

KALISPELL COUNCIL SET TO APPROVE DEAL WITH NORTHWEST DRYWALL

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After announcing it has reached a deal with Northwest Drywall to facilitate the company's move to the new rail park, the Kalispell City Council on Tuesday will look to make that deal official.

The council will vote on a memorandum of understanding on Tuesday to approve the deal between the city, Northwest Drywall and Flathead County Economic Development Authority. The deal aims to move Northwest Drywall into the upcoming Glacier Rail Park on Kalispell's eastern edge. Without the deal, Northwest Drywall would have lost access to rail or suffered too high a cost in relocating to the park to sustain its business.

The agreement says that the city and the economic development group will chip in \$1.6 million for the land, site improvements, a new facility, asphalt and fencing. Northwest Drywall will contribute \$750,000 to the relocation, which covers most of the remaining construction costs. Using Northwest Drywall's existing building, appraised at \$750,000, for collateral, the city will provide Northwest Drywall with a 3 percent loan for the company's relocation costs.

After voting on the agreement, the council will vote to request BNSF Railway Co. abandon the existing rail line in town. That process is expected to take seven-to-eight months.

The council will also set notice for a public hearing regarding Immanuel Lutheran's request that the city administer a \$75 million bond to the company. The city has previously acted as the issuer of bonds for Immanuel Lutheran, who hopes to use the bonds to refinance its debt and obtain more bonding for its ongoing development projects.

The bond does not come from the city. Kalispell only handles the transaction as a third party.

A date for the public hearing is yet to be set.

The council will set a second public hearing on the proposed amendments to the development plan at Silverbrook Estates north of Kalispell. The subdivision owners are asking the city to allow its commercial building heights to increase. At last week's council work session, council members agreed the change could affect residents and wanted to hear thoughts from the residents on the proposed change.

The public hearing will be set for the Feb. 6 regular council meeting.

The council will also vote on approving the conditional use permit for the Lofts at Ashley apartment project proposed for South Kalispell. The council previously tabled the permit request to discuss conditions of the project design, but last week decided to move forward with language simply directing the Architectural Review Committee on design standards, rather than setting those standards at the legislative level.

The council meeting begins Tuesday at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 201 First Ave. East.