



November meetings

City Commission, Nov. 5, 4 p.m. and Nov. 19, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

School Board, Nov. 4 and 18, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

Park Board, Nov. 11, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

County Commission, Nov. 12, 4 p.m., Morton County Courthouse

City Planning and Zoning Commission, Nov. 25, 5:15 p.m., City Hall

State of the City Nov. 5

Mayor Arlyn Van Beek will present statistics on Mandan's growth at the Chamber's State of the Cities breakfast Nov. 5 at the Seven Seas Inn. To register, call 223-5660.

Check out progress on comprehensive plan at Nov. 12 input meeting

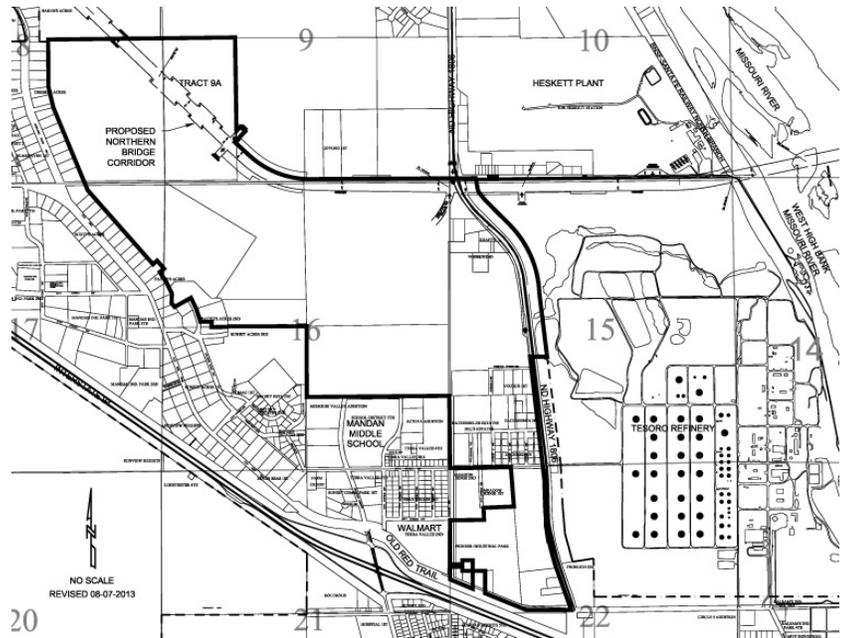
Be part of planning the future of Mandan. The Mandan land use and transportation plan is progressing and area residents and business representatives are invited to a community forum Tuesday, Nov. 12 at City Hall from 7 to 8:30 p.m. to review information and recommendations assembled to date. Planners from consulting firm Stantec will present background information, goals, and concept plans, and invite comments and suggestions.

Economic indicators

Collections of the 1 percent local sales tax were up 11.3 percent through August. Restaurant and lodging taxes were up 9.5 percent.

Adjustment in annexation boundaries gains approval, allowing City expansion

After an approximate 1,000-acre annexation proposal was protested by owners of more than 25 percent of the affected property in July, the City Commission on Oct. 1 approved annexation of a smaller area. Reduced to 877 acres, protests came in for 15 percent of the land area, an insufficient number by state law. Three different development groups are working on plans within the area of annexation.



Any street improvement projects in the area requiring funding through the special assessment process will be subject to future City Commission review and approval including the creation of a district, a separate protest period and bids. Possible future projects include the extension of Eighth Avenue NW and Sunset Drive to allow for further residential and commercial development by interested land-owners.

City budget approved with levy down 11 mills

The Mandan City Commission approved the 2014 budget in September with a decrease to 83 mills for 2013 property taxes, down from 94 mills last year. After an average valuation increase of 6.8 percent for residential properties, tax collections will still decrease by \$160,000, thanks to an increasing offset from sales tax revenue. Without setting aside 50 percent of sales tax revenue, or \$1,267,600 for general fund expenses, the City's mill levy would need to be 25 mills higher. The 2014 budget allows for hiring and capital outlay to keep pace with city growth. This includes more police officers, firefighters, a snow blower, dump trucks and street sweepers.

As elected boards finalize school district, park district and county budgets, the consolidated mill levy will soon be known.





NEW & EXPANDING MANDAN BUSINESSES:

- Station West Bar & Grill, 412 W Main
- Matrix Design, 400 W Main
- Mandan Diner & Soda Fountain, 316 W Main
- Alliance Real Estate & Low Vision Products, 320 W Main
- BKBM Engineers, 104 3rd Avenue NW
- Construction Engineers, 104 3rd Avenue NW
- Safe Ship, 3801 Memorial Highway
- Big Tex Trailers, 4200 Memorial Hwy
- Diversity Homes & Bakken Link, 2101 46th Ave SE
- Lakewood Landing, 4401 21st St SE
- Edgewood Vista, 2801 39th Ave SE
- BOS Solutions, 2916 34th St NW
- Novaspect, 2813 37th Street NW
- Walmart, 1000 Old Red Trail

Quota on number of liquor licenses may be removed

Quotas may be removed with higher initial issuance fee implemented

The Mandan City Commission at its Oct. 1 meeting voted to approve an ordinance that would remove the quota on Class A on- and off-sale and Class D and D1 off-sale licenses. The ordinance will need a second consideration before becoming law.

