

City to apply for \$500,000 EDA grant

By BOB FELL
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The final vote was unanimous but not before the city council had thoroughly debated alternatives to a grant application issue at Monday's meeting.

The question considered and approved by the council was an application to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a half million dollar grant to help construct parking facilities around the civic center.

Mike Madden opened discussion, asking where the city would get the match money. Mayor Art LaCroix replied that it is included in the proposed projects under the Community Development Act block grant program.

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LaCroix said he has contacted the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and use of about \$333,000 from Community Development funds for the parking lots is an eligible project. The mayor stressed the need for parking at the civic center when it is completed in 1977 and said he is convinced the use of Community Development funds to match an EDA grant is the only way to get the job done.

Having the civic center complex, including the parking lot, is important not only to city officials, he said, but also to everyone in the city.

James Gillette argued that priorities were wrong in the Community Development program when only \$400,000 is apportioned to storm drainage, the city's most critical problem.

Mike Madden suggested the establishment of a parking district around the civic center site to raise the match money through assessments.

Leonard Swanson, public works director, explained that there is not enough time to set up a parking district. The application to EDA has to be in by the 15th of this month and one of the requirements is the city has documentary proof that the match money is available.

The second year program for Community Development projects presently is being reviewed by the Community Development Department and city department heads before final recommendations are made to the council.

Swanson said he had hoped the council could act on the CD program by Dec. 15, but now finds it will be delayed. Swanson also is director of Community Development for the city.

In making the motion to approve and submit the application to EDA, Jim Kissel recommended that while the CDA funds be used at this time, the city might consider bonding or the parking district to repay the CD program budget.