

City asks attorney to negotiate lease

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin City Council agreed Thursday that the city attorney should begin negotiations with Pheasants Forever to lease the lake bottom at Sappa Park.

The group proposed to lease the ground at a meeting in January. At that time, City Attorney Steve Hirsch had some questions. Thursday night he said he had talked with the group's regional director and found out the lease would be with the corporation. The

rest of the questions, said Mr. Hirsch, are more about drafting the contract.

Towards the end of the year, the council requested cash bids for the farm ground. They received one from Jim Abbey for \$32 per acre and one from Kendal Fisher for \$53 per acre.

Two weeks after the bids came in, the council received one from Pheasants Forever for \$25 per acre. The lease would guarantee a return of \$3,500 a year.

The bid included farming 100 of the 140 acres. The rest of the land would be used for food plots and riparian buffer strips for wildlife and hunting.

At the January meeting, Ken Badsky, with the Sunflower Chapter of Pheasants Forever in Oberlin, said the group wanted to keep Mr. Abbey farming the property although the chapter would come up with a crop rotation for the habitat and the soil.

Thursday night, the council revisited the

discussion about the farm ground.

Councilman Jay Anderson said he thought going with Pheasants Forever was a win-win situation for the city. Farming alfalfa, which Mr. Fisher's bid included, tied up the land for at least five years with no public use.

Mr. Fisher said he would be willing to open up the land for walk-in hunting but he didn't want anyone driving on it. He said he wanted to have the right to tell someone they

couldn't drive on the crop and hunt.

If the plan with Pheasants Forever doesn't work, he said, and the city wants to return to farming the 140 acres, they would have to clean up some trees.

Mr. Fisher said he wasn't sure why the council put the property up for cash bids if they didn't want to get more money from the land. If 40 acres is cut out of the farm ground, he said, that will cut down on the money. His (See CITY on Page 5A)

Council agrees to fax questions to pool architect

The Oberlin City Council agreed to fax a list of questions from the swimming pool commission to Water's Edge Aquatics, the engineering firm that did a pool study.

Members of the pool commission met with the council at a regular city meeting Thursday night with a list of 15 questions they would like answers to and to tell the council where they are in research on a new or renovated pool.

Commission member Anna Shaw said the group surveyed people in the county and made a drawing, which includes both an indoor and outdoor pool, plus the possibility of added attractions like a slide and hydrotherapy pool.

Mrs. Shaw said the commission members have checked out grants available and thought it would be better to do the project in phases. Without the hydrotherapy pool, she said, members haven't been able to find any grants for the project.

Bob Gaskill with The Bank called recently, said Mrs. Shaw, to say that someone mentioned to him that he has a vacant building that would possibly work for an indoor pool. The commission went to look at the building last week, she said.

After looking at it, said Mrs.

Council Roundup

At a meeting Thursday night, the Oberlin City Council:

- Agreed to fax Water's Edge Aquatics a list of questions the pool commission needs to get answered before they can move on with the project. Story to left.
- Accepted the request for a hearing at the Thursday, March 3, meeting by an Oberlin man to discuss the notice he received about his inoperable or junk vehicles. Story on Page 3A.
- Received an estimated cost to pipe water from the sewer plant to Sappa Park to use for a wetlands. Story on Page 3A.
- Gave the city attorney permission to begin negotiations with Pheasants Forever to lease the lake bottom. Story above.

Shaw, the members want to know if it would cost more to renovate the old building on Main Street than to build something new. With the location, she said, all the town would (See POOL on Page 5A)

Farmers, speakers pack The Gateway for ag conference

The Gateway filled with farmers Thursday as the second annual Cover Your Acres conference brought around 520 people to town.

Brian Olson, area Extension agronomist for Kansas State University, said he thought there were around 450 farmers at the conference and 70 speakers and others.

Last year, said Mr. Olson, the conference drew around 340 people. There were a lot of positive comments after that session, he said, and word must have spread this year. Farmers returned and brought their friends with them.

