ross Olson reported on:

- Following the lead of St. Cloud – Sauk Rapids made the decision to create a train whistle quiet zone and will close the Broadway Avenue South crossing. They will provide a quiet zone on one crossing in order to do some improvements at another crossing First Street South. By August they hope to have this done
- Following the lead of Sartell in meeting with their legislators - They will meet as a council with their legislators on 2/11/08
- Natural Resources Inventory – They are creating their own. Protecting resources that should be protected and to facilitate development

Waite Park – Shaunna Johnson reported on:

- Mayor Miller is on vacation
- 2/5/08 – They will hold the first state of the City address between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. This breakfast is sponsored by the Waite Park Chamber
- They are working on a master park plan – At River’s Edge Park they are looking to build a splash park, walking trails, soccer field, etc.
- Reviewing Capital Improvement Plan
- Hiring police chief
- Miller Development – (property west of Menard’s) will be extending water/sewer along 18th Avenue from Hwy. 23 to CR 137. This is for a major development project. MNDOT is requiring them to build 18th Avenue – Construction to begin this year
- Waite Avenue Redevelopment project – This is in conjunction with development of the “Dropp” property
- Across the street from Gruber Quilt Shop – purchasing property for development
- Trailer Park and Salvation Army property to be developed
- KIA Dealership approved and will be located across from Denny Hecker

St. Joe – Mayor Al Rassier reported on:

- No state of the City report – They are just keeping their head above water
- Reviewing their Comp Plan
- Public Works Director – negotiating with the applicant
- Working session Thursday – CIP
- Revitalization plan – piecing together from St. Joe Meat Market to CR 75
- School – main structure up and on time
- Planning for the future

St. Augusta – Mayor Bob Kroll reported on:

- Housing industry is very slow
- Fire Dept. is up and running – bought a fire truck from Sauk Rapids
- Eliminated Kimball Fire Contract completely & using both Rockville and Clearwater for rescue services only
- They will be tarring around the new fire hall this spring
- Looking at roads to be overlaid, seal coating
- Working with St. Cloud on water rates
- Looking for land for a water tower and wells
- Looking for commercial land to develop
- Traffic light still going in on CR 136 and CR 47 at Hwy 15
- Bob Kroll & Tim O'Driscoll are going to Washington DC next month to get money for road projects for the whole area

Rockville – Mayor Brian Herberg reported on:

- Special Assessment Policy – Rockville took over the media blitz last fall, but the newly formed committee is coming together by being educated and it is turning out for the better
- Fire Department – The city is going through election Vs selection on the Fire Chief
- SJ Louis business is now established

Steve Frank urged the group to find a commonality that can be expanded upon. There is a lot to learn from each other and Steve asked if we can formalize one or two issue each year.

Jane DeAustin – CMBA reported on:

- Congratulated Rockville on 19 homes last year as the counts are down by one-half in the area for detached single family, but then they see more multi family
- CMBA hopes to see a turn around by fall, but with the cost of gas and sub prime it's hard to predict
- Spring tour of homes will be held the end of February
- March 14th to 16th – Annual Home Show – Theme: green building
- Housing committee as part of the St. Cloud Area Joint Planning Committee (new committee)

NEXT MEETING – APRIL 29TH – ST. JOSEPH – 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:50 p.m.

Submitted by Rena Weber
 Administrator/Clerk
 City of Rockville