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The Journal

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City to provide info on properties

Properties considered for RECAP

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The International Falls City Council Monday agreed to provide information about three parcels of property to officials considering development of a waste-to-energy gasification facility.

The council agreed on a 3-2 vote to provide Coronal LLC and the Koochiching Development Authority with information about topography, utilities and wetland delineation studies on a portion of a 40-acre parcel owned by the city, private property on the east side of county Highway 155 and private property on Highway 332.

The information on the properties will be gathered by Dave Serrano of Arro of the North at an estimated cost of \$2,000, said Falls Mayor Bob Anderson.

Coronal LLC and the Koochiching Development Authority are working to determine the feasibility of developing the Renewable Energy Clean Air Project which would use a plasma arc torch to vaporize garbage to create energy and other byproducts.

Councilors Gail Rognerud and Cynthia Jaksa voted against the motion, saying that while they support development of RECAP on the city's multimodal district, they could not support paying the total cost and said KDA should kick in some money.

Anderson told the council he supported Serrano's suggestion that the same information be gathered on other nearby properties, private and public, for future

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Before the Birchdale church building was built in 1913, the congregation met in the school house at Howard's Landing from 1904-1913.

Birchdale church building turns 100

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Birchdale community Sunday will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its church in a special pioneer-themed service.

Since its beginning, the church has played a key role in the community and continues to do so today.

The Birchdale United Church of Christ community was founded March 15, 1905, by the Rev. Thomas Howard, with construction of the current church building beginning in February 1913. The building's cornerstone was laid in August 1913, and was officially

dedicated Jan. 4, 1914.

The Rev. Howard came to the Rainy River area in October 1902 to see what the area was like. He found a homestead 50 miles west of International Falls on the south shore of the Rainy River, which would become known as Howard's Landing. The Rev. Howard and his son Earl came up with the household goods and supplies in March 1903, and Rev. Howard's wife Susan came to the homestead with the other children in May 1903.

The building has been updated over the years, adding modern conveniences as they've become available, Jan Imes, clerk and trustee for the church, said. Originally, the building had an outhouse, wood stove, no basement, no

kitchen, and no electricity, she said. These have been updated, and the building now has running water, indoor bathrooms, and a propane furnace.

One of the aspects of living in a smaller community is neighbors caring and looking out for each other, Imes said, and the church plays a part in that.

"It's kind of a core piece of the community," she said. "It's a place where we can meet and carry on and meet the needs of the community."

A large remodeling project took place from 1958 to 1964. During this time, the building was placed on blocks while a basement was constructed. The church interior was remodeled, lathe and plaster were removed and replaced

with paneling, and floor tile and carpeting were added. Water, plumbing, and an oil furnace were installed, the roof of the church was reshingled, and the church exterior was painted. The church's cornerstone was rededicated Sept. 18, 1960.

One thing that hasn't changed is the building's stained glass windows, which Rev. Howard salvaged from a church in the Twin Cities in 1913, she said.

The building also had a bell tower, which due to age and damage caused by ringing the bell, had to be removed, Pastor John Tschudy said. During the 1920s, the bell tower was taken down, as rain water would run

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STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Sen. Tom Bakk met Friday with the Koochiching County Board to review issues important to the county prior to the 2014 legislative session. Former Commissioner Mike Hanson, at right, discussed electric rates with Bakk.

Board reviews issues with Bakk

Senate majority leader hears about county concerns

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Issues important to Koochiching County were the topic of discussion Friday when the county board met in committee with Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk in preparation for the 2014 Minnesota legislative session.

Following the two-hour discussion, Bakk attended a meet-and-greet at the Falls Hunger Coalition Food Shelf, which was a first-time recipient of money gained in a Dec. 19 fundraiser

conducted by Bakk in St. Paul.

The annual "Stock the Shelves" event raised more than \$120,000 for Hunger Solutions Minnesota to provide to Arrowhead Region food shelves and locally brought a \$2,500 donation from Molpus Timberlands Management among other contributors.

Meanwhile, the board discussed a variety of topics with Bakk including bonding requests from the Borderland community. Bakk said he believed an \$8 million request for a project to extend sewer service to Island View and other communities surrounding Voyageurs National Park would get support.

Other local requests for bonding money from the state include \$3 million for the Falls International Airport and \$12 million for the Renewable Energy Clean Air Project.

It is estimated the state will bond for just less than \$1 billion in the next session, expected to begin Feb. 25. Bakk said the challenge is a bonding bill requires a "super majority" for approval in both the Senate and House and billions of dollars are being sought for many projects around the state.

Bakk said several issues, including sales taxes, approved in the 2013 session will likely be revisited. And, he said, spending of a projected \$1 billion surplus will be on the Legislature's agenda.

Bakk said he favors some "one-time spending" of some of the surplus as well as placing some of the surplus in a fund for future use.

County commissioners and county Administration Director

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