

MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, 4700 DREXEL DRIVE, ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019, AT 8:00 A.M.

Present at the meeting were Mayor Margo Goodwin, Mayor Pro Tem John McKnight, and Town Council Members David L. Dowler, Eric Gambrell, and Craig Penfold. Absent from the meeting was and Town Council Member Jimmy Grisham.

UPCOMING AGENDA DISCUSSION

Action

“Review and discuss conducting a public hearing to receive a recommendation from the Zoning Commission and public comments regarding a request to amend the Town’s Zoning Ordinance by combining the multifamily properties at 4508, 4510, and 4512 Abbott Avenue and replatting them into one combined building site.” Kirk Smith, Assistant Director of Town Services, stated that the Zoning Commission conducted a public hearing on September 25, 2019, and recommended approval. No comments/correspondence in favor of or in opposition to the request was received. The applicant plans to develop the combined properties into new multifamily residences of 50 units or less. If approved, the replat of this property will be unique; several units are occupied by tenants, and a delay of 180 days is needed to allow time for them to vacate the property. The execution of the plat will be deferred until the existing structures are razed. In response to questions, Mr. Smith explained that the plat process is separate from combining the properties, which requires an ordinance amending the Zoning Map. The plat is an administrative process which is recorded in the Dallas County Deed Records Department. Currently 61 units occupy the 3 complexes, 17 of which are in the apartment complex at 4512 Abbott Avenue, built in 1954. Kirk Smith introduced Mark Miller, with Provident Realty Advisors, Inc., and Robert Cramer, representing the Abbott Terrace Homeowners Association. Mark Miller stated that over the last two years, he researched the area; plans are currently to construct 34 units for sale within 6 buildings, designed in a Santa Barbara/old Highland Park style. Kirk Smith added that the 6 three-story buildings will be connected as one entity, with underground parking.

“Review and discuss conducting a public hearing to receive a recommendation from the Zoning Commission and public comments regarding a request to amend the Town’s Zoning Ordinance by combining the properties at 4504, 4508, and 4512 Belclaire Avenue and relating them into two combined building sites.” Kirk Smith stated that the owners of 4504 Belclaire Avenue and 4512 Belclaire Avenue purchased the property at 4508 Belclaire Avenue, and plan to eliminate the building site at 4508 and combine it into each adjoining property. The width of the proposed combined property at 4504 Belclaire Avenue would be 102.5 feet wide, and at 4512 Belclaire Avenue, 97.5 feet wide. The Zoning Commission conducted a public hearing on August 28, 2019, and recommended approval. No comments/correspondence in favor of or in opposition to the request was received. In response to questions from the Town Council, Kirk Smith explained that Scott Brady, owner of 4504 Belclaire Avenue, plans to install a wrought iron fence at the rear of the property, and Shane Egan, owner of 4512 Belclaire Avenue, may add a pool and a garage at the rear of the property in the future.

Consent

“Review and discuss the purchase and replacement of firefighters’ self-contained breathing apparatus.” Rick Pyle, Director of Public Safety, described the need to purchase 20 new self-contained breathing apparatus (“SCBA”), the equipment that provides fresh air to firefighters allowing them to work in otherwise deadly atmospheres. Over the past 15 years, SCBAs were purchased in

groups of five. There are differences in the models of SCBAs currently used at a single fire. Various models may differ in the way one SCBA can or cannot connect to another to provide air to a firefighter who is trapped and low on air. The Town has mutual aid agreements with the City of Dallas Fire and Rescue and the University Park Fire Department, both of which utilize equipment from the same manufacturer; however, not all SCBAs connect the same. Additionally, some of the Town's older equipment does not comply with the 2019 National Fire Protection Association standard on SCBA. The new standard promotes greater safety by extending the air supply; pairing via Bluetooth mask speakers to radios for clearer communications and enhanced safety; requires inter-connectable fittings across all SCBAs purchased after 2018, integrated tracking devices that continuously display the firefighter's location inside a structure, reduces the wearer's exposure to carcinogens due to the design of SCBA frames and straps for ease of cleaning SCBA, and Rescue Bags that contain a large high-pressure air bottle that can quickly refresh the air supply of a trapped firefighter during a lengthy extrication. In response to questions from the Town Council, Director Pyle explained that communication is the Number 1 priority when fighting a fire, and this purchase will greatly enhance firefighters' safety from a communications perspective, as well as lessen exposure to carcinogens due to less absorbent materials. Five of the current SCBA units will be utilized for training purposes. In response to a question about the cost, Rick Pyle stated that the units are priced at \$9540 each through the BuyBoard, a consortium that provides favorable pricing to government entities, and satisfies state bidding requirements; the Town Council approved \$183,459 for this purchase in the past year, but due to changes in a few components and a small price increase in the past six months, the total quote was priced at \$190,808. The difference in price is adequately covered in the Capital Improvement Plan.

