

What's next for the Coal Avenue Commons?

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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City council talks funding, construction

The Gallup City Council discussed two items related to the Coal Avenue Commons project Dec. 10.

The first was a resolution in support of funding for the Coal Avenue Commons project. The City of Gallup's MainStreet program applied for a grant of \$800,000 for construction funds for its downtown. Coal Avenue Commons project, which has been tentatively approved. The city will be the fiscal agent for the grant, and a grant agreement will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

Kara Smith, executive director of the Gallup Main Street Arts and Cultural District, advocated for the item.

"We're honored to be one of the key stakeholders and contributors to this important revitalization project for downtown Gallup," Smith said.

The second item was approving a proposal for the construction management with Wilson and

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Company for \$347,218, which includes the current New Mexico Gross Receipts Tax rate of about 8.31 percent. The funds will be taken from the state capital outlay.

The construction plans for the Coal Avenue Commons extend from Second Street to Fourth Street, which is why city staff needs construction management and full-time inspection presence that will meet requirements of the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

"It's a very hefty amount of money, but we think it's very important we're in compliance with all the state's requirements," City Manager Maryann Ustick said. "This is a critical project that's going to have a major impact on downtown in terms of business continuation."

Mayor Jackie McKinney said he would have been hesitant to accept the contract with Wilson and Company if they were involved with design of the commons, in part due to their past work on the Fox Run Golf Course.

However, he added the project is too far along to not accept the agreement. As such, he asked the council take measures to ensure the quality of their work.

"I'm asking that we watch them with a microscope," McKinney said.

Both items were approved with a 5-0-0 vote.

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