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By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

- Leader & Times

Liberal Housing Authority recommended Linda K. McMechan, resident of Parklane Towers, be placed on the LHA board Tuesday night at the Liberal City Commission meeting.

The motion was agreed to 5-0.

The South Kansas Avenue Project was also covered in the meeting.

City manager Mark Hall said, “As you are aware of our city streets and our city street program – 2014 is approaching us, and this is one of many projects in the next few years till 2021.



“What we propose is we start with Kansas Avenue. We will start from the south from Pine Street to the railroad tracks,” Hall said.

Starting in 2014, that would encompass Phase 1, and Phase 2 in 2015, would include from the railroad tracks to 15th Street. Phase 3 would include from 15th Street to Tucker Road.

Hall continued, "The first phase is estimated, as we go forward, at \$937,970. The commission previously appropriated \$165,000 to south Kansas Avenue. That was when we got started the engineering.

"With the commissioners approval, we would like to place additional \$772,970 in the south Kansas Avenue project, which comes out of the 1-cent sales tax streets, drainage and other capital improvements portion," he said.

Vice Mayor Janet Willimon asked, "How wide are these sidewalks?"

"They will be 6-foot wide. There will be lighting, and we feel that will enhance the south part of town," Hall replied. "I know that it's limited in nature now, but it will be consistent.

"The estimate, approximately, 65 lights. And that would be on both sides from Pine to the intersection. That's a rough estimate about every 80 feet," he added.

Commissioner Joe Denoyer asked, "Did we look into possibly sidewalk from south Pine Street to those apartments. I mean, I'm sure that would be an additional cost. We've talked about that for years."

Hall replied, "We can look at that project. I know it's been in the 'look at' in the sidewalk project, but we can get some information back on it."

A motion was made by commissioner Denoyer and second by Willimon.

Denoyer added, "I just think enhancing the south part of town could also be economic development – beautify down there, it is more attractive for business, so I think it's exciting for starting down there."

Hall added, "We currently have the wood lighting poles, but the electricity would be put underground so that would clear up the horizon."

The motion was agreed to 5-0.

The formation of new boards presented by commissioner Ron Warren.

"I continue to hear a request, 'are we making any ground in housing?' It's an area that I'm dealing with a lot, being in construction," Warren said. "And what I think I've seen is we got a department that could use a little helpful input. The city inspector that we have now has been two years that he's been marked with us."

"There are several people in the skilled profession. I know it's been different in the past on how we deal with things – my idea on creating a board would be to throw out ideas."

He then suggested a building board, plumbing board in Liberal. A board where they could all go to each other for knowledge.

Mayor Dave Harrison asked, "Are you talking about an advisory board?"

"An advisory board, and then like I said we have a Planning and Zoning board that has the authority to take action. I'm talking about a board, I feel like, would have volunteers and meet once a month. I think that I would allow people that aren't on the board that have issues to show up to those meetings and discuss an item and have the benefit of some knowledge of people that are in the business."

Harrison asked, "What's there to prevent you guys from having your own board? Create your own board?"

"There's nothing that keeps us from doing that. I was approaching – the support of the city commission."

"I'm just speaking quite candidly right here, we have a city manager, and he has hired someone to be...what's his title?"

Hall said, "Planning and Zoning administrator, building inspection director."

Harrison said, "Really, if we are going to create a board that is giving him direction we are actually going to undermine the system that we have in place, in my mind."

"I don't see it that way," Warren said. "In life, if you have six or seven people coming up with a solution, you might come up with a better solution than one person trying to do it on their own, and that's what I'm trying to get at. It's knowledge – five, six people trying to come up with a solution."

Harrison responded, "I think that can happen without creating a board. If they have a problem of some sort, they can be communicated through you or one of us, but that's just me."

Willimon said, "Maybe there is a lack of communication or cooperation, and having said that we meet every two weeks and encourage and welcome people to come before us. I think what we have a very cooperative, united commission. I think before we go to that effort, let's talk about it a little bit more. Let's try to cooperate a little bit more, and encourage more activity right here at this podium and see how we can move forward that way. I'm all about a check and a balance."

Commissioner Dean Aragon said, "I would like to learn more about it."

Denoyer added, "If we can enhance that department through the advice of knowledgeable people in the field, I think it would be a good thing. But once again, the makeup of the board would be essential."

The commission then went into a 20 minute executive session regarding personnel matters of nonelected personnel.

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