FUTURE AGENDAS DISCUSSION

Review and discuss proposed improvements to Fairfax Park and the Town's Tennis Courts No. 1 through 8. Kirk Smith and John Eaglen, Town Services Manager, reported that since the last discussion, more information has become available. For the purpose of the discussion, the presentation was divided into 3 areas. Area 1 – Tennis Courts; Area 2 – Play Area; and Area 3 – Play Field.

Area 1 – Tennis Courts

According to United States Tennis Association regulations of one tennis court per 2,000 population, the Town has a surplus of 3 tennis courts. Fairfax Park currently contains 4 courts with 9.5 feet between each court. Options include removing and replacing the existing 4 courts; removing the existing 4 courts and replacing with 3 courts, plus 2 dedicated Pickle Ball courts; removing the existing 4 courts and replacing with 3 courts, with 12 feet between each and fencing; or removing the existing 4 courts and replacing with 2 dedicated tennis courts with 12-foot fencing. The Town Council discussed: (i) that tennis players would likely be okay playing next to Pickle Ball; (ii) citizens making reservations for a court would be required to specify "tennis" or "Pickle Ball;" (iii) the slight difference in area between 3 USTA-regulation tennis courts and the existing 4 tennis courts; and (iv) reducing the number of tennis courts to 3 USTA courts with a 3-foot or 4-foot-tall fence separation between each.

Area 2 – Play Area

Kirk Smith described the two play areas that would include relocation of the basketball court, a staging area to place strollers while children play, a new sidewalk/walking course, a quick-fill water bottle-fountain, and removal and reinstallation of the current playground equipment. The new sidewalk would feature intermittent decomposed granite sections with stone enhancements.

Area 3 – Play Field

Kirk Smith stated that O'Brien Engineering was consulted to evaluate and identify surface drainage improvements, which will include the design of swales to allow better drainage of the field following rain events. The existing irrigation system will be updated and adjusted. The backstop will be relocated and the field can be utilized as one large area or two smaller fields. A 4-foot-wide concrete sidewalk with inter-connected crushed gravel/stone paths is proposed around the perimeter of the athletic field to provide a learning area for riding bikes and scooters, as well as a 1/4-mile walking path. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight stated that he understood the sidewalk would be a different surface, which in his opinion, is important for walkers. Council Member Gambrell commented that not many runners would utilize a 1/4-mile track, and mentioned a distinction between concrete and a tartan surface. He suggested the possibility of a public hearing. Council Member Penfold commended the walkway as being the best idea to improve the park and increase usage. Mayor Goodwin stated that small children on scooters and in strollers would be better served with a smooth surface. Kirk Smith explained that the berms mentioned in a previous discussion could be a hindrance, and staff is investigating other options. He verified that two multi-use fields would provide enough space to meet the YMCA regulations. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight suggested that a 4-foot-wide sidewalk would not give enough space for two-way traffic, adding that a 6-foot-wide sidewalk would be better. Council Member Gambrell expressed his opinion that green space is a priority, and a 6-foot-wide sidewalk would be too much concrete. Lori Chapin, Director of Engineering, suggested that a 5-foot-wide sidewalk would allow for two-way traffic; a 4-foot-wide sidewalk would not meet ADA requirements.

Kirk Smith explained the total costs of the project, which depends on the number of tennis courts: 4 courts would cost an estimated \$705,000; 3 courts would cost an estimated \$697,000; and 2 courts would cost an estimated \$657,000. To meet the funding needed for Fairfax Park, a portion of the Hackberry Creek project could be deferred.

