SANFORD CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, March 29, 2016
225 East Weatherspoon Street, Sanford, NC

The City Council held a Work Session on Tuesday, March 29, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. in the West End Conference Room at City Hall. The following people were present:

Mayor T. Chet Mann
Council Member Byron Buckels
Council Member Charles Taylor
Council Member Rebecca Wyhof
City Attorney Susan Patterson
Mayor Pro Tem Sam Gaskins
Council Member Jimmy Haire
Council Member James Williams
City Manager Hal Hegwer
City Clerk Bonnie Davis

Absent:
Council Member Norman "Chas" Post, III

Work Session

Mayor Chet Mann called the work session to order.

Parking Regulations in Downtown Sanford and Jonesboro

City Manager Hegwer explained that Jennifer St. Clair, Downtown Sanford, Inc. (DSI) Director, had not yet met with or received feedback from downtown merchants but a meeting would be held soon. Mr. Hegwer requested that discussion be delayed until additional information is received.

Regarding suggestions for parallel parking downtown, Manager Hegwer stated that City Engineer Paul Weeks recently presented information to DSI and it appeared that the majority (including Temple Theatre representative Peggy Taphorn) oppose it. Mayor Mann, Mayor Pro Tem Gaskins and Council Member Williams stated that they had been contacted by board members who are adamantly opposed. Mr. Taylor stated that Chris DeLambert had expressed support. There was consensus to wait until a DSI representative could appear before Council before proceeding.

Regarding parking regulations in Jonesboro, Manager Hegwer stated that direction is needed from merchants and interested parties. Council Member Haire stated that he would canvas the area and report back to Council.

Mayor Mann suggested taking a short recess (at 5:40 p.m.) for dinner before proceeding with the presentation on Parks and Recreation bonds. The meeting resumed at 5:55 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Bonds (Exhibit)

Public Works Director Vic Czar explained that if a Multi-Sports Complex is constructed, it will be privately funded not financed through the bond project. He introduced Derek Williams, a Registered Landscape Architect with the Alfred Benesch firm, who has more than 30 years' experience in parks and recreation, as well as landscape architecture. Mr. Williams and his firm

have been involved with many plans in North Carolina, both comprehensive and site specific. Other members of the firm are also qualified in recreation master planning, cost estimating, conceptual design, detailed design and sports field and athletic facility design. He shared brochures and information on other projects with which they have been involved, including park/greenway trails, athletic facilities, sports complexes, tournament facilities, park planning and amenity selection.

Mr. Williams summarized the two types of planning processes: the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Site Specific Master Plan. Council could proceed with a recreational facility with a broad variety of amenities such as walking trails and greenways (both are currently popular). He suggested leveraging bond funds with grant funds and stated that he has attended several Parks and Recreation Trust Fund ("PARTF") meetings and is aware of what they look for in awarding grants. They use a rating system that awards points for having a Comprehensive Master Plan, a Site Specific Master Plan, and for surveying for public input during the planning process. Projects recently approved for funding have included walking trails; they also like to see land preservation projects and partnerships between governmental entities. Grants are awarded up to $250,000 and require a local match. He also noted that the number of grants awarded recently has increased but in lower amounts. Benesch's fee was estimated at approximately 10% of the project cost (including PARTF participation), and includes planning, surveys, and geo-tech consulting.

Various park options were discussed, including splash parks. Mr. Williams explained that they are interactive and also have lower operating costs, are not as risky and require less oversight than pools. Mr. Haire stated that he had visited sites which are staffed and some of these facilities are rented to the public. Mr. Williams confirmed this is an option and noted that decisions will also be required on whether amenities will be offered free of charge or for a fee. Kannapolis (which was on the forefront of the movement about ten years ago) has a fenced area, train, carousel and splash pad. He explained that the City could do several small neighborhood parks or work with the county to construct a large recreational park center which could include a building, picnic shelter, restrooms and other features.

Public Works Director Vic Czar stated that determining the size of the site needed would involve comprehensive planning. Mr. Williams agreed, stating that a playground with baseball, basketball and a picnic area would require only one-half to two acres, while a neighborhood park with ball fields (excluding league play) would require approximately five to ten acres. On the other hand, a community park which could include all these features plus open space (for passive recreation and natural areas with trees) would require about 30 acres.

