

The last status report was October 13. This update reports on the Appleton Common Council action with respect to the Exhibition Center and briefly sets the agenda for the next few months.

This morning (Thursday) around 10:00 the following was posted on the *Post-Crescent* website:

APPLETON — During an eight-hour session Wednesday night that spilled into Thursday morning, the Appleton Common Council approved a pair of capital improvement projects that will transform the downtown district.

The council supported a \$1.5 million renovation of Houdini Plaza by rejecting a plan 11-5 that would have delayed the project until 2013.

A proposal to cut the renovation entirely failed 13-3.

**Council members also approved \$3.4 million in capital improvement money for the proposed Fox Cities Exhibition Center, which would be adjacent to and run by the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel.**

**An attempt to cut that funding from the budget was denied 14-2.**

As overall spending falls slightly to \$146 million next year, the tax levy will go up 1.64 percent to \$37.6 million.

The council voted 9-7 on the budget resolution....

This action records the desire of the City's leadership to step to the front and support the Fox Cities in ways that will bring more visitors and more visibility to both the City and the Region. Thanks to the Council members for the support and commitment to the Exhibition Center.

Contrary to the belief of many, the Center is still a proposal. It will take continued focus and advocacy to become reality. Here are some samples.

Representatives of the City and Outagamie County will now finalize the terms upon which the County would make the Exhibition Center site available. This availability would also be subject to other contingencies of the County commitment being fulfilled, mainly that all funding is obtained. We have assigned the County negotiations to the City staff. When agreement is reached, a transfer will be made to the City and the City will prepare the site for construction with respect to infrastructure and demolition. The City will then transfer the site to the Fox Cities Exhibition Center, Inc., after it is ready for construction.

Boldt is at the final stages of engaging a consulting architect to support its design and engineering phase for the project. When this decision is made, we will apply (December 8) for a grant from the Convention and Visitors Bureau Capital Fund for around \$250,000 to enable design work to commence. Keep in mind that, to-date, all the work by various parties on this project has been pro bono, although some have support of it in their job descriptions. When we get to the next design steps, we need financing, and this will be supported by the grant that the CVB Grants Committee and Board will hopefully approve in December.

Design should be far enough along to become a topic for public discussion in April. At that time we will ask the CVB for an additional grant and also approach the Neenah, Kimberly, Grand Chute and Appleton Councils and Boards for enactment of room tax increases.

From now until late spring, we will be working with the private sector to obtain naming gifts for the project. Ideas with respect to possible prospects are welcome.

When funding is assured with respect to the local sources of contribution, we will go to market with a bond backed by the room tax increases. The current target for bonding is \$12.5 million available for construction support. The actual amount will depend on the interest rate scenario for long-term bonds at that time.

*Walt Rugland, November 10*