

SAVAGE Pacer



Final touches put on town square parking lot design

Nancy Huddleston, Editor, August 13, 2005, Savage Pacer

Changes to the town square parking lot design have met with the Savage City Council's approval, but will cost more than originally anticipated.

The parking lot - which faces Highway 13 between Ottawa and Princeton avenues – has been scrutinized for the past six months. The Dan Patch Historical Society is mobilizing efforts to move the old railroad depot back to the city and it will be placed on one corner of the parking lot. In light of that, the city council asked for the parking lot to be more than just asphalt and concrete.

The changes made to the lot will push the total price tag to \$500,000, up \$150,000 from the original estimates. But council members said Monday night (Aug. 8), that the increased cost was worth it because it will provide a focal point for downtown.

Dave Hutton of WSB and Associates presented changes – the two most expensive ones being a concrete wall between the northern edge of the parking lot and Highway 13 and the extra landscaping. On top of that, the city council wants an irrigation system factored, into the plans, which could add another \$8,000.

Hutton noted that the poured concrete retaining wall was the most expensive change because footings are needed. The poured wall is curved and the plan is to possibly include a decorative rock face on the wall or words, such as "Hamilton District" and the city's logo. Hutton said the poured wall is almost more durable than a keystone wall and will hold up better to salt spray from the highway.

Landscaping was added at the direction of the city council members because they felt the parking lot islands at the end of parking aisles were too typical. So, Hutton said, the middle parking lot median was eliminated and more trees were added to the northern boundary of the parking lot (TH 13 side). What's more, shrubs and other perennial plantings were added in between trees.

In addition to the higher monetary cost, the changes to the parking lot design will result in the loss of some parking spaces (15 total). The site will still accommodate 90 parking stalls.

Councilman Kevin Lienau expressed concern with how street lighting in the parking lot islands will compete with honey locust trees planted there. Hutton said engineers could change out decorative lighting for typical shoe box lights on taller poles to address that concern.

In terms of a time schedule, the city council originally requested the project get under way this fall. But Hutton noted that could drive the overall costs up, as it is getting late in the construction season.

Instead, he suggested bidding out the project so that grading and the poured concrete wall could be done this fall and the rest of the project in the spring. Or the entire project could be bid out for construction next spring.

The bid specifications for the project will be written both ways and, when the issue comes back for final approval, the city council can decide how it wants construction to proceed.

The extra cost for the project will likely come from proceeds from the first and second phases of the Hamilton District Redevelopment project bonds. Councilman Craig Chamberlain also suggested city staff look into whether funds from the sidewalk, community investment and storm water funds could be used for various aspects of the project.

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