

ND FISHER HOUSE COMMITTEE

Minutes

June 18, 2020
10:00am Webex

Call to order by Lonnie Wangen at 10:02am

Roll call conducted

- Lonnie Wangen Present
- Dr. Weintraub Present
- Dale Dekrey Present
- Paul Dosch Present
- Austen Schauer Present
- Jim Haukedahl Present

Self-introduction by members

Presentation of power point by Lonnie Wangen

- Fisher House information
- Status of Fisher House exploration in Fargo

Discussion:

- Barriers to Fisher House in Fargo land and grant application discussed
- Need to have 1 ¼ acres of Federal land in order to submit application. 2 years until next grant opening could become available.
- Land options were discussed...
 - Land East of VAHCS is VA property. Very floodable on wrong side of dike. VA uses this land to store snow in the winter. Would have serious obstacles with city of Fargo and Corps of Engineers in gaining approval for a Fisher House
 - Land directly south of VA (VA Park East of Elm St. N and North of Woodland Dr N) could be developed. Was used for drainage but now dike is built and lift stations are used. Some land still VA's some donated by VA to City of Fargo.
 - Possible to include empty lot furthest east on Woodland Dr. N?
 - Are these 4 homes on Woodland Dr. N. buy outs from city?
 - How much of their back yards are city property?
 - Oxbow Park North East area (Elm and 17 ½ Ave North) is flat and would be easiest to develop.
 - Likely an acre ¼ of flat land there.
 - Most likely for water storage prior to dike construction.
 - Could build Fisher house up and remove soil to ensure water storage is not compromised
 - Elephant park-
 - Short walking distance
 - Area directly west of Elm Street would be ideal but has mature trees and tennis courts. Could have significant resistance.
 - Other parts of park to consider?
 - Most likely for water storage prior to dike construction.
 - Could build Fisher house up and remove soil to ensure water storage is not compromised if an area were identified as available
 - Homes south of 19th Ave along 3rd St N. back up to park. (purchase?)

Members: ND Department of Veterans Affairs-Lonnie Wangen, Fargo VAHCS-Dr. Breton Weintraub & Dale Dekrey, ND Legislation-Austin Schauer, Veterans Organizations-Jim Haukedahl
Independent members-Paul Dosch,

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- S.W. corner of Elephant park along 18th Ave N?
- Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church (West of Ems St. between 20th and 21st Ave N)
 - VAHCS rents parking spots during the week
 - Day care and other groups lease space in church
 - Church appears to be doing well-not likely to sell.
- Homes west of Elm street between 19th Ave N and 20th Ave N.
 - Large back yards
 - 2-3 homes needed to produce 1.25 acres?
 - Late 50's homes
 - Homes in North Fargo are expensive as no more development happening.
 - Home prices go up if offers made compared to if they owners are looking to sell.
- Homes North of VA HCS parking lot. (S. Woodcrest Dr N)
 - Great and easy access to VA
 - 2-3 homes would need to be purchased
 - Expensive homes-great neighborhood
 - Homes in North Fargo are expensive as no more development happening.
- Land not connected to VAHCS.
 - City land NW of VAHCS East of Airport. Some areas not fully utilized.
 - Would need to drive back and forth.
 - Concerns with distance. Families would like to be able to quickly get to VAHCS
 - VA Could provide shuttle service back and forth
 - Could obtain cheaper
- Building a VAHCS Parking Garage/ramp discussed
 - Takes a lot of land to build. Usually would add to parking but not necessarily free up any spots.
 - Would need to build quite high and it is quite expensive.
 - Would need VACO approval and funding-could take very long if approved.
- Prioritized possible land options to research further
 - #1: Land directly South of VA south parking lot. (VA Park towards Woodland Dr. N)
 - #2: Oxbow Park corner of Ems Street and 17 ½ Ave N
 - #3: Land located off campus
 - #4: Another area of Elephant park
 - #5: Purchasing homes around VAHCS
- Next Steps were discussed
 - Measure land to determine if 1.25 acres available-Lonnie
 - Members consider if more stakeholders needed on committee
 - Reach out to City of Fargo and Parks Dept. members-Lonnie
 - Jerry Rostad-President of Fargo Park Board
 - Schedule next meeting
 - Discuss need for more members-if any
 - Determine persons or entities to reach out to for discussions and support
 - Determine best options.
 - Begin plan of action.

Next meeting: Plan to meet in July 2020. Date and time not set.

Adjourned at 11:00am

Members: ND Department of Veterans Affairs-Lonnie Wangen, Fargo VAHCS-Dr. Breton Weintraub & Dale Dekrey, ND Legislation-Austin Schauer, Veterans Organizations-Jim Haukedahl
Independent members-Paul Dosch,



*"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country
is good enough to be given a fair deal later."™*

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Lonnie L. Wangen
Commissioner-NDDVA

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1

1



What is a Fisher House

- Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where military & veterans families can stay free of charge, while a loved one is in the hospital.
- These homes are located at military and VA medical centers around the world.
- Fisher Houses have up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room, and an inviting living room.
- Since inception, the program has saved military and veterans' families an estimated \$451 million in out of pocket costs for lodging and transportation.

