



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN WORKSHOP
JANUARY 23, 2020 - 2:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Doug Nodine
Martha Pittman

Staff Present

Terry Lannon, Parks & Recreation Director
Sandra Smith, Town Clerk
Sean Taylor, Planning Director
Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sam Anders, Finance Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Councilman George McClellan moved to approve the meeting agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

3. DISCUSSION/ADOPTION OF 5-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Mayor Schneider said a follow-up meeting could be held on February 19 if needed, then turned the meeting over to Town Manager Bill Bruce.

Bruce noted several items in the meeting packet, which are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. The items included the current 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that was adopted in January 2019 and a set of papers from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (including a prioritized list of recommendations, the Action Implementation Plan-Appendix D from the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, a proposed layout of improvements on the Whitaker property, and a proposed layout of improvements at Oak Ridge Town Park), the 2019-20 Budget Message, the 2019-20 budget review showing year-to-date figures, the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan implementation schedule, and the proposed Pedestrian Facilities from the Town's Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

Councilman McClellan asked when work on the NC 68/NC 150 intersection was supposed to begin, and Bruce said in spring 2022. Council agreed by consensus to move that project to fiscal year 2021-22.

Finance Officer Sam Anders highlighted the 2019-20 budget versus actual and projected end-of-year budget figures. He noted a recurring item would be the debt service on the property purchased from Frank and Claudia Whitaker, or roughly

\$250,000 per year; Bruce suggested the amortized figure for the debt service be placed on the CIP each year. Schneider asked about funds set aside for park capital improvements, capital park infrastructure and capital park equipment. Anders explained that the Town had set aside restricted funds for several projects a few years prior to prevent the State from being able to seize that money to balance the State budget. Restricted funds were a way to do that. Restricted funds had been used for park infrastructure improvements, which had caused that line item to dwindle down. A restricted \$25,000 for sidewalks was used in 2016. Anders added that although State statute required only 8 percent of a year's expenditures be kept in reserve, the Council had determined several years prior that it would maintain a year's worth of its typical expenditures in reserve.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman asked what the procedure for removing money from the restricted fund was, and Anders said it would require a majority vote of Council.

Bruce said the fund balance projection for the end of the current fiscal year was \$3.1 million. He said if Council wanted to continue the policy of restricting one year's operating costs, that would bring the fund balance down by roughly \$1.1 million to \$2 million. He asked Anders how much would be added to the current fund balance if the Town elected to do no capital projects in the upcoming year; Anders said approximately \$500,000 if all other factors remained exactly the same, which does not include the debt service.

Bruce reiterated that the CIP is not a budget or a budget ordinance; it is simply a plan to give guidance to Council and staff. He said it would not become an ordinance until it is incorporated into the annual budget.

Bruce said capital projects had been basically divided into three areas – parks and recreation, sidewalks, and other projects.

Council began by discussing parks and recreation projects and what would be required if a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant were applied for and obtained. Parks & Recreation Director Terry Lannon explained that PARTF awards matching grants up to \$500,000. The grants are awarded based on a point system, with the most points given for items not currently available at the site. Once awarded, grant projects must be completed within 3 years. Bruce pointed out that there could be economies of scale for items such as grading done at the same time.

Council also discussed a park security system, for which \$100,000 is included in the State budget whenever it is adopted. Councilman McClellan and Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman debated whether spending the money on cameras or some other type of system was the best way to make the park secure.

Council also discussed the proposed veterans memorial to be placed on the former Whitaker property.

Discussion then ensued about the possible rehabilitation of the former Chester Redmon house. Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman said he realized it was a sensitive issue, but he did not think the fact that something was old was always a reason to preserve it. He said if the Town was going to spend \$200,000, he wondered if the money would be better spent elsewhere.

Mayor Schneider disagreed, saying there was a misconception about historic structures that they had to have significant architectural significance. She said the fact that the Chester Redmon house was the last standing farmhouse on what was a large farm gave it historic resonance. She said the recent park survey of residents indicated citizens were strongly in favor of saving the structure, and to her, Council's responsibility was to restore and find a new use for the house.

Councilman McClellan said the structure could become a community center of sorts, and Councilwoman Pittman said although she liked preservation, there had also been strong public support for stabilizing the structure for public use.

Bruce reminded Council that it had established a subcommittee, which did a lot of analysis of the structure. He added that the park survey indicated there was support for using the building for a community center or meeting space.

Councilman Nodine said at the outset of the meeting, Council had determined it would spend around \$500,000, and it was now considering spending \$200,000 for rehab of the Chester Redmon house, which was just one project.

Planning Director Sean Taylor said the Council might consider expanding the structure, and that it could still meet the character of the Historic District.

After additional discussion, Council tentatively prioritized the following projects:

FY 2020-21

Debit service (former Whitaker property)	\$ 266,400
Former Whitaker property site development	\$ 350,000
Former Whitaker property restrooms/parking	\$ 450,000
Mountains-to-Sea Trail Phase 2a	37,500
Chester Redmon House rehabilitation	<u>\$ 100,000</u>
Approx.	\$1,200,000-\$1,300,000

FY 2021-22

Debt service (former Whitaker property)	\$ 255,600
Mountains-to-Sea Trail Phase 2b	37,500
NC 68/NC 150 intersection improvements	\$ 400,000
Sidewalk-NC 150	\$ 325,000
Walkways	<u>\$ 250,000</u>
Approx.	\$1,268,100

FY 2022-23

Debt service (former Whitaker property)	\$ 244,800
Mountains-to-Sea Trail Phase 3	65,000
Playground/picnic area OR Multipurpose fields	<u>\$ 300,000</u>
Approx.	\$ 609,800

FY 2023-24

Debt service (former Whitaker property)	\$ 234,000
Mountains-to-Sea Trail Phase 3	65,000
Playground/picnic area OR Multipurpose fields	<u>\$ 300,000</u>
Approx.	\$ 599,000

FY 2024-25

Debt service (former Whitaker property)	<u>\$ 223,200</u>
Approx.	\$ 223,200

Councilman Nodine noted that the Council had talked about tennis courts for several years.

Councilwoman Pittman said most items in the park master plan had been addressed with the exception of tennis courts, an additional baseball/softball field, and a basketball court. She suggested holding off on those for a few years. More discussion ensued regarding the tennis courts.

Bruce suggested he summarize the discussion thus far and distribute it to the Council for review. He said Council needs to discuss sidewalks and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail at the next CIP meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m. Councilwoman Pittman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk

Ann K. Schneider
Mayor