The day kicked off with registration at 7:45 a.m., although the first session wasn't held until an hour later.

Every room in The Gateway was

used for meetings. In the arena, implement dealers lined up sprayers and other larger machinery along the walls. Booths for seed companies and farming businesses were set up on the floor.

The idea of the conference, said Mr. Olson, is for farmers to get information on conservation practices. The conference deals with management of crops for places that get 20 inches of rainfall a year, like northwest Kansas.

Representatives from the industry and the university come in and talk about how people can improve their cropping practices, he said, and it is also a good networking time.

Mr. Olson said speakers included people from the industry, including (See TALKS on Page 5A)

Prankster turning hydrants on at night; city wants it to stop

Someone using a hydrant wrench kept city employees on their toes late into the night Thursday and early Friday when they turned on about 10 fire hydrants in Oberlin and let them run.

City Foreman Dan Castle said around 11 p.m., Office Scott Zeigler checked a report of a hydrant at Beaver and Oak, where water was welling up around a tree by a hydrant. About 30 minutes later, Mr. Castle and Willard Perrin started getting calls at home.

Mr. Castle said they both drove around for a couple hours, checking all the hydrants and finding the ones that were on. Whoever turned the hydrants on left the caps in place, so the water just leaked out into the ground.

The men found that 10 hydrants

had been turned about two turns. They weren't on full, he said, but it was enough for the hydrants to fill up with water and to saturate the ground around them.

If a fire hydrant is full, said Mr. Castle, and it gets really cold, there is the risk of the water freezing, breaking the cast-iron hydrant.

Some of the hydrants don't drain down very well, he said, so they will have to be blown dry with air.

Mr. Castle said because of the incident, they are having to check all of the hydrants.

When someone does this, he said, there is the danger of the ground getting saturated enough that water will run into people's basements. The water is wasted and it might be hard to fight a fire. (See WATER on Page 5A)



SATURDAY EVENING, Robyn Rouse (above) and Kathy Almquist played in the Citywide Band at the Seeds of Hope Telethon. Emcee Stan McEvoy (below) talked to

his partner, Marvin Matchett, who raised \$20 riding the stationary bike, one of the items on the all-day auction.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes and Kimberly Davis

Telethon raises \$11,000

The 10th annual Seeds of Hope Telethon raised over \$11,000 Saturday with the help of those who donated items to be sold, buyers and others who were willing to make donations.

In the first two hours, though, it seemed the telethon would never reach the goal of \$12,000 set during the opening ceremonies at 1 p.m. By the afternoon, things heated up in the auction and the phones really started to ring.

At 1 p.m., viewers at home turned on their televisions to Cable Channel 7 to see Sid Metcalf of the Oberlin American Legion Post presenting the flag and Kristi Smith and Anita Hirsch singing the National Anthem with Judy Jordan.

It was the start of the telethon for viewers, but for volunteers and committee members things really started Friday night when the arena at The Gateway was turned into a sound stage. Committee members Mrs. Hirsch, Miss Smith, Peg Smith, Brenda Ulery, Jack Benton, Bill Duncan, Regina Stanley, Dennis Brown and Kimberly Davis met Friday night. With the help of volunteers they wired up microphones, speakers, televisions and cameras. Curtains were hung for backdrops and tables were loaded with auction items.

For the interview area, a sofa, chair, table and lamp were set up which were on loan from Pauls Furniture in Selden.

The crew, with the help of husbands, wives and friends, worked



until close to midnight to get things ready.

Saturday morning started early, with volunteers tying up loose ends and making sure everything that was wired up was still working.

Around noon, the first shift of

workers started to show. Behind the curtains, Ms. Smith and the crew made sure the 150 donated auction items were in place.

The all day items were set out on platforms, and the table holding the first hour's items was placed on the opposite side of the curtains.

