

City Council approves grant match, street closure

Written by By Jonathan Gregg Sun Correspondent
Friday, 25 August 2017 02:53



The Gallup City Council Aug. 22 meeting full agenda included a request to close Coal Avenue for two days during next month's Gallup Film Festival; a request for approval of matching funds for the "Our Town" grant; and the acceptance of a public recreation easement from Gallup Land Partners.

The Gallup Film Festival was again front and center during the City Council meeting, taking up more time than any other matter on the 13-item agenda.

Knifewing Segura, director of the Gallup Film Festival, requested the closure of Coal Avenue between Second and Third streets.

After objecting to any potential street closures during the City Council meeting on Aug. 8, and being informed that there were no street closures on the agenda at that time, downtown business owner Louie Bonaguidi again objected to the proposed street closure now that it was on the official agenda.

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Bonaguidi is both chairman of the Business Improvement District as well as the owner of the City Electric Shoe Shop downtown. Bonaguidi said that “Saturdays account for 30 to 40 percent of our revenue” and went on to say that “a street closure would reduce that by 30 to 40 percent.”

Segura argued that the increase in foot traffic would be beneficial to local business owners, but Bonaguidi said he had spoken to other businesses owners in the affected area, and they all felt the same way he did and they “sent me to represent them.” Additionally, Mayor Jackie McKinney said, “it’s a film festival, they are inside watching films.”

Coal Avenue was closed last year for the festival, and when asked by Councilor Allan Landavazo how many vendors actually showed up, Segura said “we probably had a couple out there.”

When Landavazo asked Segura what has he done to increase the participation of street vendors for this year’s event, he replied that he reached out to Gallup ArtsCrawl for assistance, and was also cutting prices relative to last year rates to attract more vendors. He later said that “we built this for the film makers, the icing on the cake is if people show up.”

McKinney and Landavazo suggested an alternative. Instead of closing Coal Avenue that they instead close Second Street between Aztec and Coal. McKinney said that would move things “half a block” away. Bonaguidi was asked if this would address his concerns and he agreed it would. Segura also agreed, saying “I am a team player.”

The request modified to a Second Street closure was unanimously approved.

‘OUR TOWN’ GRANT

As reported in The *Sun* in June, the city of Gallup, in partnership with GallupArts, received a \$150,000 “Our Town” grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant was matched in part by various area organizations including Northwest Council of Governments, the Gallup

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Business Improvement District, and others. The agenda item under consideration was for approval of the city's share of the match in the amount of \$65,000, which would bring matching funds to \$150,000 and a project total of \$300,000, including the NEA grant.

According to the NEA website, these grants are designed to support "creative placemaking projects."

It describes "creative placemaking" as "when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work - placing arts at the table with land-use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies."

It goes on to say "these projects represent the distinct character and quality of their communities. These projects require a partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government entity, with one of the partners being a cultural organization."

The deadline for project completion is December 2018.

PUBLIC RECREATION EASEMENT

City Attorney Chris Hayes presented an offer by Gallup Land Partners for an easement of several thousand-acre of tract of land north of Gallup for public recreation.

Hayes said that as Gallup "advertises itself as the 'Adventure Capital of New Mexico,'" and this was a perfect opportunity to expand adventure-based and outdoor activities in the area.

Hayes went on to say that there would be a mutual benefit to both the city and GLP, as GLP would get the benefit of the city's liability insurance for any injuries on the land, while the city would be able to greatly expand the scope of its recreational space.

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Councilor Allan Landavazo said there were “several abandoned mines” in that area, and inquired what would be done with them to ensure public safety.

Adam Wilkey from GLP responded that he had been in contact with the Abandoned Mine Land Program, and while he “could not speak for” AMLP, he said he will contact them to inquire a report on the area.

By Jonathan Gregg

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