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Site plan for new grocery store gains approval

By Traci Papineau

A site plan for a new grocery store Monday night gained somewhat grudging approval from Tioga City Commissioners, amid questions about the ownership of the proposed store.

A Coburn's grocery store is proposed for construction in the southwest corner of the new Annabelle Homes subdivision.

Project Developer Jay Moore spoke at the meeting, along with Anabelle's Dean Dovolis. According to the pair, the 34,000 square foot structure would include a liquor store and would be one of six stores built in the region.

Commissioners expressed concern over the store's affiliation with the Tioga Food Pride.

Moore assured the board that the owner he was representing was not the same Coburn's affiliated with the Food Pride. Commissioners want to see an unaffiliated store in order to generate competition and bring food prices down.

"It's healthy to have some competition," said Commissioner Jeff Spivey.

Dovolis said the two stores have different suppliers and this particular store would have a pricing policy similar to stores in Minot.

Commissioners also expressed concern over how delays in the housing portion of the building project would affect the store. Commissioner Judy Heilman was especially concerned about the order in which the stores will be built.

Moore said construction is scheduled to begin with stores in Watford City and Minot but that Tioga would be their next priority.

Dovolis and Moore stressed the need for quick action on the request in order to start construction this fall.

"I have a hard time with being pushed when we aren't seeing anything done with all we already approved," said Spivey, referring to the housing project. Dovolis said he is

Kraft says new store would have different branding

By Cecile Krimm

Williston grocer Mike Kraft, who several months ago announced a new business relationship with the Coburn's grocery chain for his Econmart and Food Pride stores, Tuesday morning said the store discussed for Tioga would indeed be different than the Tioga Food Pride.

"They are going to brand that with the Coburn's label," said Kraft, with a different format, and an emphasis on competitive pricing and a wider variety of products.

He referred other questions to Emily Coburn, who was unavailable for comment Tuesday.

"working through" the situation, but the solution "hinges" on the grocery store approval.

Dovolis said a meeting Tuesday with Spivey and Commissioner Drake McClelland would shed further light.

In a unanimous vote, the board gave its approval.

A Tioga Comprehensive Plan was presented by representatives from AE2S, including a summary of the Land Use plan, Utility Plan, Capital Improvement Plan and Financial Plan.

The plan includes recommendations for the annexation of Hess property to the east and west of the city, increasing building permit and impact fees and instituting other possible taxes for RV parking and restaurants.

With more city growth on the horizon, the possibility of requesting a special census was discussed. The census would cost \$75,000 but could be recouped by higher state funding.



City streets in Ray are festooned with colorful pipe as crews work on a major water line replacement project this summer. Heather Donnelly photo

Ray residents will endure summer of construction to get new infrastructure

By Brandon Becker

Driving around Ray isn't as easy as it used to be. The city is in the process of replacing water lines at several key locations, including Main Street, Comford Street, Score Street and Third Avenue.

"The whole reason why this all started is we have to do monthly tests," City Auditor Kim Steffan said. "Back" tests showed low chlorine residuals. Out of five test sites only two recorded chlorine."

Essentially, a chlorine residual is how much chlorine is left after it travels through the pipe, and it is what helps keep bacteria from forming.

"The possibility of bacteria is there but we've been lucky," Steffan said. "But we are supposed to have a chlorine residual."

Back in 2009, the state health department first noticed the city of a problem, but the money wasn't available to replace municipal water lines.

That has since changed. "It's a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund project," said Steffan.

The fund has federal funds put into it and part of it will be

given loan forgiveness, which is basically a grant, according to Steffan.

The city borrowed \$2.5 million for the project and will be required to pay back \$1 million. A majority of the water lines in Ray are from the 1930s and are made up of cast iron, and are extremely brittle.

Steffan said water lines are supposed to be replaced every 30 years. Due to the pipes being fragile, the best way to put the new water lines in is through a technology called pipe bursting.

Another way of putting in new water lines is through an open trench – it requires roads to be torn up and would create a bigger mess.

Through pipe bursting, the only part of the road that gets torn up is the receiving and insertion pit.

Jon Pauna, project engineer for the water main said a steel rod is put through the insertion pit to break up the existing pipe.

After the pipe has gone all the way through to the other side the new pipe is hooked up and then pulled back through the hole created by the rod.

A temporary water line has

been set up above ground for residents whose water lines are being replaced.

"In some cases, temporary water has had better water pressure than what they originally had," said Steffan. Construction on the project started last month and is expected to wrap up in November

Lagoon at capacity
With the Ray lagoon already filled to capacity the city is in need of another one.

"We have to build new lagoons. We have to have a new solution to take care of our waste," said Steffan. "We've doubled in size in the last few years."

Developers who have wanted to come to the area and build have had to be turned away because there's no sewer available at this time.

"All the additions and developers want to come here, but we can't add any more people to our lagoon right now," Steffan said.

Several months ago Ray received \$50,000 from the Energy Impact Fund that was to go towards finding an engineer for the lagoon project. In the latest round of the impact funding,

Ray received an additional \$1.8 million.

