

Falls City Council Approves Funding for CGB Project

(KLZA) The Falls City, City Council voted 7-1 Monday night to approve a resolution approving Consolidated Grain and Barge Companies redevelopment plan for an approximate 160 acre site on the south edge of Falls City.

CGB plans to build a grain handling facility that will provide storage for 2,250,000 bushels of grain. The site will include truck dumps to allow for unloading of local corn from farmers and the facility will be able to load unit trains. Rain infrastructure will also include a loop track. The initial cost is estimated at more than 20-million dollars.

The council also approved a memorandum of understanding between the City and Consolidated Grain and Barge for a loan/grant of \$500,000 in LB-840 Re-Use Funds as recommended by the Citizens Advisory Review Committee. The vote was again 7-1 with Second Ward Council Person Judy Murphy casting the nay vote each time.

The project has not been without controversy. Mayor Tim Hersh addressed this during his report Monday night. (play audio :32 seconds)

During the public hearing, Dave Irwin, Manager of Salem Grain with facilities in Salem and Falls City stated his concern about the secrecy of the project that was revealed to the public in June.(play audio :09 seconds)

Irwin said he cannot understand how a field on the south edge of town is qualified for Tax Increment Financing. (play audio :24 seconds)

EDGE Executive Director responded to Irwin's accusations that he was not provided answers to questions he had about the project. (play audio :23 seconds)

Cromer went on to explain that by agreement EDGE and the City are required to work confidentially with prospects until they are prepared to go public with their projects. (play audio :28 seconds)

Mike Bain, Special Council to the Community Redevelopment Authority said a statutory cost benefit study conducted indicates the CGB project will not mean added expenses for other local entities. (play audio :48 seconds)

Bain said if the project is done, it certainly will mean changes for some current businesses and truckers. (play audio :44 seconds)

Charlie Radatz, Chairman of the Community Redevelopment Authority told the Council they believe this is a good project for Falls City. (play audio 1:07)

Cromer said that the half-million dollars in funding from LB-840 Re-Use funds is only a small part of the project. (play audio :26)

If CGB meets the terms of the agreement, they will not need to pay back the funds.

Area farmer Jerry Duerfeldt told the Council he also believes this will be good for area producers and the community. (play audio :26 seconds)

Mike Alexander raised concerns about the site being disturbed because of significant tribal culture and heritage meetings. He also raised concerns about environmental concerns with the property.

Finally at the end of the public hearing, Eric Kresin, Southwest Region General Manager for Consolidated Grain and Barge addressed the Council. (play audio :31 seconds)