

Neighbors,

It has been a minute since I have given you an update on our city strengths and challenges. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to; Parks and Recreation, Roads and Drainage, City Growth, and the Extra Territorial (ET) area.

PARKS & REC

Baseball/Softball

2020 saw unanticipated challenges. The Harwood Baseball Association did not hold a little league season and therefore did not rent our fields this year. The ball diamonds had more players than ever before in spite of this void. Activity creates activity and the Council had more requests to use our fields than ever before. The Council knew an active city would be one of the best marketing tools to sell lots...it worked, more to come about lot sales, later. In 2021, assuming Harwood has a season, we will not host as many, if any, non-Reile's Acres populated teams. To discuss your 2021 field desires contact tim@reilesacresnd.org.

Park upgrades

We endured challenges finding a long-term solution for our semi-full-time city worker, this year. Because of this instability, our park upgrades were negligible. 2021 will be an improvement year for our parks. Projects being worked include an upgrade to our batting cages. We plan to shift them to the northwest end of the tennis court with strengthened post attachments. The cage court area will have a new entrance gate as well as entry gates into the cages. The change was motivated by the continued wind damage. We are also pursuing costs and a feasibility study for resurfacing the tennis court.

The city is on the verge of receiving a lighting grant from Border States Electric (BSE). The BSE grant will add high tech, high efficiency lighting to the 9th Addition ballfield as well as the 9th Addition park and basketball court. The council is pursuing an additional grant for a double pickle ball court that will be set in the 9th Addition Park between the basketball and tetherball courts.

The council is also pursuing some developer owned land on the east and north ends of the city. The city's plan for these spaces are to plant roughly 120 trees on the North parcel and roughly 50 trees on the East parcel. The second phase for the East parcel would be to provide adult and senior recreational opportunities. An example of this is available along 42nd Street in SW Fargo and 8th Street in Moorhead. The plan would include a 1/8th mile walking track with outdoor exercise equipment spread throughout the track area.

Park Names

We need names and we need you to provide them. Be on the look out for park naming contest details before the year ends. It is time to have official names for our city focal points.

ROADS & DRAINAGE

Roads

No major 2020-road projects took place; however, we do have proposed 2021 plans that include crack and chip sealing of Adams Drive, Bakers Lane, 32nd Ave, and Landview Rd. If adequate funds are still available, we will pave the remaining portion of 45th St from 36th Ave to County Rd 20. A common question asked is; when will we pave 45th St from 19th Ave to 32nd Ave. The short answer is. we cannot accomplish this. The City does not own that portion of road and cannot expend taxes towards a non-municipality owned infrastructure project. We have and are continuing to encourage Mayor Mahoney to accomplish this for us. He is open to it but insists the money does not yet exist. Until this improvement happens, we will continue to encourage Fargo to accomplish more frequent maintenance on that section of road.

Drainage

We improved 2 drainage areas this year. The first project was on the inlets to the 9th addition drainage ditch. These areas were set in concrete. The motivator for this project was to increase the integrity of the ditch. These areas, because they stayed wet, were beginning to sluff. The addition of the concrete stabilized them and delayed any major re-building for many years.

You will also notice a large section of Landview was dugout, regraded, and reseeded. The motivator for this project was mosquito control. These areas never completely dried and Vector Control informed us that much of our mosquito population was building their forever homes in these wetlands.

We replaced the sewage pump located on the Community Center lot this fall. A maintenance check identified a near catastrophic failure earlier this spring, something we absolutely needed to avoid. The price tag, \$40,000.

NEW NEIGHBORS

The 9th Addition experienced some growth this year. As of this writing, there are 28 opened or recently closed new home building permits. 2020 permits have a value of \$11.3M plus an additional \$3M in land sales. There are currently 24 new homes scheduled for construction in 2021. There are three 9th Addition lots left to be sold. Unprecedented growth: you all have created a community that motivated the building and plans to build 106 new households in 5 years!

