

MINUTES OF AN ONLINE STUDY SESSION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, ON TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020, AT 8:07 A.M.

Prior to the study session, Gayle Kirby, Town Secretary explained that as provided by the State of Texas, this online Town Council study session could be viewed online via the Town’s website or listened to by telephone, and gave the toll-free and alternate telephone numbers, as well as the access number for citizens to call. Ms. Kirby conducted a roll call of the Town Council Members.

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

Mayor Goodwin called the study session to order.

UPCOMING AGENDA DISCUSSION

Action

“Review, discuss, and consider approval of contracts for professional tree pruning services.” On a motion by Council Member Penfold, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem McKnight, the Town Council voted unanimously to approve contracts for professional tree pruning services as follows:

Tree Pruning:

Primary Vendor	SRH Landscapes
Secondary Vendor	Southern Botanical
Additional (Third) Vendor	Complete Landsculpture of Texas LP

Tree Removal:

Primary Vendor	Southern Botanical
Secondary Vendor	Complete Landsculpture of Texas LP

Stump Grinding:

Primary Vendor	Southern Botanical
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Certified Arborist:

Primary Vendor	Simply Horticulture
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Additional Services, Alleys, and Easements:

Primary Vendor	Complete Landsculpture of Texas LP
Secondary Vendor	Southern Botanical

Prior to the vote, Kirk Smith, Assistant Director of Town Services, explained that eight bids were received on February 21, 2020. He further explained that the contract terms specify a term of three years with two optional 1-year renewals; the bid package requested hourly rates for tree pruning services, tree removal, stump grinding, and certified arborist. Lump-sum pricing was requested for tree pruning services for the Town’s alleys and easements. The staff recommended awarding a contract to a Primary Vendor for each category, and Secondary/Additional vendors to secure contract pricing during high-demand events such as storms or other emergencies to enhance

coverage. In response to questions, Mr. Smith explained that during a catastrophic event such as a storm, one vendor cannot meet all needs of the Town; with regard to trees in public parkways, in situations where public safety is an issue, the Town gives authority to the property owner to remove diseased or damaged trees. In the event a property owner wishes to remove a tree for reasons other than disease or damage, they must obtain approval from the Town. The Town Council discussed the obligation of property owners to maintain trees planted in the parkway, and how they would know their obligation to obtain approval prior to removing a tree. Following the discussion, Bill Lindley, Town Administrator, remarked that the Town could provide notice periodically to property owners reminding them of their responsibilities related to trees in the parkway. In response to a question regarding the trimming of trees in alley easements, Bill Lindley explained that the State of Texas Public Utility Commission develops and updates the safety standards which utility companies must follow. He added that Oncor typically notifies property owners and the Town when tree trimmers are scheduled to work in the area; however the Town has no authority to restrict their work.

Consent

No items assigned to this category.

FUTURE AGENDAS DISCUSSION

“Review and discuss the proposed walking path at Fairfax Park.” Mayor Goodwin explained that the purpose of this item is to review the proposed walking path at Fairfax Park and give direction to the staff regarding the surface of the pathway. Kirk Smith presented slides of the original concept and the proposed design of the pathway. The proposed pathway consists of two large circular loops inside the park. The north loop includes the area north of the Tennis Courts (the “Courts”) parallel to Edmondson Avenue, continuing to the south on the east side of the Courts, and connecting to the playground area south of the Courts, and/or continuing south and connecting to the Fairfax Avenue cul-de-sac. The south loop begins on each side of the playground area and extends to the south around the playfield and connects to the sidewalk on Beverly Drive. The pathway also has two east-west sections south of the playground area and north of the Beverly Drive sidewalk. Mr. Smith described four choices for the surface of the pathway: (i) plain concrete surface at an approximate cost of \$50,000; (ii) decorative concrete (stamped, colored, etc.) in a wide range of patterns, at an approximate cost of up to \$75,000; (iii) brick/stone pavers, that would require higher maintenance costs depending on the type of wear, at an approximate cost of \$110,000; and (iv) rubberized sport track, providing a softer surface, also requiring higher maintenance costs, with a life expectancy of 8 to 10 years before resurfacing would be necessary, at an approximate cost of \$120,000. Mr. Smith estimated that \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year should be set aside to fund the resurfacing of the rubberized sport track. In response to a question about crushed granite, Kirk Smith explained that similar to paved stone, it softens with time and is not ADA-compliant due to the necessity of constantly maintaining the surface. Landscape and design professionals steer their clients away from crushed granite because it does not provide ADA accessibility and it begins degrading almost immediately following installation. In response to other questions, Mr. Smith stated that for a normal track surface, rubberized sport track is usually installed over an asphalt base, but can be placed over concrete; ADA requirements were met in Flippen Park’s installation of crushed granite because the primary sidewalks in and around the park are concrete, and the secondary paths inside the park are crushed granite. The Town Council discussed the various surfaces and associated costs. Council Member Grisham voiced his opinion that the safety of the surface is important, and the Town should not have to set aside funds

