

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, JANUARY 7, 2020, 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 Town Council Member Jimmy Grisham.

UPCOMING AGENDA DISCUSSION

Action

*No items assigned to this category.*

Consent

*“Review and discuss bids for the 2020 Miscellaneous Concrete Repairs annual contract.”* Lori Chapin, Director of Engineering, explained that this project will include miscellaneous concrete repairs to existing concrete. Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., the Town’s consulting engineers, recommended awarding the contract to Cam-Crete Contracting, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$500,000. In response to questions, Ms. Chapin explained that the bid listed many items for which the contractor provided a set price for each; the not-to-exceed amount of \$500,000 reflects the funds allocated for the current fiscal year Capital Improvement Plan for concrete repairs. Ms. Chapin further explained that RBR Infrastructure & Road, LLC, submitted the lowest bid, but subsequently withdrew it because they did not feel comfortable with the contract; the nature of the project is not conducive to a one-time mobilization, and staff would like the flexibility of calling the contractor back for additional repairs during the year. She further explained that the Town has contracted with Cam-Crete in the past, and has fully vetted their references. Among other miscellaneous items, the contract would include pavement repair following a water main break.

*“Review and discuss scheduling Town Council meetings.”* Mayor Goodwin explained that the agenda briefing delineated several options. The Town Council currently meets approximately four times per month, which equates to 44 meetings. Referencing a past summer meeting schedule, she stated that discussions during meetings that began at 4:00 p.m. were sometimes limited by time constraints, and late meetings did not foster as good a discussion as early-morning meetings. Mayor Goodwin suggested a schedule to meet twice per month, starting with a Town Council meeting for the Town Council to consider action on items reviewed in a previous meeting, followed by a study session to discuss items to be considered at the next Town Council meeting. The Town Council discussed this option, with Mayor Pro Tem McKnight and Council Member Gambrell indicating their support of this schedule, and remarking that their terms on the Council will end in May. Council Member Penfold stated that he is happy with the present schedule, but if the proposed schedule is better for the staff, that is fine with him also. Council Member Dowler voiced his willingness to try the new schedule. Mayor Goodwin asked the staff to draft a list of meetings for the year, and asked the Council Members to add those meeting dates on their calendars upon receipt of the list.

*“Review and discuss a resolution casting the Town’s vote in a run-off election for the Board of Directors of the Dallas Central Appraisal District.”* Bill Lindley, Town Administrator, explained that a tie between the top two candidates for the Board position representing suburban cities on the Dallas Central Appraisal District necessitated a run-off election. Mayor Goodwin stated that Michael Hurtt, the candidate receiving the Town’s vote in the election, Michael Hurtt, was a

candidate in the run-off election. The resolution naming Michael Hurtt as the Town's choice in the run-off election will be considered at the next Town Council meeting.

## FUTURE AGENDAS DISCUSSION

*“Review and discuss proposed improvements to Fairfax Park and the adjoining Tennis Courts.”* Kirk Smith presented a current photograph of Fairfax Park, and explained that the project would be separated into two segments, Phase I – Tennis Courts, Roland Avenue and Fairfax Cul-de-sac, and Phase II – Playground Area and Athletic Field. The playground will remain “as-is;” sidewalk and other such needs will be assessed later. In response to questions, Mr. Smith stated that the playground equipment will be cleaned rather than replaced. He explained that a land survey, prepared prior to the park design, identified an Atmos Energy (“Atmos”) utility line located under the tennis courts, which must be relocated. Atmos is expediting its construction program to facilitate the Town's work. Removal of the gas line will be coordinated with the demolition of the existing tennis courts (the “Courts”). A water line located under the Courts and a separate line located under the play-field area will be replaced.

