

Special Council Meeting

August 1, 2017

Meeting called to order by Mayor Harley at 5:00pm.

Present were Mayor John R. Harley, Councilman Randall Wright, Councilman J. Micheal Evans, Councilman Edward D. Armijo and City Attorney Rebecca Tydings.

Upcoming City Projects: Mayor Harley recognized Director of Marketing/ Economic Development Kate Hogan. Mrs. Hogan provided a package to include spreadsheet-estimate of probable construction cost (\$722,001.00) to complete Phase 1 Center Park. The breakdown consists of design fees, erosion control, traffic control, demolitions, site grading, infrastructure, hardscape, water feature (splash pad), landscape, and site structures (amphitheater, restroom pavilion, gazebo, horseshoe, bocce ball structure). A copy of the spreadsheet attached and made part of official minutes. Mrs. Hogan recognized City Accountant Harrison.

City Accountant Harrison informed everyone how the conversation originally initiated. She stated that Councilman Andrews sent an email to her inquiring "how can the city can begin developing Center Park, possibly borrowing money to begin development". Mrs. Harrison researched and reported that a general obligation bond (GO) could be an option. If the city decides to move forward with GO bond, a bond referendum question would have to be placed on the ballot for electors to vote upon. Mrs. Harrison provided a breakdown with several scenarios for the following: \$800,000, \$1,000,000 or \$2,000,000 through a GO bond. She reported that when speaking with Tom Owens (Raymond James) and Trey Monroe (Stifel) –underwriters, they recommended seeking \$2,000,000 bond. City Attorney Tydings stated that a bond referendum would require all debt to be analyzed. Mrs. Harrison provided a breakdown of current debt-snap shot. A copy of the package attached and made part of minutes.

General discussion - Mayor, Council and staff.

Councilman Evan referred to current existing loan with BB & T Police Department vehicles. Is there a possibility to pay debt before 6/30/2018? Mrs. Harrison replied- this expenditure is paid out of General Fund and SPLOST funds would only pay off the GEFA loan, it is a SPLOST project. Mrs. Harrison explained the content of package: 1st page is current debt, 2nd page is future city projects, also breakdown of possible loan scenario with GO and 2017 property tax digest millage rate modifications. This is for informational purposes only.

City Attorney Tydings stated she had spoken John Pannel (Gray, Panel and Woodard, LLP) and they advised to speak with underwriters. Mrs. Harrison made contact and they confirmed the 1st step would be adopt a resolution, 2nd create language for bond referendum question; submit for clearance and then final step place on ballot. Mrs. Tydings reported there is a lot of detail in the process, not enough time to prepare and place question on the November 2017 General Election. Mrs. Tydings stated we have to verify the bond rating. The second part of this would be the underwriter, market the bond, looking at 3% cost of the bond, have to make a lot of decisions, approve a question, then certify formal of question to Department of Justice, they can take up to 60 days for pre-clearance. If unable to meet the time restrictions to have on the November ballot, the next date permissible for a Special Election would be May 22, 2018.

Mrs. Tydings recommended ask for the amount needed for whole park vs what is needed to begin project. Mrs. Harrison referenced items: 2, 3, 4 on 2pg of packet- future city projects, talking with underwriters, there are 2 options to sell bonds: 1) bank 2) public offering to sale bonds, bank will not got 30 years only 20 years. Mrs. Harrison also informed all that the underwriters would come and do on site presentation. City Attorney Tydings recommending if Mayor and Council consider doing a bond referendum, have a planning retreat and have the group come down to speak with them.

Councilman Armijo asked Mrs. Harrison what the best approach would be, borrow the 2 million? Mrs. Harrison confirmed “yes”. Councilman Armijo asked what would be the impact on other departments. Mrs. Harrison reminded everyone there are 12 departments within the budget, would have to use a little bit of fund balance or transfer. Mrs. Harrison also provided a breakdown for possible future increase in millage rate. Mrs. Hogan stated that there has to be a first step to making this area more marketable; mixed use developmental. Switching the tax base will help take the burden off the tax payers?

Mrs. Hogan reminded everyone, about the question that Councilman Andrews had posted, “how can we get the park started”. Mrs. Hogan stated there are a lot of projects, asked what do you “Mayor and Council want to put forth monetary for park, priorities, how do you see project going”?

Councilman Armijo stated he supports the initiative 100%, wants to fund the first part and get it going, but need to fully understand what other activities that are going on, need to understand big picture so we will know in the outline years, expenses coming in the future, to plan effectively. It’s going to take money to sustain, need it put out there to have full picture, and can it be done. Getting bonds, a lot of different options, making sure we have all information.

Councilman Armijo reported he had met a gentleman recently at the GMA convention; he provides the following service- strategic planning, possible that he would come to the city and help us. Think this would be beneficial. Councilman Wright asked him to contact the individual and ask cost for services.

Councilman Evans expressed that he really wants to do the park, this is a project, how to come up with the money. Reiterated that we need to have a planning retreat.

Councilman Wright frustrated stated that we cannot even sit down for one day, we have been talking about having a retreat for a year. They (Mayor and Council) cannot agree on a date to have a planning retreat. The park is at the “bottom” of his list.

Mayor Harley reminded everyone of the cost of Phase I, \$722,001. Mrs. Hogan informed Mayor and Council that Phase 1, has to be completed before she can solicit any grant money for the park. Mayor Harley proposed asking the senior citizens group if they would like to donate money for the restroom pavilion. They have shown interest in wanting to donate funds for the park. Director of Operations stated the estimate cost for the restrooms would be \$50,000. Mrs. Hogan stated this something to consider.

Councilman Armijo asked if there are any down time for the park. Mrs. Hogan stated November –March. Councilman Armijo recommended working on the park during this time frame.

Chief Jones stated that he agrees with retreat, Mayor and Council need to be aware of what is coming in the future before making decisions.

City Attorney recommended creating a park committee. Councilman Armijo and Mayor Harley stated they would like to serve on the committee. Director of Operations recommended each department head serve on the committee. Mrs. Hogan stated she doesn't think Court Clerk Caldwell would need to serve on the committee. Motion made by Councilman Wright to establish Center Park committee that will consist of : Mayor Harley, Councilman Armijo, Director of Marketing/Economic Development Kate Hogan, Director of Operations Mike Brumfield, City Accountant Carol Harrison and City Clerk Krista Bedingfield; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried.

Councilman Cameron W. Andrews arrived at 6:19 pm.

In closing, all department heads are to provide their 5 year plan to Mayor and Council in the next 30 days for review. Once Mayor and Council have time to review each plan will discuss at later date and then decide on planning retreat and potential park financing.

Meeting adjourned at 6:38pm.

Mayor John R. Harley

Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield

Date