

Town of Mineral Springs  
Town Hall  
3506 S. Potter Road  
Town Council  
Special Meeting  
May 4, 2015 ~ 6:00 PM

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*Minutes*

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The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Special Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2015.

**Present:** Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Janet Critz, Councilwoman Valerie Coffey Councilman Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Melody LaMonica, Councilwoman Peggy Neill, Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks and Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector Janet Ridings.

**Absent:** Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton.

**Visitors:** Dan Blackman, Charles Bowden and Randi Gates.

With a quorum present Mayor Frederick Becker called the Special Town Council Meeting of May 4, 2015 to order at 6:10 p.m.

**1. Opening**

- Mayor Becker welcomed everyone to this special meeting of the town council of the Town of Mineral Springs which was strictly for park updates and input with Stewart.
- Councilwoman Critz delivered the invocation.
- Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Discussion with Stewart on Proposed Downtown Park Design**

- Mayor Becker introduced Mr. Dan Blackman (Project Manager) and Randi Gates from Stewart.
- Mr. Blackman explained that he would give the council a rundown of any new items that they have, give them any information that they can provide from the last session, note where we are with our schedule and then afterward he would open it up to discussion to get more feedback (new ideas and thoughts). Mr. Blackman further explained that last time it was a conceptual plan to help them understand the first draft of this. Now they would like to get council input back again to make sure that they are headed off in the right direction to move forward with construction drawings.
- Mr. Blackman provided the council with an agenda that he had prepared and would be going by for this session.

**I. Disability Rights and Resources**

- Mayor Becker has contacted the organization. Stewart wants to make sure that they get their plans in front of that organization to make sure that

everyone is aware of what we are doing and that we are in adherence with the ADA guidelines. Mr. Blackman believes they are pretty well versed with the process and with the guidelines; it affects every project that they work on, but it also good to have a second set of eyes to look over things. In our particular case we have no fall zones, because we have a very flat site. There are no topography issues. Mr. Blackman didn't think that they were going to find anything that is going to be prohibitive on the plan that we've got right now, but to make sure that we are covering all the bases and make it as inclusive as we can Mr. Blackman is always willing to hear the experts' opinions.

- The plan is to get us to a point that our construction drawings have started and knowing what the Disability Rights and Resources (DRR) are going to look for that we have enough information to provide to them to make the review worthwhile. We are looking for the end of May or early June to be able to get the plans to the point that it would be worthwhile for their review.

## **II. Park Maintenance**

- Mr. Blackman has provided Delores [Taylor] at Taylor & Sons Lawn and Landscaping with the conceptual plan to get a price range for maintenance and was given a number; however, he had some follow-up questions for Ms. Taylor before he presented that number to the council.

## **III. Site Survey**

- The survey is expected to be finished up on May 8<sup>th</sup>. From what Mr. Blackman has seen so far it primarily looks very sharp; they have picked up all the areas.

## **IV. Schedule**

- The schedule has been updated; Item #A (Kick-off Meeting) and Item #B (Public Input Session) are occurring tonight. They are shooting for May 14<sup>th</sup> (the next town council meeting) to have the conceptual plan review to update all of the information gathered tonight. Construction documents will be taking the latter half of May through June/July. Item #E is the DRR review, which will be about mid-way through and then they will start in with permitting and bidding. They are shooting for September 21<sup>st</sup> for the construction start date (just after the festival).

## **V. Plan Review**

- The rough dimensions are just over 300' x 50' or 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of an acre. Mr. Blackman pointed to the park diagram and referred to the top of the plan showing town hall with the parking area and along the park property with the existing cedars and oak trees. The walking path is 365 linear feet; it would take approximately 14.5 laps to make a mile. The proposed play structure seems to serve a multitude of ages; it is rated for the 5 year old to 12 year old group, but it also has low enough decks to accommodate younger children. The site furnishings are split rail fences, wooden-backed benches and wood-lined trash receptacles to give it more of a rural character; make it feel as though it is following the parameters of "Conservation by Design".