specifically for surface maintenance. Council Member Gambrell stressed the importance of the pathway's safety in relation to its proximity to the playfield; Kirk Smith stated that the pathway design was shifted south to mitigate safety. Council Member Gambrell remarked that seniors look for a low-impact surface for walking, and regular concrete is not the most low-impact option, but does provide a smooth surface. He asked if the pathway could be extended around the tennis courts to a distance of 1/4 mile, versus 1/6 mile without significant expense. Kirk Smith explained the difficulty in expanding the length of the pathway. Bill Lindley added that extending the distance to 1/4 mile would require reconfiguring the park by moving the Courts and the playground area. Mayor Goodwin stated that as a walker, she measures the amount of time spent walking rather than the distance. She also stated that the decorative concrete crosswalks at Abbott Park so closely resemble bricks that she touched the surface to verify that it was not brick. Council Member Penfold suggested connecting all the pathway areas on the diagram to extend the walkway by the Courts or the field, or both. He added that distance walkers could utilize the track at Germany Park. Kirk Smith verified that a concrete path connects to the sidewalk at the playground area. The Town Council discussed various suggestions to increase the length of the pathway. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight asked about a sidewalk adjacent to Roland Avenue west of the Courts; Kirk Smith explained that the space is inadequate for a sidewalk in that area. The Council discussed various suggestions to increase the width of the area to accommodate a sidewalk. Bill Lindley explained that a sidewalk adjacent to a roadway is required to be 5' wide, and a sidewalk adjacent to a grass-way is required to be 4' wide. Following the discussion, Council Member Penfold asked staff to check if a sidewalk could be placed at the west side of the Courts, and suggested getting a variance to allow a 4' wide sidewalk. Mayor Goodwin suggested that residents can walk on the pathway under the trees without walking onto Roland Avenue. Following the discussion, Mayor Goodwin asked the Town Council Members for their direction to staff regarding the surface of the pathway. Mayor Pro Tem McKnight, Council Member Grisham, and Council Member Penfold expressed a preference for decorative concrete; Council Member Dowler expressed a preference for either plain concrete or decorative concrete; and Council Member Gambrell expressed a preference for plain concrete, with a suggestion that it be made to look more natural, or more "green." Mayor Goodwin advised the staff that she is fine with plain concrete or decorative concrete, as both are safe. The direction to the staff is to utilize plain concrete or decorative concrete for the surface of the pathway.

REPORTS

"Review and discuss the Financial and Investment Report for the period ending December 31, 2019." No discussion.

"Review and discuss the Financial and Investment Report for the period ending January 31, 2020." No discussion.