Presently the number of licenses in the city is limited in number to 17 for Class A, 3 for Class D off-sale beer and liquor and 7 for Class D-1 off-sale beer and wine only.

The formula for increasing the number of licenses was changed in 2012 to such time as the number of "living units" (as determined by the Office of Building Inspection) increases by 500 living units in excess of the number of living units within the City of Mandan as of June 30, 2012. The ordinance indicates a measuring date of May 31, at which time in 2013 the increase was 432 living units. The next measuring date was indicated as of May 31, 2014. Cumulative growth from June 30, 2012, through September 2013 stood at 687 living units.

Under the proposed ordinance, when a new license is issued or when a license is non-renewed or revoked, a one-time issuance fee would be required. The higher issuance fee shall be in addition to a lower annual license fee. The proposed issuance fees are \$60,000 for a Class A license, \$80,000 for a Class D, and \$40,000 for a Class D-1. The issuance fee is based in part on bids received for licenses in 2012 when a Class D sold for \$80,000 and Class D-1 licenses went for \$40,711 and \$36,000.

Proposed Ordinance 1168 would also add definition to a Class A license stating a requirement for a minimum seating capacity of 30 persons.

The proposed change in ordinance is modeled after a City of Grand Forks ordinance. West Fargo is the other of North Dakota's larger cities to operate without restrictions on the number of certain types of liquor licenses.

Numbers of licenses for restaurants, hotels and other classes are not restricted.

More daytime parking designated on First Street

The Mandan Parking Authority met Sept. 25 to review the current downtown parking map. Parking Authority members voted to lift the 90-minute limitation on parking on the south side of First Street NE on the block that includes the Fire Station. The change will help in meeting demand for parking by business owners and their employees in the area with development set to begin soon on the lot at Collins and Main. The entire south side of First Street from Sixth Avenue NW to First Avenue NE is now without daytime restrictions. A new map will be posted to www.cityofmandan.com and new brochures will be distributed to downtown businesses within the next month.

Experienced planner joins City of Mandan staff



Robert Decker

Robert Decker joined the City of Mandan's Engineering and Planning Department in mid-September as the new principal planner. Decker has extensive experience in both planning and engineering. He earned his bachelor of science degree in engineering from Antioch College in Ohio and master's degree in city and regional planning from Ohio State University. Decker was a charter member of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners. He is also a registered professional engineer. His experience includes managing new development and operation and maintenance of utility infrastructure.



Limits on property tax incentives for new & expanding businesses impact projects earlier than anticipated

The N.D. Legislature approved a bill in 2013 that has an additional eligibility requirement for new and expanding businesses to receive a property tax exemption. Under Senate Bill 2314, which became effective Aug. 1, a business must have primary-sector certification from the N.D. Department of Commerce to be considered for property tax exemption. The new act is effective for property tax exemptions granted by a municipality to initially become effective for taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2014.

Through summer working sessions to study and revise Mandan's property tax exemption policy for new and expanding businesses, Mandan officials learned that SB2314 is having a more immediate impact than anticipated during legislative hearings. State law requires all real property subject to taxation to be listed and assessed every year with reference to its value on Feb. 1 of that year. This means any non-primary sector business, such as a retail or service business, would need to have a building or addition complete by Feb. 1, 2014 to be eligible. Buildings completed after that date won't go on the tax rolls until 2015 or later.

NORTH DAKOTA'S DEFINITION OF A PRIMARY-SECTOR BUSINESS

The business adds value to a product, process or service. It generates new wealth through the sale of the majority of its products or services beyond North Dakota's borders.

Use of exemption to attract retail may appear on ballot. Municipalities under 40,000 in population may grant exemptions for retail sector businesses in the future if they receive approval for retail use of exemptions in a statewide general election. The next general election is November 2014. The Mandan City Commission is gathering input on whether to place the question on the ballot.

Criteria tighten in Mandan. The City of Mandan revised its property tax exemption policy for new and expanding businesses in 2012 to raise standards and again in July 2013 to become more targeted. While consideration of property tax exemption for most types of businesses is basically shelved due to SB2314, the new policy ties consideration of any exemption for a retail-sector business to it falling within a category lacking in the community. It would allow partial to full exemption for up to five years for the first of the targeted businesses in each of the city's three major business districts. The level and duration of the exemption would be dependent upon the amount of local sales tax collections, the quality and scope of the project.