The site is heavily planted with perennials, shrubs, lawn spaces and ornamental trees to make it feel as though it is part of a downtown park; it needs to have some of that character of color and splash to make it feel like a “little bit of a garden” and also as a walking exercise opportunity. They have shown a fountain (this would have to be something off the shelf as budgeted at this point) that does not have direct plumbing, so it would have to be refilled manually, but it could have power to circulate a fountain spray. There are plans for a temporary restroom; this is in anticipation of a need to make sure that there are adequate services on the property while folks are at the park. It was noted that the town has plans to update the stone building and would add a restroom at that point; the temporary restroom would go away. They have put a walkway with striped lines in the parking area to connect into the park; they would remove the curb, add a walkway with a flared section of accessible ramp connecting the parking area. Mr. Blackman noted that the town council should be aware that there will be one parking space missing that they have currently; it would be adjacent to the planter island that is there. Out towards the front of the property the loop trail would join back to the sidewalk; the sidewalk will be extended along the face of the property up to the easement (south of the park).

#### **VI. Park Amenities**

- Mr. Blackman explained that making sure that there was senior exercise/play equipment stemmed for a conversation/presentation that was provided to Mayor Becker by the Union County Park and Recreation Commission. The response was overwhelming that there is a high demand within the county and surrounding communities to provide a heavier level of senior activities in the form of exercise machinery, which may be added to the walkway. It is the intent of Stewart that the walkway will serve as an exercise opportunity, but along the walkway or over towards the playground structure there may be additional equipment that is primarily used by seniors; the equipment that has been looked at is for ages 13 and above for all abilities and disabilities. Mayor Becker added the disclaimer that this [the exercise equipment information provided to the council] was sent to him on Friday by Union County Parks and Recreation Director Bill Whitley; it was excerpts from a catalog of equipment suppliers that sells 50+ targeted equipment. Mayor Becker further explained that he had searched out their full online catalog and put together a couple of representative items and forwarded it to Mr. Blackman. Mr. Blackman further explained that there are multiple stations that are available, which all focus on different needs and different exercise options. While Mr. Blackman was not suggesting that the town go with this particular company, he explained that they primarily focus on this kind of equipment, which is meant to be durable long-lasting exercise equipment. Instructions are provided on a panel that sits next to each item and for the “young at heart” they have a “QC” code where you can scan it in to get to their website to watch a video for instructions. The price range (without installation) is between \$1,500 and \$6,500.
- Councilwoman Critz noted that it was mentioned multiple times in our survey that people wanted to see more things available to older citizens in the

community. According to the Council on Aging in Union County, Union County itself is aging faster than the North Carolina State average. For some reason Mineral Springs residents are aging faster than the county level, so our number of senior citizens is growing more rapidly than the State/County level. Councilwoman Critz explained that was a little background on why we have had some focus on things for senior citizens to be included in this.

- Mr. Blackman stated that some of the other considerations that need to be considered are: cost and where we are with our budget; spatial considerations, making sure they are truly accessible; additional concrete pads; and connections to each of these items. Mayor Becker commented that it would increase the overall budget and the council may have to consider increasing the budget; the project ordinance allows for a slightly increased budget over what the first proposed budget was.
- Councilwoman Coffey expressed concern for the utilization for this equipment without a park and rec employee overseeing it. After some discussion it was determined that the council would get Attorney Griffin to weigh in on liability and Mayor Becker would talk with our insurance carrier next week to see what their position on it is.
- Mr. Blackman explained that the next item were boulders. It turns out that Mayor Becker has found a couple of boulders that have lost their way and need a home. Mr. Blackman reminded the council of earlier conversations about the concept plan and part of what we are trying to do is respect the slogan "Conservation by Design". We are looking more globally to initiatives with nature; there is a movement afoot that is pointing us away from the standard swing sets and slides that go into playgrounds to log pits and add stacks of lumber and leaves for children to create very intricate spaces. Stewart will suggest something in between with these large boulders that children can climb on and jump off; it's simple and elegant. Mayor Becker mentioned that the rocks are five feet in diameter with a height that reaches his shoulders and weigh approximately 9,500 pounds. Mayor Becker spoke with Mr. McCollum (grading/excavation contractor) and he does not have the equipment to move rocks, but suggested that the town talk with Secret Wrecker and Crane. It might require a fork lift and it might be very expensive. The rocks are available and accessible from a paved road; they are stored at the back of one of the lots [in Harrington Hall].
- Mr. Blackman noted that the next item is shade structures; perhaps we change out some of the trees on the south end of the property to be less ornamental and more shade providing particularly for the seating areas.