City Manager Hegwer questioned whether a study had been conducted in the past five years. Council Member Taylor stated that one had been done on Horton Park. Community Director Marshall Downey noted that the County has conducted a comprehensive study.

Mr. Czar asked Derek Williams if there was enough time to complete a comprehensive survey, conduct citizens' surveys, move to a site specific survey, apply for PARTF funding and issue bonds before the February 2018 deadline. Mr. Williams confirmed that this 22 month time frame was adequate and realistic.

Council Member Taylor suggested bundling projects. Manager Hegwer noted other sources of funding, including Connect NC bonds and funds for veterans and child related projects. Mayor Mann agreed that funds could be leveraged and maximized by "piggybacking" and Council should consider several projects, including greenway, stream restoration and gateways.

Derek Williams pointed out that mountain biking is also very popular now. Manager Hegwer reminded everyone that a tract of land which is rocky, hilly and located near the greenway (at Riverbirch) has already been donated to the city.

Council Member Buckels asked what consideration could be given to locating parks near low-income housing; Mr. Williams replied that there is a need and demand for parks near residential communities but no location works for everyone. More people now view parks as a quality-of-life issue and it is important that they be relatively accessible. Mr. Williams explained that these issues are considered in comprehensive planning.

Mayor Mann noted that it appears we should proceed with a comprehensive plan: request a proposal and estimate, proceed with grant applications and plan a park or parks that will have an impact if it is to be ready in 22 months.

Council Member Taylor stated that some funds have already been allocated for parks and asked what should be done now to help later with PARTF funding. Mr. Williams suggested that we contact Recreation and Resource Services, the state agency that administers PARTF. They have consultants who can help establish an advisory committee, which PARTF likes to see. He also noted that they prefer and reward points to surveys conducted by telephone based on random samples of citywide land lines and cell phones, rather than online surveys.

Council Member Haire emphasized the importance of including the Hispanic population in planning. Mayor Mann suggested forming a joint city and county task force, noting that the county already has a board. Friends of the Park could also be helpful. Council Member Williams questioned whether the county's advisory board could be used. Mr. Czar suggested that the Community Development Department address whether to use the county board already in place or organize one. Mr. Williams stated that since the park or parks will also serve the county, that board should definitely be included in the conversation.

Council Member Wyhof stated while she is not against those ideas, consideration should be given to doing something in a location that might impact and transform a neighborhood. Manager Hegwer stated that the fields at the Southern Lee High School campus, which received PARTF funding, have been very popular.

Mayor Mann noted there appeared to be consensus to proceed with a Comprehensive Plan Proposal. Manager Hegwer stated that we could do a comprehensive plan and incorporate what Lee County is doing. Possibilities include using a county park and creating a destination park or tying the greenway into Kiwanis Park. Mr. Williams noted that PARTF would look favorably on the connectivity shown by the city and county working together.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Member Wyhof stated that Citizens' Academy visited the sewer plant earlier in the day and it was very interesting.

Council Member Taylor commented on the need to address space needs for the police department and there were some steps that could be taken immediately.

Mayor Mann noted that the Vietnam Veterans proclamation and flag-raising ceremony were held earlier in the day. He would like to investigate ways to distinguish Sanford as a military friendly community and will present additional information at a later date.

Mayor Mann also reminded everyone of the presentation to be held Tuesday, April 5, by Mark Sweeney (with McCallum Sweeney, a leading site selector consultant). He will be revisiting what we need to work on at Central Carolina Enterprise Park and what site selectors consider when selecting project sites.

Community Development Director Marshall Downey informed Council that work has begun on the African-American mural on Wall Street (by the same artist who did the Sanford Spinners mural) and that another mural will feature a local NASCAR driver. Information has been requested on a privately-funded mural to recognize World War II golden pilots.

Adjournment

Council Member Williams made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Council Member Wyhof, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

T. Chet Mann, Mayor

Attest:

Bonnie Davis, City Clerk