

Moorhead Power Plant Study Group

Stage 2 Recommendations – Addendum

May 17, 2010

Submitted by Mark Chekola, chair, on behalf of Moorhead Power Plant Study Group (David Anderson, Bob Backman, Jana Bye, Mark Chekola, Jeff Hanson, Heidi Manning, Deanne Sperling)

December 8, 2009 the Moorhead Power Plant Study Group met with the Mayor, City Manager, and City Staff to discuss the Study Group's Stage 2 Recommendations and Report. At that meeting Mayor Voxland suggested that we submit an addendum to the report after we sought input about the recommendations from Moorhead citizens at an Open House and on an online survey. This is our addendum. It includes several other issues that arose subsequent to the Dec. 8, 2010 meeting.

1. Open House and Surveys

After the Moorhead Power Plant Study Group's Stage 2 Recommendations were submitted to the Mayor and City Council and made available to the public, we held an Open House on January 6, 2010, seeking feedback from Moorhead citizens. Bad weather that night made for limited attendance at the Open House. However, there was some publicity in the Forum, and on radio and television, and people were invited to fill out surveys on line. The surveys asked people to indicate their views about the recommendations made in the Stage 2 Report.

Results indicated that people support the recommendation to delay decisions about development for up to two years.

In addition, **there was very strong support for the following, which also had strong support in the January, 2009 Open House and online survey:**

- **People regard the Power Plant site as a valuable city-owned property.**
- **The Power Plant site should be for public use with the possibility of compatible private uses.**
- **The Power Plant structure should be preserved and adapted for reuse.**
- **There was strong opposition to selling the property to private developers for private use.**

With regard to questions about possible uses of the site there was some support for the various possibilities mentioned in in the Stage 2 Recommendations, with no clear front runner.

2. “Defiant Garden” Proposal

Colleen Sheehy, Plains Art Museum Director, attended the Open House in January, 2010, and spoke with several Study Group members about the idea of developing a temporary “defiant garden” and perhaps in the future a permanent one, at part of the Power Plant site, designed by a team of artists. Sheehy raised the idea of the Museum preparing a proposal to the Lake Region Arts Council for a grant to fund a visit by a team of two artists to develop a plan for the garden and asking the city to partner with the Museum by submitting the proposal to the Arts Council.

The Study Group discussed this idea and voted to give it enthusiastic endorsement. The Study Group sees it as a great opportunity to draw attention to the Power Plant site and to invite the public to visit and enjoy the garden there.

The proposal has been presented to city staff, the Public Service Commission, and the City Council.

3. Possible Relocation of Log Cabin

There was some recent publicity about the need to find a new location for the Log Cabin presently located adjoining Woodlawn Park on 4th Street near 3rd Avenue, S. A proposal to locate it on public land adjoining the Power Plant site, specifically at the corner of 6th Avenue, S. and 2nd Street, S. Since we were asked by the city to consider the next best use of the whole Power Plant site and adjoining publicly owned land, we believed the Study Group should discuss this proposal.

By the time we met, in early May, Cliff MacLain had indicated to Holly Heitkamp that that location was unsuitable because it would interfere with maintenance of the water tower. While he suggested considering west of the water tower as a possible location, city staff noted that given the uncertainty of future development of the site, that area was important to keep open should future development require it, for instance, for parking.

In discussing the issue of where to locate the log cabin, the following suggestions were raised:

- It seems desirable to seek a location for the log cabin somewhere in the core of the city. An earlier proposal to locate it in M. B. Johnson park seems undesirable because

It would likely attract vandalism in that location

Being located that far from the center of the city it would likely be little used for community group meetings as it had in the past, and wouldn't serve as a focus for some events such as the summer arts gatherings that for a time met there.

- Given that the future of the Power Plant site is at this point open, and some possible future development possibilities might be compatible with part of the site serving as a location for the log cabin, we wonder if it might be a good idea to wait for a while before making a final decision. Information in publicity about the need to relocate the cabin indicated that problems with the basement made it unusable at this time, but also suggested that the log building just remaining there for a time is not in any serious danger. Some possibilities for the future of the Power Plant site might even be such that the log cabin could be a desirable feature of the site.