Beyond the new home permits, the city issued \$500k worth of improvement permits. We see this as a happiness meter. If you like where you live, you invest in your property.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL (ET) (This has been near the top of our Priority list for 18 months)

The perimeter of Reile's Acres is not Reile's Acres but our ET area. What does this mean? It means this area does not pay their taxes to us but must comply with our ordinances. In the last 18 months, the cities of Fargo and West Fargo have, behind the scenes, challenged the integrity of this North Dakota Century Code protected area and has created a plan of their own through an organization called the Metropolitan Council of Governments (METROCOG). Fargo and West Fargo Commissioned METROCOG to prepare a plan titled 'Northwest Metropolitan Transportation Plan.' In June of 2019, a council member and I were invited to a meeting with the METROCOG team. The team showed us their plans for

potential transportation and infrastructure growth in and around the Metro that included Reile's Acres and its surrounding Extra Territorial (ET) area. We were caught off guard by their plans which included development within our ET area. The Plan concept has been placed here;

<https://www.reilesacresnd.org/city-administration/planning-zoning/>

The background of their plan states: Historically, the northwest portion of the Fargo-Moorhead metro has been largely rural and heavily oriented towards rural residential and agricultural uses. Recent developments have led the City of Fargo to improve utility services, as well as other infrastructure planning efforts. The City of Fargo and West Fargo have established a new extraterritorial agreement in coordination with a recent utility service agreement between the two cities. The City of Reile's Acres has also seen a notable increase in residential development within its city's limits.

The objective of the plan states: The intended outcome of this project is to develop an implementation plan for future roadway needs and develop policy recommendations to guide transportation decisions and future land use in the study area. The Northwest Metro Transportation Plan is intended to provide guidance for growth and development for the northwestern portion of the Fargo- Moorhead metropolitan area, as well as general multimodal transportation and land use recommendations.

What we know to be true:

The cities of Reile's Acres and Fargo entered into an ET agreement in May of 2016 that says, in summary; The City of Fargo cannot annex any land within the Reile's Acres ET area without Reile's Acres approval. The plans that were shared with us and presented to the public in July 2019 appear to not take this ET agreement and NDCC into consideration. We have no reason to believe our larger neighbor will honor this agreement as we have recently observed them neglecting federal injunctions relating to the Diversion Project.

How we responded:

In May of 2020, the city council passed a Resolution of Annexation that made all the surrounding land on the West and South of RA plus the agricultural land to the North, a part of the city. For a moment, this land was in the city. Shortly after the resolution was recorded with Cass County, two of the landowners to the west of RA challenged our procedures in court. We followed North Dakota Century Code (NDCC), literally. The landowners argued we did not give them ample notice to respond, they challenged our resolution in court. The appointed judge agreed and said the literal version of NDCC did not allow them proper notification. This did not mean we lost but it did mean we would have to expend an un-determined amount of your tax money in mediation hearings to come to an agreement with no guaranteed return on our investment.

Moving Forward:

The city council made the decision to drop the annexation quest in its current fashion. The council and I are now communicating directly with surrounding landowners to negotiate terms of annexation. Key landowners are in favor of annexation if it ensures they can keep their agricultural land, agricultural. They, like us, are fearful of Fargo's development encroachment and land grab but at the time of our resolution of annexation were unaware of the Northwest Metro Transportation Plan designed by METROCOG and commissioned by Fargo and West Fargo.

SURVEY

Every few years or when we have a large council turnover, the city puts out a survey to help guide us. The survey is complete and is posted here: <https://www.reilesacresnd.org/city-administration/surveys-and-letters/> The team has been reviewing the responses for a couple of weeks and will prioritize what can be accomplished in the near term and what is feasible for the future. We posted the survey in two documents - data and comments. You will notice on the comments portion that some trending questions have been responded to by our team. The responses are in red font. For those who may have a red/green color challenge, responses are located at the end of the comment. Your responses allow us to make more efficient data driven decisions and we are grateful for those of you who participated. If you were not able to complete the survey, we still want to hear from you, please join us for our monthly Council Meeting. Our meeting dates and times are always posted here: <https://www.reilesacresnd.org/>

As always, you can reach out to any of your council members for questions and clarifications.

Very Respectfully,

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