Phase I proposed work on the Courts includes: (i) reducing the number of Courts from four to three, and striping the eastern Court for pickle ball; (ii) aligning the new concrete Courts predominately to the west, to allow 15 additional feet of open space on the eastern area; (iii) painting the Courts green-on-green; (v) providing pedestrian access to the Courts from the entrance located on the south side of the Courts as is currently; (vi) installing a water fountain with a speed-fill water bottle feature and new trash receptacles; (vii) installing a new practice backboard on the north side of the center Court; (viii) updating the existing landscaping along Edmondson Avenue on the north side of the Courts; (ix) landscaping design will be consistent with recently improved Courts in other Town parks; (x) installing a “backless” teak bench on each Court; and (xi) providing wind-screening around the perimeter of the Courts. Following a discussion, Mayor Pro Tem McKnight recommended a height of 4 feet for the fences between the Courts and a gate near the net on each for court-to-court access, placing the benches near the middle of each Court, and placing the backboard on the north side of the western Court as a way to reduce the noise impact to residents. Council Member Gambrell expressed agreement with placing the backboard on the western Court, noting that the eastern Court has become a “sport court.” Kirk Smith verified that the technology of the new water fountain will be frost-free and operable year-round. Following a discussion regarding the placement of the Pickle Ball Court, Mayor Pro Tem McKnight stated that if he played Pickle Ball, he would prefer to play on the eastern Court, away from the Dallas North Tollway. Council Member Penfold asked about adding parking on Edmondson Avenue. Bill Lindley, Town Administrator, stated that the south side of Edmondson is currently designated “no-parking,” and allowing parking would require repealing the current ordinance. He added that the Town could host a neighborhood meeting to address same. The Town Council discussed landscaping and a path for the area on the western side of the Courts along Roland Avenue. In response to questions, Kirk Smith explained that the path is two feet wide and is utilized as a maintenance path for staff access; plans are to remove the asphalt/concrete path and replace with gravel. He added that the area is not wide enough to allow a pedestrian sidewalk.

Kirk Smith described the components of the proposed improvements to Roland Avenue and the Fairfax Avenue Cul-de-sac that include: (i) removing the crepe myrtles and other under-story trees on the southeast corner of the Courts to improve sunlight for growth of the turf; (ii) constructing an additional handicap parking space on Roland Avenue pursuant to ADA standards; (iii) installing new planting in the Fairfax Avenue Cul-de-sac; (iv) constructing a grass drainage swale designed

with an open flow along Fairfax Avenue to intercept storm water runoff from the tennis courts, as presently presented. The presentation included plans to remove cobblestone and replace with flagstone and evergreen plants in the Fairfax Cul-de-sac. The tree in the cul-de-sac will remain in place. Mr. Smith explained that the previously mentioned land survey revealed a fence encroachment easement agreement, which was granted in 1967 to an adjoining property owner, for an area measuring 12 feet wide by 78 feet long and located on the eastern side of the Courts and south of Edmondson Avenue. The Town's engineering staff determined that the easement does not directly interfere with plans for the proposed drainage swale. Mr. Smith reviewed an assessment of the trees in the eastern area of the park, and identified trees planned for removal prior to the installation of the new landscaping design adjacent to the Courts. In response to questions, he stated that some of the trees will be removed due to disease and failing conditions; Matthew Boyle, Town Attorney, verified that the Town can trim branches that overhang into adjoining private properties.

Phase II proposed work on the playground area includes: (i) considering as a bid alternate, (ii) replacement of the concrete sidewalk, which is in good condition, adjoining the existing playground (\$17,500 estimate); (iii) installing decorative wooden benches; (iv) the adjacent off-street parking will remain as-is; and (v) constructing a crushed gravel surface with steel edging to provide an area to park baby strollers and a location for a bike rack. Kirk Smith added that the Park's donated benches will be cleaned and power-washed. Mayor Goodwin stated that she does not see a need to remove the perfectly good concrete sidewalk around the playground.

The proposed work on the athletic field includes: (i) re-grading and re-sodding the turf area, utilizing the existing irrigation system to improve drainage; (ii) hydro-mulching the perimeter area of the athletic field as a cost-savings initiative; (iii) installing decorative wooden benches; (iv) installing a new water fountain with a speed-fill water bottle feature and new trash receptacles; (v) relocating the baseball backstop to the southeast corner of the play area, and constructing the base of the backstop with brick/stone, approximately two feet in height, to minimize damage to the chain link fencing; (vi) trimming the trees bordering the park to promote improved sunlight for the turf; and (vii) the adjacent off-street parking along Beverly Drive will remain as-is.