Ms. Smith said items which brought in the most money on the auction included a package donated by Photos by Jeannie which sold for \$150, a flower swag donated Shirley Shields which went for \$126 and a bronze horse statue (See GROUPS on Page 5A)

* Talks cover farming

(Continued from Page 1A)
implement dealers. There were also speakers from K-State and the Northwest Kansas Crop Residue Alliance, who talked about the field day results from a day in August spent at the Grafel farm.

It seems, he said, that the first part of February is a good time to hold a farm conference and the extension service plans on doing one again next year.

By holding the conference in the winter, said Mr. Olson, farmers can implement some of the practices this spring. The university also holds a field day, he said, which shows what is going on in the area.

Breakfast and lunch were served. The farmers, he said, were able to come and go as they pleased. Some, he said, could only stay until noon because they needed to go check cows.

Mr. Olson said they decided to have the conference in Oberlin because The Gateway is the only place in northwest Kansas where they can hold something like this. Out of the five counties he covers, said Mr. Olson, this is the only facility for this many people and a conference of this kind.

Alliance has new leader

Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug, agreed to be the chairman this year for the Oberlin Business Alliance after no one else stepped up to the job at a meeting last Wednesday.

Chamber of Commerce Manager Glenva Nichols, who takes minutes for the alliance, said they needed a chairman and quarterly chairs so that events for the first quarter could be set up. She said they like to include the events on the table brochures put out by the Chamber.

The group agreed to have a planning meeting at Stanley Hardware on Monday evening.

Volunteers to work on the quarters included Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware for the first, Rusty Addleman, owner of Addleman Drug Store for the second, Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Economic Development Corp. for the third, and Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, for the fourth.

Mrs. Nichols said they may be able to talk with Gary Walter at the Bank about working on the Holiday Parade of Lights again this year. Ms. Grafel said she noticed that McCook changed their parade to the same night as Oberlin's, which may have hurt attendance.

The group talked briefly about paying for the Fourth of July fireworks. Mr. Addleman said he still hasn't received a bill and he has tried to call the business. The alliance hasn't been billed for the last few years, he said.

* Water being wasted

(Continued from Page 1A)
Something like this has never happened before, he said. Normally, if someone turns on a hydrant they turn it on all the way and run.

"This was pretty malicious," the foreman said.

Whoever did it must have had the right kind of wrench, too, he said, because there weren't any marks on the hydrants.

City Administrator Gary Shike said that fooling with the hydrants could create a major problem. It isn't just a waste of water, but can be a real public safety issue.

Mr. Castle said in just the one evening, 46,000 extra gallons of water was wasted.

On Sunday Mr. Castled received a call around noon that the hydrant by the county shop had been turned on. This time there was only one hydrant on, he said, and instead of being open a little this one was on all the way and ran out of water. He said he wasn't sure how long it had been on for, but probably about 10 hours.

If anyone has any information or saw anything, he said, they should call the city police department at 475-3392.



SATURDAY AFTERNOON, committee member Bill Duncan (above) took his turn on Camera A at the Seeds of Hope Telethon. Anita Hirsch (below) signaled the emcee that he had two minutes left in a segment.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

* Groups will get money

(Continued from Page 1A)
donated by Rocking R, which went for \$100.

Most of the items were donated by businesses in the area, although there were some from athletic teams, including the Colorado Rockies, St. Louis Cardinals, Kansas City Royals, Kansas City Chiefs, Miami Dolphins and Kansas Speedway.

Ms. Smith said she really appreciated everyone who donated items and those who bid.

Throughout the day, cameras operated by volunteers, focused in on auction items and emcees who gave updates.

Besides the on-air auction, the telethon featured entertainment from area people. There were gymnasts flipping around, bands who praised God in song, kids who gave speeches, piano players and those who rang bells.

"The talent portion of the telethon went quite smoothly," said Mrs. Hirsch. "There were a lot of fun groups, like the Citywide Band, which was fantastic. What an inspiration to dust off those instruments. Great job, Mr. Russell."

Since this was the 10th anniversary of the telethon, the committee decided to run video segments of past shows. Mrs. Hirsch said the most memorable part of the day was to see the faces of today's talent when they saw themselves 10 years ago performing at the show.