"Review and discuss the Financial and Investment Report for the period ending February 29, 2020." Steven Alexander, Director of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the February report, explaining that February is the fifth month of the fiscal year, or 41.7% of the year. General and Utility Fund combined revenues were \$23,633,135, or 64.0% of the annual budgeted amounts. Combined expenses and encumbrances were \$16,516,234, or 44.4% of the annual budgeted amounts. Property tax revenues were 99.7% of the year-to-date projection; sales tax revenues were 122.3% of the year-to-date projections; and building permit revenues were 100.9% of the year-to-date projections. General Fund expenditures were 48.9% of the budgeted

amount, which Mr. Alexander explained was partially attributed to one additional payroll during this period. Water sales were \$6,529 more than projected; revenues were up 28.1% when compared to the same period the prior year. Utility Fund expenditures were 34.2% of the budgeted amount. The market value of the Town's investment portfolio as of February 29, 2020, was \$43,784,033, and the total portfolio yield was 1.98%

“Review and discuss the status of the Fiscal Year 2020 Operating and Capital Budget.” Steven Alexander reported that COVID-19 has caused significant impacts to revenue sources resulting from business closures, lower interest rates, and operational adjustments that are slowing or reducing other revenue sources. Forecasting end-of-year projections is made difficult by ever-changing data. As such, the report is made using conservative estimates. Sales tax revenues have been the most-impacted source of the Town's revenue, due to the closure of retail stores, restaurants, and clubs. The Town received a modeling tool that enables forecasting by sector; by utilizing this tool and calculating month by month, the projections result in a shortfall in sales tax revenue of \$607,000 compared to the 2020 Budget. May sales tax remittances will reflect the impact of the Shelter in Place Order; June remittances will provide a clearer picture, as sales tax remittances lag behind two months. Mr. Alexander predicted that sales tax revenues could increase when people are able to go back to work, patronize restaurants, and shop in retail stores. Revenues from Municipal Court fines are experiencing the second largest loss in revenues, at \$564,000 below budgeted projections. Revenue from interest income is easier to predict, because interest rates are known; however a shortfall of \$47,000 is anticipated. At this point, Mr. Alexander estimated the total loss in revenues at \$1.5 million, which could change when better data is available. Mayor Goodwin commented that this provides an opportunity to see how sales tax revenues from online purchases may be remitted to the Town or to the locale of the seller. Pursuant to the Dallas County Order, building permits may be issued only for new construction, most likely based on the work area being open, rather than in an enclosed existing home; new construction permits are behind budgeted projections at \$187,000. According to Mr. Alexander, these projections are very rough estimates based on limited data in a dynamic environment.

Steven Alexander emphasized that the Town is financially sound and should be able to work through these shortfalls. Mr. Alexander presented several potential adjustments that could mitigate the projected shortfall. The excess Fund Balance in the General Fund, which would normally be transferred to the Capital Projects Fund at the end of the year, is \$750,000 above the ideal Fund Balance. The \$3,000,000 transfer to the Capital Projects Fund could be reduced. Staff is identifying adjustments within their departments to reduce expenditures. If further adjustments are needed, Mr. Alexander stated that there is room in the Budget beyond these identified potential adjustments. Council Member Penfold complimented a great job in explaining and identifying possible solutions; he encouraged staff to continue monitoring every month to determine other possible adjustments. Council Member Dowler remarked that the current situation represents a decrease in revenue related to the economic situation, rather than a loss.

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 in the 4200 block of Oak Lawn Avenue.*

2. *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 at 2500 Conveyor Lane in the City of Dallas.*

Mayor Goodwin recessed the study session at 9:05 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, to wit: (1) a parcel of land owned by the Town in the 4200 block of Oak Lawn Avenue and (2) a parcel of land owned by the Town at 2500 Conveyor Lane.

Mayor Goodwin closed the closed session at 9:32 a.m. and reconvened the study session in open session. No final action, decision, or vote was taken during the closed session.

OPEN SESSION

1. *Pursuant to Section 551.072 of the Texas Government Code, the final action, decision, or vote regarding 1. above, shall be made, if any.*

On a motion by Council Member Penfold, seconded by Council Member Dowler, the Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance No. 2062 authorizing the sale of Town rights-of-way at 4200 Oak Lawn and approving all other necessary action to affect the sale.

2. *Pursuant to Section 551.072 of the Texas Government Code, the final action, decision, or vote regarding 2. above, shall be made, if any.*

Mayor Goodwin asked the Council for a final action, decision, or vote, to which there was no response.

Mayor Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

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

BY:



Margo Goodwin
Mayor

ATTEST:



Gayle Kirby
Town Secretary