The staff sought direction from the Town Council regarding the number of tennis courts. The discussion included striping the tennis courts for Pickle Ball. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight recommended 3 tennis courts, striping only one for Pickle Ball. Council Member Gambrell stated that he strongly prefers 2 tennis courts, no dedicated Pickle Ball court; create more usable green space with a dedicated play area that could accommodate 3 sports teams; defer the walking trail and limit concrete as much as possible. Mayor Goodwin commented that taking 2 courts away would make the decision on the court at Hackberry Creek more difficult. Because that court is not ADA compliant, that area could provide more green space, but that would eliminate 3 tennis courts. The Town Council discussed how additional green space in Fairfax Park would be utilized by various age groups. The Town Council discussed the impact of reducing the number of courts at Fairfax Park. Mayor Goodwin suggested that if Court No. 1 near the swimming pool were removed, another tennis court could possibly be added next to Court No. 7 on St. John's Drive. Council Member Gambrell recommended removing Court No. 1 and by adding green space at that location, it could be utilized as practice space for kids. He was in favor of 2 tennis courts in Fairfax Park. Council Member Dowler stated a preference of 3 tennis courts in Fairfax Park with 1 striped for Pickle Ball. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight and Council Member Penfold concurred. Mayor Goodwin stated that she would like to defer any decision on Court No. 1 for now. The direction from the Town Council was to construct 3 tennis courts at Fairfax Park, striping one for Pickle Ball, with the surface painted green. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight requested open spaces of equal size east and west of the tennis courts; Council Member Gambrell requested an aesthetic buffer at Roland Avenue where the tennis courts will be located. In response to Kirk Smith's suggestion of an open space with green hedges/foilage along the residences adjacent to the park, Mayor Pro Tem McKnight again requested green space on both sides. Council Member Dowler requested a nova cushion surface on the tennis courts.

REPORTS

“Review and discuss the status of the current construction projects.” Lori Chapin stated that the final walk-through of the Preston Road project is scheduled after this meeting, and the final items on the punch list are being completed. In response to questions, Ms. Chapin stated that Armstrong Parkway is being striped today; the walk-through and backfill will be completed this week. The sidewalk at the northeast corner of Beverly Drive and Preston Road is deferred pending completion of the dedicated left-turn signal improvements.

“Review and discuss the status of construction at 4509 Mockingbird Lane.” Kirk Smith stated that the electrician has yet not requested an electrical inspection; there is still no power to the house. In response to questions, Mr. Smith explained that the permit can be voided after 90 days; monetary fines could be assessed; the demolition permit could be reinstated, and the property owner could be barred from being on the property after the 90-day permit expires. If no permit exists, there is no need for the property owner to be on the premises.

“Review and discuss the Financial and Investment Report for the period ending August 31, 2019.” Karen Kurtin, Controller, stated that August marks the end of the eleventh month of the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Year; the year-to-date percentage for budgetary comparison is 91.7%. General and Utility Fund combined revenues were \$32,892,109, or 87.4% of the annual projected amounts. Combined expenses and encumbrances were \$30,348,170, or 78.8% of the annual budget. Property tax revenues were 100.0 % of the year-to-date projection; sales tax revenues were 112.5% of the year-to-date projection; and building permit revenues were 112.1% of the year-to-date projection. General Fund expenditures were 89.9% of the annual budget. Water sales were less than projected through August, at 81.4% of projections; revenues were down approximately 18.9% when compared to the amount of revenue generated during the same period in the prior fiscal year. Ms. Kurtin attributed lower water consumption to above-average rainfall; from October through August, rainfall was 48.20 inches, as compared to 29.7 inches in the prior fiscal year. Utility Fund expenditures were 59.9% of the annual budget. The market value of the Town’s investment portfolio as of August 31, 2019, was \$36,667,474, and the total portfolio yield was 2.65%.

Mayor Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

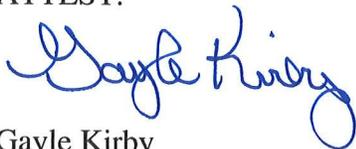
APPROVED on this the 5th day of May, 2020.

BY:



Margo Goodwin
Mayor

ATTEST:



Gayle Kirby
Town Secretary