"It makes me want to stay around



and watch these kids today grow up on the telethon," said Mrs. Hirsch. "It makes me feel honored to be a part of the whole blessed process."

At the concession stand, Mr. Brown served plates full of ham and cheese sandwiches, sloppy joes, bowls of soup and chili, and slabs of pie and cake. After the dinner hour, things started to run out.

The money raised for food was given to the telethon, and cakes and pies left over were auctioned off at the end of the night.

Mr. Duncan said the whole day had gone well. This was probably one of the smoothest telethons yet, he said. There were plenty of volunteers who came in and were able to assist wherever they were needed.

The television crew did fairly well

this year, said Mr. Duncan, although they needed two or three more people. Most of the teenagers used in the past weren't able to make it.

All of the volunteers, including those who donated items, donated money or called and bought an item, did a great job to help raise over \$11,000 for community causes.

"I congratulate the people of Decatur County for pulling together," said Mr. Duncan.

For the first time this year, he said, the committee is selling copies of the telethon. The DVDs cost \$10 for a set or \$5 for one. The first DVD covers the telethon from 1 to 6 p.m. and the second from 6 to 10 p.m. Anyone interested in buying a DVD should call Mr. Duncan at 475-3259.

* Pool group wants answers to 15 questions

(Continued from Page 1A)
There is an indoor pool and hydrotherapy pool, but there wouldn't be space for an outdoor pool.

If the city kept an outdoor pool at the City Park, she said, they would need two pump houses and two crews.

Mrs. Shaw said the commission would like the council to hire Water's Edge to answer the 15 questions, which include the possibility of renovating the bank building and whether the sketch they have will work.

"We are up against a wall," she said, adding that without knowing what might work, it is hard to ask for gifts from people.

The commission has around \$8,000 in the pool fund, said Mrs. Shaw, which will probably have to

be used for matching grants.

What would it cost to have Water's Edge answer the questions? asked Mayor Ken Shobe. Good question, said Mrs. Shaw. The council would have to ask the company.

Mr. McEvoy said another question should be added on whether there is enough room in the City Park for the commission's plan or if it would take the entire park.

He said he thought it would be hard to hire Water's Edge without knowing what it would cost.

They might answer the questions for the \$3,800 the city paid for the pool study, said Dori Pauls, who is on the pool commission.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he could fax the list to the company and see if they will answer them. The council agreed.

* City asks attorney to start negotiating lease for farm land

(Continued from Page 1A)
proposal, he emphasized, is the most money for the city.

He complained that he was never told the council was opening the bid time back up.

He said he read about the Pheasants Forever bid in *The Oberlin Herald*.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said they didn't know that Pheasants Forever was even interested in the property until the January meeting. He said he wasn't sure if the city has a good plan for the lake bottom yet, but he thought the majority of the council wants to see it used for recreation.

Mayor Ken Shobe said the coun-

cil wasn't necessarily looking for more money.

Mr. McEvoy said he thought it started out that way.

The ultimate goal, said Councilman Joe Stanley, is to have a lake or some kind of recreation in that area. A recreation idea came from Pheasants Forever and the council kind of jumped on it.

There is another option. If the council decides to go with Pheasants Forever, someone will need to farm it, said Mr. McEvoy. That could be Mr. Fisher, but that decision is up to the organization.

The council agreed to have Mr. Hirsch begin negotiations with Pheasants Forever.

Women invited to supper

The Decatur County Health Department plans a soup supper with an educational program on breast and cervical cancer at 6 p.m. next Thursday, Feb. 17, at The Gateway.

Health Nurse Marilyn Gamblin said the supper and information will be sponsored by the health department and Early Detection Works, a group that offers free mammograms for women over 50 and pap smears

for women over 40.

They would like women of all ages to attend the supper to learn who is at risk, what precautions to take and what to do if a person doesn't have the money or the means to pay for tests.

If planning to attend call the health department at 475-8118 by Friday, or at the latest Monday, if you'd like to come.

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