



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 9, 2022 – 3:30 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**

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

*Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the agenda, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

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

Mayor Schneider turned the meeting over to Town Manager Bill Bruce, who presented the approved 2021-22 Capital Improvement Plan and accompanying spreadsheet showing proposed projects for the next 5 years, which are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. Bruce said the figures on the spreadsheet in black ink were all the items approved in last year's CIP, and the figures for the projects printed in red had been updated with more current figures.

Conversation ensued, with Council members weighing in on various projects as well as their timing.

*By consensus, the Council decided to move \$100,000 in order to add a sidewalk on HWY 68 from Linville Road to Fogleman Road to Year 3.*

*By consensus, the Council decided to move all of the \$50,000 Small-Town Development Grant into FY 2022-23 to be used as matching funds for the Veterans Honor Green.*

Parks & Recreation Director Terry Lannon presented a proposed replacement schedule for large equipment that will be needed in the future.

Council then discussed items related to Oak Ridge Town Park. Councilman Kinneman answered questions about the proposal to install Wi-Fi in Oak Ridge Town Park at a cost of \$15,000.

*After discussion, Council agreed by consensus to include the Wi-Fi project in the current (FY 2021-22) budget year, which will require a budget amendment.*

Council will be required to vote on a contract, which will include an exact cost.

*Council decided by consensus to remove the splash pad, which had been included in the CIP beyond Year 5.*

*Councilman Doug Nodine made a motion to amend the agenda to move the Public Comments portion of the meeting to allow citizens to speak then. The motion died for lack of a second.*

Council then engaged in a long conversation regarding the Redmon House, its significance in the Historic District, when the proposed project should be undertaken, the cost estimates, what the entire project would entail, how the building might be used and how often, and whether fundraising should be done to help defray the costs. Mayor Schneider suggested delaying the start date of the project for a year and, in the meantime, get a landscaping plan that integrates that corner into the park. She said that the estimated cost for the landscaping plan would be \$45,000 that would require a budget amendment. In the next fiscal year, she suggested planning to start on the project, including work on the septic system and the renovation, with an estimated cost of \$455,000. She added that she thought the cost would be lower if local contractors were used.

Council decided to allow comments from citizens at that time.

- Randy Floss said he thought the structure would barely be used as simply a meeting/event space. He suggested come up with a different concept, such as perhaps offering coffee, smoothies or ice cream and expanding the back of the structure to build an outdoor patio that could be used.
- Danny O'Connor said he had refurbished historic structures in the past and that it looked as if the house was not very well preserved. He said the estimated cost per square foot to rehab the building was a significant cost given that the value of a historic structure is often decreased once the building has been rehabbed.
- John Garrett, co-chair of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, answered questions from the Council regarding how the Board had listed the Redmon House as the #2 priority in the park. Garrett said the decision had come after reviewing surveys and getting input from members of the Board and members of the community. He said he felt the house was an anchor in the community and an entrance to the park. He said perhaps the house could be restored in phases.
- Van Tanner said he had done a survey and 8 of 10 people did not want the project done when they considered it might cost \$500,000.

Schneider clarified that her suggestion to delay the project for a year meant Council could spend the next fiscal year focusing on the construction of Heritage Farm Park and obtaining a landscaping plan to make the area around the Redmon House an appropriate welcome to the park. At the CIP meeting next year, the Council could discuss the Redmon House project again.

*By consensus, Council decided to leave the Redmon House project in FY 2023-24 and to increase the budget for it to \$455,000, which would include \$45,000 to extend the sidewalk and have a landscaping plan created.*

*By consensus, Council agreed to leave the construction of Field 5 (baseball/softball field) in a future year beyond year 5 (FY 2027-28).*

Council discussed consideration of expanding the parking lot on Lisa Drive, with Parks & Recreation Director Lannon citing concerns with safety traffic when the park was full.

*Council agreed by consensus to add the item to year 3 (FY 2024-25). Also by consensus, Council agreed to move small picnic shelters in year 4, since they had not been included on the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board's priority list.*

*After discussion, Council agreed by consensus to move shade structures for playground equipment out a year, with \$30,000 being moved to year 2 (FY 2023-24) and \$20,000 to year 3.*

#### **4. DISCUSSION OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) AND SMALL-TOWN DEVELOPMENT GRANT FUNDING ALLOCATION**

*By consensus, Council agreed to apply all the ARP money the Town was to receive toward development of Heritage Farm Park.*

Council then discussed whether it would be best to borrow the remaining funds for construction at Heritage Farm Park or to remove money from the restricted fund balance. Finance Officer Anders said current interest rates were favorable at 2.39 percent. He said the Town was currently approved to borrow up to \$3.25 million, but it would basically get market rate even for a smaller amount. He said that would allow Council to keep from pulling \$855,000 out of the fund balance, as was originally planned, leaving that money to be used for other purposes. He said borrowing \$1.3 million and using the \$1.7 million in ARP funds that the Town would receive, and the \$50,000 Small-Town Development Grant would cover most of the estimated cost of park construction.

Without a loan, Bruce said the Town would need to unrestrict funds by year 3.

Schneider asked if it would be better to show as a loan, and Bruce replied that the Town could add in debt service for Heritage Farm Park for \$150,000 for a ballpark and then the fund balance would be \$1.5 million.

Pittman added that by year 3 Council would probably know what the Town would need for water so that a decision could be made to whether comfortably to unrestrict the water funds or not.

*Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a motion to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as presented, and Council McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

*Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to allocate 100% of the ARP to construction of Heritage Farm Park and 100% of small-town development grant of \$50,000 as the matching fund to the Veterans Honor Green for FY 2022-2023, and Councilman McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**5. DISCUSSION / ADOPTION OF POLICIES REQUIRED TO RECEIVE ARP FUNDS**

- A. Micro-Purchasing policy
- B. Conflict of Interest policy
- C. Procurement policy

Bruce said that all 3 policies needed to be approved by Council in order to be in compliance to receive ARP funds. He said that the School of Government was recommending that the Micro-Purchasing policy be approved because it provided the Town more flexibility with bidding out projects.

Schneider said that based upon Councilwoman Pittman's conversation with Town Attorney Michael Thomas regarding the Conflict of Interest policy that the last sentence in section 3.D. could be deleted.

*Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the Micro-Purchasing policy, the Conflict of Interest policy and the Procurement policy, and Councilman Nodine seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**7. COUNCIL COMMENTS / OTHER STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES**

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman asked if Council should begin thinking about reevaluating strategic plan priorities when it came to activity around HWY 68/I-73 with the potential of 1,000 people affecting Oak Ridge. He said if the Town could grow in population by 25% in a span of two years he wondered if the Town should consider proactively acquiring land and being more aggressive with the Village Feel Guidelines. He suggested that Council have a strategic planning meeting sooner than later to address some of these concerns.

Schneider said that the Village Feel conversation would be a great time to discuss a lot of concerns that Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman had raised. She said that she would be happy to move up the strategic planning workshop but that might be difficult to do before August given Council members' travel schedules. Schneider encouraged Council to think about whether or not they would like to beef up the Village Feel Guidelines, and if so to begin thinking of specifics.

Councilwoman Pittman said that the Town might want to know how many apartment units were being planned for the area near HWY 68/I-73. She said that there were a lot of apartments that could not be seen from Hwy 68, and wondered what the demographics of the residents would be.

*Councilman McClellan made a motion to have the Strategic Planning Workshop in August 2022.*

*Councilman McClellan withdrew his motion.*

*By consensus, Council agreed to schedule the Strategic Planning Workshop in August 2022.*

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

*Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m., and Councilman Doug Nodine seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

