

February 8, 2024 Committee on Childcare in Minot

Committee on Childcare in Minot – February 8, 2024 AT 5:30 P.M.

Members Present:

Scott Burlingame, Heather Cymbaluk, Doug Diedrichsen, Amy Jenkins, Rianne Kuhn, Lisa Olson, Becca Oswill, Terry Schumalz, and Keli Rosselli-Sullivan

Members Absent:

Shelbi Lawson and Harold Stewart

Also Present:

Mikayla McWilliams (City Clerk)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Burlingame at 5:30 pm. The committee began with introductions due to the new member on the committee, Doug Diedrichsen, City of Minot Principal Planner. Amy Jenkins joined the meeting at 5:33 pm.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND UPDATES FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Becca Oswill discussed how she had spoke at Start-Up Minot with MACEDC. She operates a home daycare of 18 kids, in March she opened a center with 56 kids, and in October she opened another center with 30 kids.

Doug Diedrichsen updated the committee about how the text amendment changes were approved by City Council in December of 2023. Kelli Rosselli-Sullivan stated the RWIP Grant is opening back up for new applications. The first round of applications are still waiting their monetary award.

Amy Jenkins briefly mentioned the state is working on a facility increase grant. Amy also inquired about the possible MPS school closures. The committee was unsure if any decisions have been made and if there is a closure if it would be for the 2024-2025 school year. Amy has had 2-3 license holders inquire about them and the possibility of a lease agreement for a daycare expansion.

UPDATE ON PLANS FOR THE MIDWEST MONTESSORI – CALEB HEILMAN

Caleb Heilman currently runs a local gym and is a parent of 3 small children. He began working with Amy Jenkins to obtain a childcare license about 2 years ago. Currently, he is working on a site plan to build a facility on MSU Campus. Caleb is getting half the funding from the MSU Development Foundation and other funding from the ND Development Fund. He will end up owning the building but has entered into a long-term land lease. The daycare will have open enrollment for 40-50 children and the Montessori Preschool will be for 25-30 children.

Caleb hopes to utilize/employ the students in the Early Childhood Development Program at MSU and those students will be able to fulfill their practicum requirements. He also stated how difficult it was to find leasable space that would allow for renovations or even entertain the idea of a daycare opening in the space. There is also a significant cost to start-up a daycare and his next step is to take the site plans and get bids hopefully within budget.

Caleb believes a helpful tool for start-ups would be to have educational options on the business aspects. Doug discussed the previous DRT meeting Caleb had with the City of Minot. He will need to acquire a conditional use permit due to the area being zoned "RM". The conditional use permit would go to the Planning Commission for approval and any conditions they would require. The committee talked about recommending the City Council waive city fees for any approved licensed daycare.

COMMENTS FROM OTHER CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

Stacey, another presenter at Start-Up Minot and also a group licensed daycare provider since 2014, briefly spoke to the committee about her experiences. She is licensed for up to 14 kids but usually only has 8 kids. Stacey has

thought of expanding her daycare but the cost of expanding and employees/staffing are two major issues. Currently Stacey is seeing the biggest struggle for childcare to be the lack of availability for infant care.

DEVELOPMENT OF REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL: NEXT STEPS

- Invite David Lakefield, Finance Director, to the next meeting to discuss any available funding.
- Provide the City Clerk with the top 4 recommendations by March 1st. She will compile the information and send it out to the committee. This will be the discussion for the next meeting.
- The City Clerk will provide the meeting minutes to the committee in Microsoft Word form.

The next meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 4:30 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.