



Money OK'd for Bluemont Lakes repairs

By Mike Nowatzki

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Fargo water users will pay \$370,000 to repair crumbling shorelines in the Bluemont Lakes area, the City Commission decided Monday.

The Bluemont Lakes Community Service Association, which represents 375 families, asked the city in 2001 to help pay for repairs around the neighborhood's three man-made lakes.

The city has used the lakes for stormwater storage since the area was developed in the late 1970s. The association claims the rise and fall of the lake levels is a primary factor in the shoreline failure.

But a consultant hired by the city placed 75 percent of the blame on the shoreline steepness and 20 percent on groundwater seepage. Only 5 percent of the failure was related to the city's stormwater retention, said the study by Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson Inc. of Moorhead.

The firm estimated repairs at \$3.7 million.

City Engineer Mark Bittner recommended the city pay 10 percent of that cost, rather than 5 percent, because the association contested the impact of the stormwater.

The \$370,000 will come from the city's stormwater utility fund, Bittner said. Residential property owners pay \$3 per month to the fund.

The city considered creating a special assessment district in the area bound by Interstate 29 and 25th Street and Interstate 94 and 32nd Avenue South, but it would have overlapped an existing district, Bittner said.

With the one-time payment from the city, the association assumes full responsibility for maintaining the lakes in the future. Commissioner John Cosgriff said residents new to Bluemont Lakes must be made aware of that.

"My concern is if there are additional failures of the shoreline five or 10 years from now, it would seem they may come back to the city and say, 'Wait a minute, we want the other solution,'" he said.

In other business, the commission:

- Approved R.L. Engebretson as architect for a Fargodome building project, reversing an earlier decision.

The Fargo Dome Authority chose R.L. Engebretson to design new escalators, two meeting rooms and a hallway for the Fargodome.

However, commissioners rejected the recommendation Nov. 22, citing a conflict of interest because R.L. Engebretson was appearing on behalf of the plaintiff in a civil lawsuit against the city.

The firm's owner, Rick Engebretson, told the commission Monday that the employee who inspected a building for the plaintiff hasn't worked for the firm for more than a year.

"I have not been involved in it," he said. "I haven't even been in the building."

Cosgriff cast the lone vote against awarding the contract to R.L. Engebretson, saying the city should follow the advice of its legal counsel.

"I think we go at our risk here," he said.

Commissioner Linda Coates noted that a contractor involved in the same lawsuit has a contract with the city.

- Approved tax incentives for one downtown development project and delayed them for another.

Commissioners voted unanimously to award \$51,355 in Renaissance Zone tax exemptions to Sterling Development Group Two LLC. Owner Kevin Bartram plans to remodel Kaye's Printing at 505 Broadway into a mixed-use retail, office and residential building.

The commission delayed action on Renaissance Zone and tax increment financing (TIF) incentives for the Bristol Street Development. The project involves the Fargoan, former Moose Lodge and Universal Building.

A spreadsheet error caused the commission to get different financial figures than the city Finance Committee. The repayment schedule for the TIF bonds also didn't work out, Mayor Bruce Furness said.

The Finance Committee will meet today and forward its recommendation to the City Commission for a special meeting Wednesday.