

City sets hearings on ‘dangerous’ houses

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
The Goodland City Commission agreed to hold hearings in January on three houses considered dangerous, and will decide if they should be demolished.

Steve Criswell, city building inspector, said last Monday the three are in bad shape, adding that he thinks two should be boarded up immediately.

The hearings will be held at the commission meeting on Monday, Jan. 22. Criswell said it will be up to the commission to hear the evidence from the city and the owner and then decide what to do.

The houses are at 526 W. 16th, 204 W. 16th and 510 W. 15th. Criswell asked for permission to board up the houses at 526 W. 16th and 510 W. 15th. The names of the property owners are not published in the legals Criswell said.

Commissioner Josh Dechant asked Criswell how he had picked these three.

“I thought they were the worst,” Criswell said. “There was one other that got taken care of through other resources.”

“Do they tear them down or does the city?” asked Mayor Rick Billinger.

Criswell said at the hearing, the commission would set a time for repairs, or for them to demolish the buildings.

“You give them a time to tear it down,” he said. “If they say they do not have the money, it will be up to the city to tear it down, and that goes against the property.”

Criswell said the ordinance requires the commission to set the

hearing and publish a notice 30 days beforehand. He said the notice also is sent by certified restricted delivery to the owner.

Criswell said each of the three houses has serious structural problems, broken windows and unsecured doors. He said two have foundation problems.

He said he has been in contact with the owners of the house that need to be boarded up, but they have not taken any action. He said with the passage of the resolutions, he will see that the two are boarded up until the hearing.

He said after the hearing, if the people do not follow the commission decision, he would be back with a second resolution to have the city demolish the buildings.

“How to you report these?” Dechant asked. “People are asking how to turn in their neighbor.”

“They can call me,” Criswell said.

City Commissioner Dave Daniels asked what could be done about houses that are not in a dangerous condition, but need to have yards cleaned up.

“I have an ordinance that deals with nuisances to help clean up some of the houses,” Criswell said.

“Can we beef that up,” Daniels said. “There are some worse than the ones we are holding hearings on.”

Criswell said some of the one Daniels was talking about are on his list.

“I wanted to wait until after Christmas,” he said. “That will give them a chance.”

Billinger asked about dealing with old cars.

“There are plenty of them,” the

mayor said.

“What do we do about stock cars?” Criswell asked. “How do you tell someone you can have a stock car in your backyard, but you cannot have an inoperative vehicle in the backyard.”

“That is something we ought to look at,” Billinger said, “because the idea is to get them out of sight.”

“What about the stock car in the front year on 17th Street?” Daniels asked.

Criswell said that house is in a commercial zone, and there are different rules. City attorney Jeff Mason has that ordinance under review, he said.

“Do we do the trashed houses like we do the weeds and send them a letter once a year?” Daniels asked.

“No, it is worse than that,” Criswell said. “If you get an injunction, you have to go back to the district court every time if there is a nuisance.”

In one case, Criswell said, the court ruled the city could clean up the nuisance.

“We can move all the equipment off the site and demolish the buildings,” Criswell said, “and then we can put all the machinery back in a neat orderly manner.”

“Can we do this one through the municipal court rather than going back to the district court?” Billinger asked.

“He (Keith Cook, a retired farmer who has a lot full of used farm equipment on Business U.S. 24) can appeal any decision the municipal court would make, and that is to the district court.”

“Might check on that,” Billinger said. “Keep working on it; you’re doing a good job.”

Power agreement signed

POWER, from Page 1

that with the constant changes in the power market he would not begin to guess what the rate might be when the plant is up and running next year.

“We want to pass this memorandum of understanding to make sure everyone know we are working together to reach a new agreement,” Fairbanks said.

“This means the old agreement is replaced by this document,” City Manager Wayne Hill said, “and we will have a new contract in the future to replace the old one.”

Fairbanks said the problem with the original agreement was it violated the state’s “cash basis” law.

He said that Perry Warren, who was city attorney at the time, did not think the agreement violated the law, but Fairbanks said he feels it does, and Jeff Mason, the new city attorney, agrees.

“I have a bit of confusion with the original agreement,” Daniels said. “It was for five years and a total of 20 years with the city buying all the power from the plant.”

Hill said the agreement was not the same as Sunflower Electric, where the city can choose to buy a different level of power purchase for each year.

“If the new plant is not ready by March, we will have to nominate for

the next year,” he said “We have talked about a similar arrangement with Goodland Energy Resources once they get up and running.”

“The new contract will not be negotiated until the plant is up and running?” City Commissioner Josh Dechant asked.

“If we can’t meet or better the rate you are paying Sunflower, you are not going to change,” House said, “but we cannot sell our power at too much of a discount. It is not worth it to use to provide the power to the city on that basis.”

“Do you have a rough estimate of the cost?” Daniels asked.

“We have a rough estimate,” said Doug Sederstrom, Goodland Energy Resources chief financial officer, “but we have a lot of factors to look at before we are up and running. We don’t want to wait until we are up and running, but we need to have a bit more time to get negotiating before we are up and running.”

Mayor Rick Billinger said the original contract was for a specific term, but the plant did not get up and running in the time frame set in the contract.

Hill said if the plant is not running by July, the contract became null and void.

“Then why do this memorandum if the contract runs out in July?”

