

Traverse City Record-Eagle

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Pier decision delayed

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--- — TRAVERSE CITY — A study committee charged with picking a consultant to design a fishing pier for West Grand Traverse Bay failed to launch a recommendation to the city commission.

Committee members interviewed four of seven applicants on July 9 in a five-hour-long meeting, but headed home without a consensus. The committee members split on two finalists: Grand Rapids-based Fleis & Vandenbrink, and Smithgroup JJR of Ann Arbor.

“Some people really liked the public outreach component of JJR and others were more impressed with Fleis & Vanderbrink’s marine subcontractor,” said city commissioner and committee member Ross Richardson.

Fleis & Vandenbrink partnered with W. F. Baird Associated Ltd., a Wisconsin-based marine engineering firm with extensive experience working on pier and marina projects in the Great Lakes.

SmithGroupJJR, which designed the city’s marina, partnered with Gourdie-Fraser Inc. of Traverse City, plus Interpretive Signage/Interpretive Ideas to create educational and interpretive signage for the pier.

The finalist will be charged with determining the feasibility of a pier that juts into the bay an estimated 550 feet at the mouth of the Boardman River. A \$232,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust also will fund the project’s final design, engineering and construction drawings.

Missy Luick, city staff’s project liaison, said the committee prepared

four additional questions for the two finalists to answer in writing by July 16. The questions seek more information about: the public involvement process; durability of material selection in the pier and the community’s ability to pick among material options; their ideas for creating connectivity and access to the pier; and more information about their coastal and marine construction experience.

Luick said they still hope to have a recommendation for city commissioners at their July 21 meeting or add a special meeting to the commission’s July 28 study session. She said the sooner the consultant is on board the better for studying the lake bottom, wave action, and ice movement.

”The grant we have, the deadline is June of 2015 and it’s a pretty extensive amount of work we are asking to be completed,” Luick said. “We would rather not have to ask for an extension.”