Following completion of Phase II, Town forces will construct a five-foot-wide crushed gravel walking path with steel edging around the perimeter of the play-field area. Mr. Smith stated that the gravel walking path will be 1/6th mile; walking around the path three times will equal one-half mile. Mayor Goodwin commented that a gravel path does not work for strollers or bikes, and the path was initially introduced as a concrete pathway. The Town Council discussion included: (i) the pathway would provide a local area for walkers; (ii) a concrete pathway would not promote green space and would cost approximately \$65,000; and (iii) a gravel pathway similar to that in Flippen Park could provide a spongy surface that would accommodate strollers and walkers, as well as provide a cushion for runners. Council Member Gambrell stated that there is a market for a 1/4-mile path for walkers who prefer softer trails and people who are no longer runners; he challenged the staff to find a way to make the pathway 1/4 mile, whether gravel or a tartan-track type of material, adding that it would be a massive improvement. He asked why the trail could not go around the park, to which Mayor Goodwin responded that parents walking and wanting to watch their children would want to stay inside the park. She added that in her opinion, a softer surface is a better option. Council Member Dowler stated his opinion that the pathway would be more pleasant than going to a running field. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight stated that he likes the pathway, but he also likes the berm discussed in previous meetings. Council Member Penfold stated that if the park does not have a pathway, it will not be utilized more than it is now. He did not understand why the work is proposed in two phases rather than doing it all at once, comparing the magnitude to the phased construction projects along Preston Road. Bill Lindley explained that

time is required for the growing season for the turf, the play field will be out of commission for one entire season, and a strong root base is needed to accommodate active play on the field. In response to questions, Kirk Smith explained that phasing the work enhances coordination of the work with the utilities and tennis court construction, as well as the drainage improvements. Bill Lindley added that a fence will be erected around the playfield area to keep it from being used during the turf growth period.

Bill Lindley asked for Town Council discussion regarding the berm. In response to questions regarding the berm, Kirk Smith stated that the berm would be located inside the pathway. Mayor Goodwin stated that very little space exists between the trees and the sideline of the playfield. She added that the existing level ground provides space for parents to stand and place chairs or a blanket; plenty of parents stand to watch their children playing, which provides a way to block balls and prevent children going into the street to retrieve them. Mayor Goodwin stated that for now, there would be no berm.

Kirk Smith presented proposed funding for the project, estimating the costs for the Courts at \$400,000 including improvements; for park renovations, \$197,029; water line replacement, \$292,586 (the proposed swale provides a savings of \$80,000), for a total estimated cost of \$889, 615. The Capital Improvement Plan has allocated \$400,000 for tennis court reconstruction and \$197,029 for Park Rehabilitation/Renovation improvements. Funding for the water line replacement provided by the Utility Fund. Atmos is funding its gas line relocation. In response to a question, Mr. Smith explained that the need for the water utility work was discovered during the field survey. Mr. Smith also explained that 43 residents are in close proximity to the park, and will be notified of the project by mailings. Topics will include the project scope, timeline, and work hours. Personal visits with the adjoining residents to the east will address tree removal, trimming, and mitigation. Mr. Smith explained the staff's recommendation to proceed with bidding Phase I (Tennis Courts), awarding the contract in March, notifying the neighbors, and beginning construction at the conclusion of the utility work, anticipated in April or May.

*“Review and discuss bids for the Preston Road landscape and irrigation improvements.”* John Eaglen stated that five bids were received in December ranging from \$499,118.30 to \$1,032,578.60. The Town's estimated cost of the project was \$536, 750. Two of the bids were submitted as a lump sum with no detail provided, and were not considered. The best value bid, in the amount of \$ \$499,118.30, was submitted by SRH Landscapes LLC, the same contractor that completed the work in Abbott Park; the Town has favorable experience with the company.

