

Parking problems aired

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 29 April 2010 21:20 - Last Updated Thursday, 29 April 2010 21:24



Resolution meeting set after store owners bring up issue.

Parking is a bone of contention for owners of Gothenburg's only grocery store and others.

During an April 20 city council meeting, Peterson's Supermarket owners Steve and Blaine Peterson proposed a meeting with city and council officials and other business owners in the area to work out a plan.

Following discussion, Mayor Joyce Hudson directed the city administrator and others to meet with Petersons and others with businesses on streets that intersect with Ninth Street and Avenue D.

Steve said he and his father Blaine approached the council 20 years ago about installing diagonal parking on the west side of Avenue D across from their store at 404 Ninth St.

Parallel parking, which has fewer spaces than diagonal, is offered there now.

Although—according to Steve—the council agreed to the change, state officials said “no” because Avenue D is designated as the Highway 47 bypass.

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The Petersons bought a lot for customer parking across Ninth Street which is also used by city hall employees whose building adjoins the lot.

CONTRACTORS NEEDED

Six homeowners who are eligible for owner-occupied housing rehabilitation in Gothenburg will soon receive work orders up from West Central Nebraska Development District (WCND). Homeowners must get three bids from contractors for renovation work.

Eligible contractors must be registered with the Nebraska Department of Labor and have a Renovation Repair & Paint (RRP) Certification Training Certificate. The RRP is a new regulation implemented in April 2010. WCND officials anticipate that approximately \$120,000 of funding will be spent on the six homes.

Contractors who need information on performance regulations can call WCND at 688-284-8077.

Funding for the project is available through Community Development Block Grant funding provided by the Department of Economic Development and awarded to the City of Gothenburg.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said the city has a lease with Peterson's for city employees to use a portion of the lot.

"We've run out of parking," Steve said.

In addition, he said about 70% to 80% of customer groceries are carried to their cars by grocery employees which takes time and effort when cars are parked away from the store.

During some city council meetings and on voting days—when city hall is a precinct—he said parking in front of the store is at a premium.

Steve suggested moving the emergency snow route to F Street because of heavy traffic and the need for parking spaces near the grocery store.

The snow route, designated by city ordinance, begins on Avenue D from Highway 30 and travels north to 11th Street and east to Lake Avenue which is Highway 47.

He pointed out that Gothenburg State Bank—which is next to Peterson's Supermarket—is growing as well as the grocery store.

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“We’ve got a problem so we need to solve the problem,” Steve said. “We’d like to hash it out instead of stepping on toes.”

Gothenburg Discount Pharmacy at 902 Ave. D, owned by Rick Zarek, faces the block where the Petersons would like parallel changed to diagonal parking.

Zarek attended the meeting to say he thinks adequate parking is important but that he doesn’t want it to interfere with landscaping next to the curb of the block.

“I think that’s of value to my business and to the downtown,” Zarek said. “I’d like to see something worked on before tearing out the landscaping.”

Council member Jim Aden acknowledged that adequate parking is a problem but noted that only about two more parking spots would be gained with diagonal parking along Avenue D.

“Two spots is not an answer to me because it affects other businesses with green space,” Aden said, noting that he supported a meeting with business owners.

Even with the change, Steve pointed out that parking would be whittled to five, instead of seven spaces, when heavy snow forces the street to be used as an emergency route.

Aden asked if there were parking possibilities with the lot Peterson’s bought behind the grocery store at the southeast corner of Avenue D and 10th Street.

Steve said the lot and demolition of a home there were for storage, not parking.

Clymer said five to seven spots would become available in the parking lot owned by Peterson’s next to city hall when a police department addition is finished.

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He said Friday that stalls would be gained because seniors cannot play cards in city hall anymore as the area is now part of the police department.

“We’ve been using up most of those stalls with construction equipment,” Clymer explained.

Since most of the exterior construction is finished at city hall, he said he didn’t anticipate large usage of the five to seven stalls no longer used by seniors.

Clymer said he would set up a meeting with business owners this week.

Pete’s Lounge will expand its business to add an approximate 24x18-foot enclosed area in back of the lounge.

Clymer said owner Cherry Alger requested the addition, where patrons can smoke, because the state no-smoking ban has affected her business.

Alger’s request will now require approval by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission and the Nebraska State Fire Marshall.

In other business, the council.

- approved four change orders for the renovation of and addition to the Gothenburg police department. They include: \$2,043 for extra dry wall and insulation and a change in doors and installation; \$4,156 for paving repair around the garage addition and the re-routing of water lines in the boiler room; \$1,324 for such things as a utility sink, exhaust fan, doors and installation; \$834 for added outlets and other electric work mostly as a result of a new fire alarm system.

- okayed \$15,872 in a draw down payment for a homeowner occupation project through the Community Development Block Grant program.

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- granted a payment of \$7,500 from downtown revitalization grant funds to Blaine Peterson for improvements made to a building he owns at Highway 30 and Avenue F.
- decided to add a dollar to city dog licensing fees because of a legislative bill passed that increases dog and cat licensing fees by \$1. The change is effective July 15 and will increase licensing fees from \$15 to \$16.
- learned that the public works department received a new loader.

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