Source: <https://fisherhouse.org/about/>

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2

2



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Minneapolis MN Fisher House



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3

3



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Current Fisher Houses

- 61 Fisher Houses
- 32 States
- 1 in Germany and 1 in UK
- Daily capacity of 1,100 persons
- Over 368,000 served since inception
 - Over 32,000 served in 2018

Source: <https://fisherhouse.org/programs/houses/house-locations/>

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4

4



Future Fisher Houses

- Togus ME (1st for Maine)
- Richmond VA (4th for Virginia)
- Denver CO (2nd for Colorado)
- New Orleans LA (1st for Louisiana)
- An Arbor MI (1st for Michigan)
- Omaha NE (1st for Nebraska)
- Huntington WV (1st for West Virginia)

Source: <https://fisherhouse.org/programs/houses/house-locations/>

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5

5



Recognized Need for Fisher House

Birmingham, AL (1 st)	Columbia, MO (2 nd)
Bay Pines, FL (8 th)	Kansas City, MO (2 nd -3 rd)
Ramstein, Germany (2 nd)	Montrose, NY (3 rd)
Lovell Health care, IL (2 nd)	San Juan, PR (1 st)
Lexington, KY (2 nd)	Columbia, SC (2 nd)
Shreveport, LA (2 nd - LA)	San Antonio, TX (8 th)
Perry Point, MD (4 th)	White River Junction, VT
Detroit, MI (2 nd -MI)	(1 st)

Source:
<https://fisherhouse.org/programs/houses/house-locations/>

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6

6



Fargo Qualify for a Fisher House?

- Fargo VA has one of the largest geographic catchment areas in the VA system.

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7

7



How Process Works

- Fisher House Grant Application submitted to VACO.
- SECVA approval
- Placed on Fisher House Foundation List
- Fisher House Foundation Takes the lead on fund raising
- Funds raised then Fisher House is Built
- Fisher House turned over to VA-HCS
 - Funded by VA-HCS

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8

8



Barriers to Fisher House

- Application:
 - Grant application period just closed.
 - Next application period estimated for 2021-2022.
- Fisher House needs to be built on Federal Land
 - Minimum of 1.25 Acres
 - On or near Fargo VA HCS Campus
 - Fargo VA HCS campus has priority need of additional parking. No VA land available for Fisher House
 - Land needs to be Federal property or a confident agreement/ability to acquire
 - Federal land can take 2-5 years to acquire
 - ND Air NG is leased land-not an option.
 - Cannot be part of VA HCS building or other building. Is a Landscaped property
- SECVA Approval.
 - Cannot happen until application conditions are met

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9

9



Barriers to Fisher House

- Fundraising
 - Can have a 501 (C) to fund raise
 - Federal VA Cannot fund raise or accept funds
 - Fisher House Foundation cannot fund raise for Fisher House until application is approved
 - Cannot be approved until land is acquired

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10

10



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Barriers to Fisher House

- **SUMMARY:**
- **Two biggest barriers:**
 - Application-2 years out
 - Land

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11

11



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The Good News

- Application
 - Fargo can submit application prior to next opening
 - Fisher House Foundation wants to build in Fargo
 - SECVA Wilkie wants to help make this happen
- Land
 - Land may be available around the Fargo VA HCS
 - Parks (next to Fargo VA HCS and VA Park)
 - Flood lots (if diversion goes through-may open up lots)
 - May be able to purchase from private property owners

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12

12



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The Way Forward

- Land is first priority.
 - Fargo Parks/City of Fargo
 - Donate land
 - Allow to purchase
 - Use Existing VA property
 - Build parking Ramp (VA approval-could be long process)
 - Use freed up parking space for Fisher House
 - Purchase from private land/home-owners

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13

13



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The Way Forward

- Land is first priority.
- Fargo Memorial – now not moving forward.
- Fund Raising through NDDVA
- Land Donation from others in area?