"We're happy we got that but it's still not enough, so now we're going to have to borrow more money," Steffan said.

The city received a loan this past March for \$1.5 million, which caused the sewer rates to jump from \$1.50 to \$27.82 per household.

"For people on fixed incomes that's a lot of money to come up with," said Steffan.

There's a possibility more money could be borrowed, but she said the city wouldn't do it if it meant sewer rates would have to be raised again.

She also said the majority of people have the mentality of "if we have to, we have to" in regard to adding another lagoon.

The current lagoon is receiving a discourse to help keep up with all that is coming in. Right now the lagoon leaks by 25 percent, but even with that happening there's still more going in than coming out.

Construction isn't expected to begin on the new lagoon until next year. With summer winding down, the earliest the project would start would be next year.

Oil Can! Cookfest brings 'good food, fun and information' to Ray next week

By Cecile Krimm

Mouth-watering barbecue, informative education sessions and amusement for children all will be found at the Oil Can! Cookfest Tuesday in Ray. The celebration, which moves from oil patch town to town each summer, is literally a moveable feast, with oil exploration and service companies teaming up to show off their food preparation skills.

"It's a tradition the North Dakota Petroleum Council's Tessa Sandstrom suspects grew out of the fact so many oil companies have their roots in the Southern United States, where barbecue is as quintessential as rhubarb to North Dakota.

"There are people who are actually trained to cook," Sandstrom said, and ever more elaborate catering trucks

4TH ANNUAL BAKKEN ROCKS
COOKFEST
JULY 24
5-8 PM
RAY
NCC BUILDING
111 RAILROAD AVENUE & HWY 2
GOOD FOOD! GOOD FUN!

Instead of delivering food to company rigs, next Tuesday the companies will set up in the parking lot at NCC in Ray to put on a feed for anyone who cares to drop by.

The purpose of the Cookfest is to create good will in the oil patch and what better way than through the stomachs of locals?

As the tradition of the event has grown in North Dakota, "They keep getting more and more into it, from hors d'oeuvres to whole meals with sides," said Sandstrom.

As well, many of the companies have giveaways, from trinkets to valuable branded merchandise.

"One of the goals of the North Dakota Oil Can program is trying to develop relationships," said Sandstrom, not only among the oil field companies, but es-

pecially with local landowners, mineral rights holders and public officials.

"It allows them to get to know the people operating in their community – maybe put a face to the trucks and logos they see in the area."

It's also a way of getting oil field workers connected to the community. "A lot of these companies, their people do want to get involved," said Sandstrom, and the Cookfest can serve as an introduction.

This year's Cookfest will include a large inflatable slide for kids to play on, entertainment by a clown and face painting.

The Cookfest will also feature live entertainment from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., including performances by Janelle Anderson and Kent Ralph in Ray.

Besides the food and the fun, people

with questions about oil field practices and projects are invited to attend informational sessions, which begin at 2:30 p.m. in the NCC warehouse.

There, leaders from government and industry will talk about the latest technologies as well as the challenges from rapid community growth.

Local subscribers will find an insert in this week's issue of The Tioga Tribune containing a full schedule of speakers.

Teams will begin serving their oil patch delicacies around 5 p.m. and the event will wrap up around 8 p.m.

"We appreciate everything the communities impacted by oil development do for the industry," said Sandstrom, and Cookfest is a way of saying thanks.

"Hopefully, Ray enjoys it as much as the others have."

and trailers employed in pursuit of the best barbecue.

City needs help in Tioga

Tioga Street Commissioner Drake McClelland reported a need for an additional city maintenance employee.

"There is too much work for the staff we have," said McClelland, "and I don't want to have to see our guys working 12 to 14 hours a day to get things done."

Although an ad for the position has been ongoing with the ND Job Service Center, there haven't been any applicants.

Said Auditor Jamie Erass, "It's hard to compete with oilfield wages."

It was suggested that a person who could work for both the city maintenance and the water department would be the smartest move.

Water Commissioner Judy Heilman and Finance Commissioner Ronda Davidson will work on a job description, wage and benefits package for a joint position.



Brandon Becker – Tioga Tribune

Somehow, the threat of a squirt gun still holds appeal for youngsters, even when the intended squirttees are already all wet, as seen here Monday at the Tioga swimming pool.

ALCO confirms Tioga store

Tioga and nearby residents will have another place to shop this fall. ALCO Stores, Inc., this week confirmed in a press release that a new location is opening south of town.

The store is a regional retailer that sells a variety of products. An early estimate from the company places the number of employees needed at 25.

"We are confident that the new ALCO store will meet the

needs of shoppers in Tioga and surrounding communities," said Rich Wilson, ALCO Stores' president and CEO.

"We look forward to being involved in the community and serving shoppers with ALCO's wide selection of merchandise, convenient location and friendly, local service."

There are 216 ALCO Stores that stretch across 23 states. The company was founded in 1901 in Abilene, Kan.