Examples of business projects in Mandan for which assistance may be considered include hardware/home improvement; clothing, shoe or department stores; dry cleaning; movie theater; full-service car wash; restaurants; and hotels. For more information, contact the City of Mandan Business Development Office at 667-3485.

Other forms of assistance may become more important. Other types of assistance available to new and expanding businesses in Mandan include loan programs through the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council, interest buy-downs in combination with the Bank of North Dakota PACE and Flex PACE programs, and the Retail and Restaurant Incentive Program. Renaissance Zone and Storefront Improvement Programs are available in the downtown area. Other communities have helped to pay for infrastructure costs for commercial developments through tax increment financing or sales tax rebates.

LARGER COMMERCIAL PROPERTY BASE KEY TO A HEALTHY CITY

Mandan's property tax base was 26% commercial in 2012. This compares to 36% in Bismarck and 30% in West Fargo.

Increasing the commercial base is linked to property tax relief for home-owners.

Residential property is taxed at 9% of its taxable value. Commercial property is taxed at a 10% rate.

Commercial properties that are retail in nature also generate local sales tax dollars that help pay for City general fund expenses, thereby reducing property taxes.

Once an exemption goes off a new commercial building, generally in two to five years, it typically remains in the community for 30, 50 or 100 years or more, continuing to generate tax revenue and providing a place for businesses to operate.



Dutch Elm claims more trees in 2013

Mandan Public Works' forestry division has tagged 183 elm trees within the City of Mandan in 2013 as testing positive for Dutch Elm Disease. Forester Barry Kiemele explains

that this is a large number considering the size of the city. Included in this count are 99 boulevard or street trees and 84 elm trees on private property. The City has removed 75 of the 99 street trees to date.

Kiemele is not certain about the number of private trees removed. Property owners are urged to remove their tagged trees on private property as soon as possible to help control the spread of the disease.

Kiemele cautions, "Please do not store any elm firewood. Elm firewood contributes to the spread of the Elm Bark Beetle which ultimately causes Dutch Elm Disease."

Cost-sharing available to plant boulevard trees

City Forester Barry Kiemele reminds homeowners and local businesses that the City of Mandan has a cost-sharing program to purchase and plant boulevard trees. Property owners may be reimbursed for up to 50 percent of their cost (not to exceed \$50 per tree or \$300 per property). Contact Kiemele for more info including acceptable tree species and proper spacing at phone 667-3239. Info is also posted at www.cityofmandan.com under the City Departments section in the Public Works subsection.

Dispose of prescription medications properly

The North Dakota Attorney General has a Prescription Drug Take Back Program. The Morton County Law Enforcement Center has a drop-off container in its lobby for unneeded prescription medications. The address is 205 First Avenue NW.

Disposal of prescription drugs in household garbage or by flushing down the toilet or pouring down the drain may have environmental impacts.

ON-LINE POLL RESULTS

Respondents interested in receiving City updates on Facebook

August's on-line poll asked, "Would you use social media to receive City announcements and updates?" There were 78 respondents with 58% indicating "yes," 4% "unsure," and 38% picking "no."

Another 50 respondents went on to answer the question, "Which options would you prefer?"

- 70% favored Facebook,
- 6% preferred Twitter
- 18% picked "both"
- 3% selected "other," but did not submit a suggested alternative

A question, "Would you use a City mobile app for a smart phone?" had 79 respondents with 35% indicating "yes," 22% unsure and 43% saying "no."

Three years ago, in an on-line poll asking "Should the City of Mandan have a Facebook page to communicate with residents and others?" there were 86 respondents with only 34% indicating "yes."

An official City Facebook page and city app for mobile phones are possibilities for 2014.

City Contacts

Mandan City Hall
205 Second Avenue NW
Phone 701-667-3215
Fax 701-667-3223
www.cityofmandan.com

Mandan City Commission

Mayor Arlyn VanBeek
Mike Braun
Dot Frank
Dennis Rohr
Sandra Tibke

City Departments

Administration	667-3215
Airport Authority	663-0669
Assessing & Building Inspection	667-3230
Business Development	
& Communications	667-3485
Cemetery	667-6044
Engineering, Planning & Zoning	667-3225
Finance	667-3213
Fire	667-3288
Human Resources	667-3217
Landfill	667-0184
Library	667-5365
Municipal Court	667-3270
Police	667-3455
Public Works	667-3240
Special Assessments	667-3271
Utility Billing	667-3219
Waste Water Treatment	667-3278
Water Treatment	667-3275

Receive E-mail Notices

Sign up to receive notice of city meetings and news in the "E-mail Updates" section of www.cityofmandan.com. Meeting dates and agendas are available.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

How do you rate your overall feeling of safety in Mandan?

Visit www.cityofmandan.com by Oct. 31 to respond.