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14

14



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The Way Forward

- VA Park-If permitted- *fill in. Easiest*
- Oxbow Park-*Easy possibly cheap*
- Woodland Drive North. *East lot by dike*
 - Cost to fill in. may need to buy 1 property
- East of VA HCS-*End of road-Fargo land*
- S. Woodcrest Dr N. *Homes North of Parking Lot*
- Messiah Lutheran Church
- Parking Ramp on VA HCS property

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15

15



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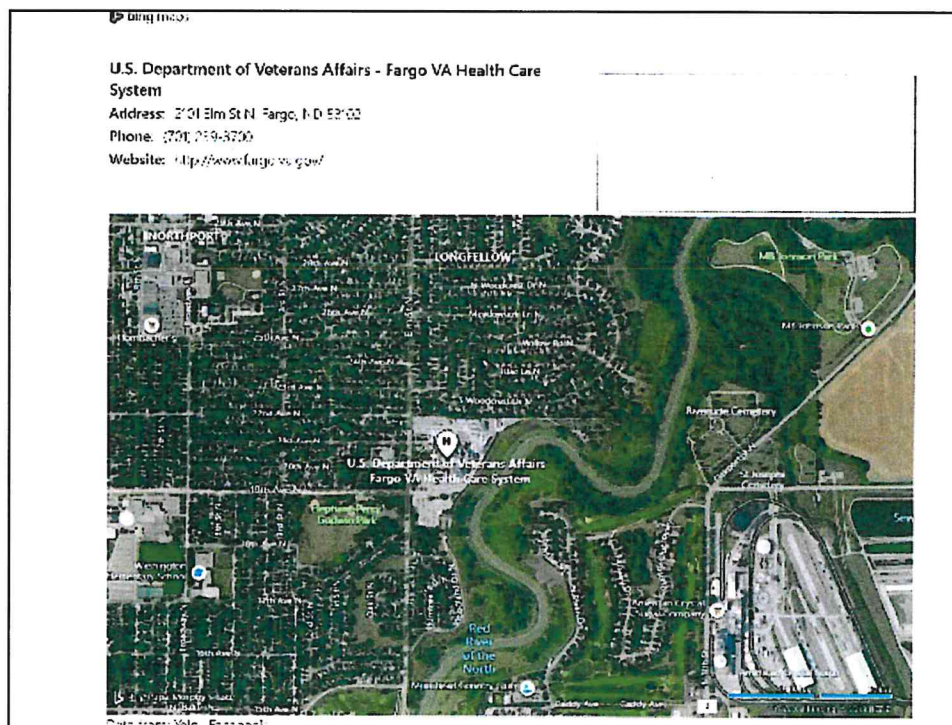
The Way Forward

- [Google map-streets:](https://www.bing.com/maps?q=fargo+va+mc&form=ENHT&mkten-us&httpsui=1&msnews=1&rec_search=1&refg=29725758a7f0498aae93885b59a8bd96sp=16pq=fargo+va+mc&sc=8-11&q=mk&k&cvid=29725758a7f0498aae93885b59a8bd96)
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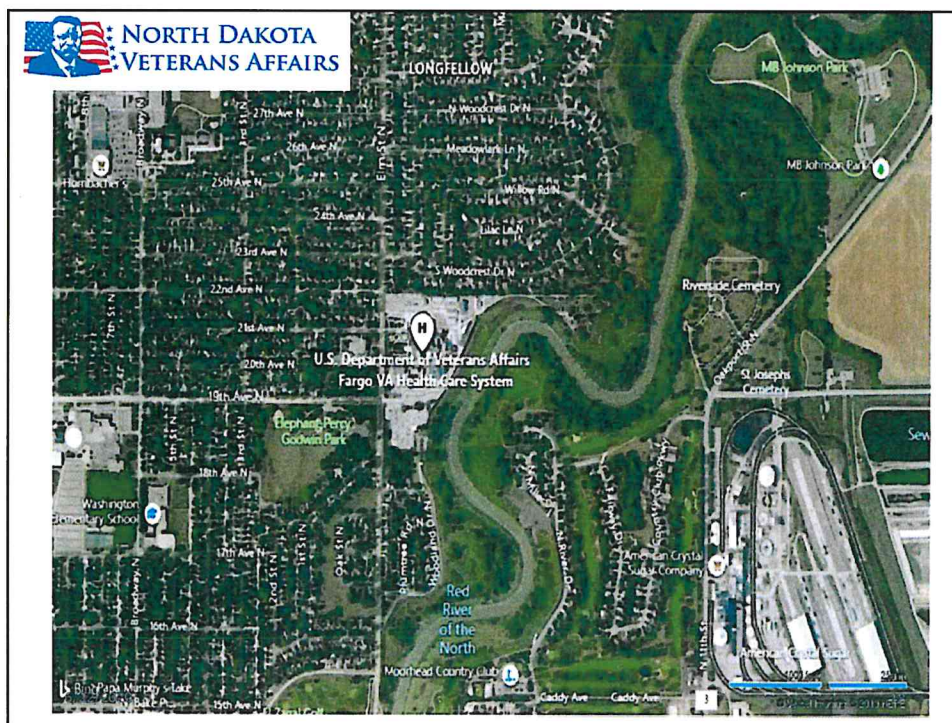
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16

16



17



18

Thank you for your Service



Feel free to contact me with any questions!

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19