## REPORTS

*“Review and discuss tree planting opportunities in the esplanade of Armstrong Parkway and Preston Road.”* Kirk Smith explained that this item is presented as an opportunity for the Town Council to discuss whether or not to plant a second tree in the esplanade of Armstrong Parkway and Preston Road. The Capital Improvement Plan has \$250,000 allocated for landscape enhancements on Armstrong Parkway from Preston Road to Douglas Avenue. Mayor Goodwin explained that the available funds are for the entire esplanade, not just for a new tree, and asked the Town Council for their thoughts. Council Member Dowler remarked that John Armstrong, one of the Town's landscape consultants, presented a negative case regarding the installation of a new tree in the area; a positive case could be made for a different tree. Mayor Goodwin expressed concerns that (i) planting a large tree would have no guarantee of survival; (ii) the root structure of the former tree could be detrimental to a new tree; (iii) space is limited between the location of a new tree and the Landmark Tree; and (iv) the Landmark Tree was grafted from the Monarch

Tree, and in time, it will be as grand as the Monarch. Council Member Gambrell stated that he strongly feels the need to plant a tree; the arborists offered a very limited opinion and did not opine on planting a smaller tree that would not compete with the root structure. He emphasized the need for a tree in this location because there has always been a tree there, and the location is the entrance into the boulevard. He further questioned how planting an appropriately sized tree, three feet high or more, could be an issue. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight stated that he respectfully disagreed with Council Member Gambrell. Mayor Goodwin referenced the space required for risers, the choir members, and members of the Cole family who attended the Tree Lighting Ceremony in December, and stated that she would prefer seeing azaleas and white plum trees in a large azalea bed that would complement the space, rather than replace a tree. Council Member Penfold expressed satisfaction with the decision and the manner in which the former tree was removed, and added that people would donate funds toward a new tree. Mayor Goodwin stated that fundraising would not be needed if the Town were to plant a 6-foot tree; she reiterated her preference to see a garden with azaleas, not hybrids, planted in a massive bed, and suggested old-fashioned azaleas that would grow to be 6 feet tall. Following a discussion, Mayor Goodwin commented that planting a new tree doesn't necessarily have to be located on Armstrong Parkway. The Town Council discussed the need to look many years into the future with regard to planting a tree, just as former Town Councils did with regard to the Monarch tree. Following the discussion, Mayor Goodwin asked staff to consult with John Armstrong and Micah Pace, Arborist, with Preservation Tree Services, the Town's two consultants, for their opinions about planting a smaller tree and about other planting at the same location. In response to a question regarding the smallest tree to consider, Council Member Gambrell responded 8 to 12 feet high.

*"Review and discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 Capital Improvement Program quarterly report."* Mayor Goodwin asked if anyone wished to ask questions, to which there was no response.

*"Review and discuss the status of construction at 4509 Mockingbird Lane."* Kirk Smith presented photographs of the property from the perspective of the residence to the east. He reported that neither the property owner nor his contractor called for an inspection, but some improvement has been made. He added that a meeting with the property owner was scheduled later in the day. Mayor Goodwin commented that the house must be safe and secure.

#### CLOSED SESSION

1. *"In accordance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D, Section 551.072 – REAL ESTATE – the Town Council will convene into closed session to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, to wit, a parcel of land owned by the Town located at 2500 Conveyor Lane, in the City of Dallas."* Mayor Goodwin recessed the Council meeting at 8:41 a.m., and convened a closed session pursuant to Section 551.072 of the Texas Government Code, to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property (a parcel of land owned by the Town located at 2500 Conveyor Lane, in the City of Dallas). Mayor Goodwin closed the closed session at 10:03 a.m. and reconvened the Council meeting in open session. No final action, decision, or vote was taken during the closed session.

#### OPEN SESSION

1. *"Pursuant to Section 551.102 of the Texas Government Code, the final action, decision, or vote regarding Closed Session Item 1. above, shall be made, if any."* Mayor Goodwin asked for discussion or a motion as a result of the closed session, Item 1, to which there was no response.

Mayor Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

APPROVED on this the 21st day of April, 2020.

BY:



Margo Goodwin  
Mayor

ATTEST:



Gayle Kirby  
Town Secretary