## **VII. Utilities**

- Mr. Blackman referred back to the council talking last time about potentially adding security light; however, after speaking with Mayor Becker after the last meeting about how the parking lot lights are shut off and there are no more lights out here as part of the "Conservation by Design" and protecting the night sky, Mr. Blackman wanted to get the council's take on whether we need to light the park. After a brief discussion there was a consensus of the council not to have security lighting or accent lighting.

- Mr. Blackman questioned whether or not there was a need for drinking fountains or hose bibs to manage the establishment of the plant materials or if there was a need/desire to add any electrical outlets to the property. The developed plan includes no irrigation and the water source would be dragging a hose across the parking lot. There was a consensus to get the water utilities done while we are doing the excavation, for both the drinking fountain and some hose bibs to facilitate spot watering of the plantings.
  - Mr. Blackman recapped that his notes included evaluating opportunities to utilize the senior exercise equipment on the plan to see how they fit in focusing primarily on stationary items and also asking the attorney to take a look at what the liability of those concerns are for that equipment. The notes for the boulders were that they would be considered, but it would be based on cost for transport. The security lighting and accent lighting was decided against. Electric service for the fountain can be pulled from the rock building. The water items will be included on the plan as well.
  - Mayor Becker mentioned putting in a picnic table in one of the more shaded areas among the trees instead of a couple of benches. In addition, since the town will still be using the easement until the road gets developed we might want to plan to have a couple of 10' wide entry areas instead of that whole 300' strip being a "wall of gardens".
  - Councilwoman Critz questioned if we had one ADA compliant picnic table could we have one that was not that could be placed in between some trees off the walkway. Mayor Becker responded that Julia and Donna can certainly weigh in on that to make sure we are doing it right for DRR.
  - Councilwoman LaMonica questioned if there was a way from a funding perspective for residents to buy a tree or something and donate it. Mayor Becker offered that a bench would get a plaque on it or they could purchase bricks that would go around the fountain. Laser etched bricks can be purchase/shipped for \$19.00 each and sold for \$50.00 in order to get some funding. Mr. Blackman explained that they are working on a park in Huntersville right now that is anticipating selling at least 500 bricks and the contractor for the project will ultimately set all the brick. The town would have to purchase, handle and manage the advertisement for selling or purchasing and orchestrating the brick being cut and delivered to the site.
- Mayor Becker announced that the council would recess until 7:15 p.m.
  - **Councilwoman Critz made a motion to recess the meeting and Councilwoman Coffey seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

*Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, LaMonica and Neill*  
*Nays: None*

### 3. **Public Input**

- The meeting was resumed at 7:18 p.m. and Mayor Becker turned the meeting back over to Mr. Blackman to explain how we were going to do this and the council would come out from behind the bench to have this more like an open house.
- Mr. Blackman introduced himself and Randi Gates and stated that they were both from Stewart; both are land planning and design professionals. Mr. Blackman

explained that he was the project manager for the development of the park concept plan and would also carry it through construction documents and then helping the town deliver it to a contractor for bidding; he will then oversee the construction from an observation standpoint.

- Mr. Blackman described the project to the audience and explained what they would like to do is ask them to participate in this planning effort. Plans were laid out on the table for the audience to scribe on (notes, ideas and thoughts). Comment cards were also made available for participants to give any new ideas/thoughts, new components or activities that haven't been thought of that they might want to participate in on the property.
- During this segment the public and council mingled around the tables discussing the plans and talking with Mr. Blackman and Ms. Gates.
- Mr. Charles Bowden of 6409 Pleasant Grove Road insisted that "Public Comments" was offered as part of this meeting and demanded that he be allowed his three minutes. The council agreed to allow Mr. Bowden three minutes of public comment.

#### 4. **Adjournment**

- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** to adjourn and **Councilwoman Critz** seconded. *The motion passed unanimously as follows:*

*Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, LaMonica and Neill*

*Nays: None*

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.
- The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

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Frederick Becker III, Mayor