Veterans’ phone calls can help hospital get clinic

VETERANS, from Page 1

in the next few months; a decision on the town may be made in January.

Jolly said the hospital has the staff and facilities to support the clinic, and there is community support for providing veterans with health care.

“By putting health care outpatient facilities in rural communities, we’re enhancing veterans’ access to VA’s world-class health care,” Nicholson said. “The clinic will help ensure these veterans receive the health care they have earned through their service and sacrifices in defense of our nation.”

The new clinic will provide basic primary care and mental health services, the agency said, including medical evaluations and the diagnosis and treatment of conditions that do not require hospitalization or a specialist.

The clinic will be open five half-days a week, with a registered nurse on site during operating hours. Telemedicine will link it with doctors at other Veterans clinics and hospitals.

Community based outreach clinics in Colorado already include Ala-

mosa, Aurora, Colorado Springs, Durango, Fort Collins, Greeley, La Junta, Lakewood, Lamar, Montrose and Pueblo.

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Steel sections are being lifted into place on the building at the ethanol plant at the Goodland Energy Center. Project Manager Roger Marsh of IMC Engineering told Goodland High School students that many of the tanks for the ethanol process are in place, and other are ready to be installed.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Steel rising at energy center plants

PLANTS, from Page 1

“cogeneration” power plant and will be providing wholesale electric power to the City of Goodland and steam to other entities in the complex. The power plant will produce about 22 megawatts, and Marsh said there is room to add another power plant at the site.

E Caruso LLC has received an air quality construction permit from the state Department of Health and Environment for a 20-million-gallon-a-year ethanol plant.

A third firm, Kanza Energy LLC received an air quality construction permit and is in the process of beginning construction of the biodiesel production facility.

Livengood said she has her students researching ethanol, biodiesel and electricity. She said the students have seen photographs of the plant, but thought they would benefit from seeing it first hand.

“I hope these students realize what an opportunity for Goodland this energy center is,” Livengood said.

Students on the tour included

Marcus Binger, Hannah Blake, Michael Bryce, Jennifer Cole, Cassie Cooper, Samatha Erickson, Matt Espinoza, Selbe Estes, Britany Fisher, Lee Fyfe, Eugene Gutierrez, Casey Henderson, Steven Mangus, Rachel Maxwell, Brittany Medrano, Keith Ray, Michelle Smith, Andrew Taylor, Nathan Thomas, Joel Weis and Dustin Zelfer

Marsha Sieck and Caroline Pettibone, who help Livengood in class, joined the tour.

Crossword Puzzle


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- CLUES ACROSS

 1. A monk or nun's small room
 5. City in Yakima, WA
 10. City in Maine
 14. Chinese minority aka Hmong
 15. 1836 US siege location
 16. First Chinese dynasty
 17. Yugoslavian River
 18. A group in a formal system of nomenclature
 19. Group chaos
 20. Cheese dish
 22. Citizens of Seoul
 24. Old Italian monetary units
 25. Not high
 26. ___ Boothe Luce, American author
 29. Present in great quantity
 34. Plumber's snake
 35. Ancient Greek coin
 36. Fish eggs
 37. Bedazzled
 41. Denotes three
 42. Untouchable Eliot
 43. Glorify
 44. Sound powers of the mind
 47. Bitsy
 48. Scoundrel
 49. This circular object
 50. Disney town
 54. ___ Hess, oil company
 58. Military disguise
 59. Clematis ___ of Woking
 61. Expresses pleasure
 62. One of the Great Lakes
 63. One who tightens a corset
 64. A light two-wheel carriage
 65. Simpson prosecutor C. ___ en
 66. Icelandic poems
 67. Finless fish
- CLUES DOWN

 1. Military leader (abbr.)
 2. Mammal genus
 3. Natural home of an animal
 4. More isolated
 5. Treacherous wit or sarcasm
 6. Fill with high spirits
 7. Permissive
 8. Murderous frenzy
 9. State capital
 10. Insightful and wise
 11. Continent
 12. Heir (alt. spelling)
 13. Cereal grain
 21. Makes a whirring sound
 23. Director Howard
 26. Molds
 27. River Otter genus
 28. Once more
 29. Gulf
 30. Cat calls
 31. Caucasian of Nordic descent
 32. Christmas carols
 33. Cranky
 35. Small integers
 38. Not suitable for food
 39. Della ___, singer
 40. To feel loathing for
 45. Resounded
 46. No (Scottish)
 47. Hourglasses
 49. Trailing Indigo bush
 50. Got an A
 51. Ancient Japanese religious center
 52. Title of Kuwait's head of state
 53. Made of fermented honey and water
 55. Swiss river
 56. "James and the Giant Peach" author
 57. Cobras
 60. Computer screen material

The crossword puzzle brought to you by:



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Comments wanted

Northwest Kansas Technical College is seeking comments from the public about the college in preparation for its accreditation evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The college will host an evaluation team, representing The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, on its campus on February 12-14, 2007. This team will review the institution's ability to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. The public is invited to submit comments regarding the college to:

Public Comment on Northwest Kansas Technical College
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago IL 60602-2504

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed, and include the name, address and telephone numbers of the person providing the comments. The Commission cannot guarantee that comments received after the due date will be considered. Comments will not be treated as confidential. All comments must be received by January 12, 2007.

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