

Town of Spring Lake
Board of Aldermen Workshop
Municipal Building
300 Ruth Street
Spring Lake, NC 28390

September 14, 2009

MINUTES

5:00

p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a workshop in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Municipal Complex with Mayor Ethel T. Clark presiding.

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem James O'Garra
Alderman Richard Higgins
Alderman Napoleon Hogans
Alderwoman Nellie McCoy
Alderwoman Fredricka Sutherland

Others Present: Allen Coats, Interim Town Manager
Daniel Gerald, W&WR Director
Paul Hoover, Director of Inspections
Ken Metcalf, Recreation Director
Rhonda Webb, Town Clerk

The purpose for this workshop was to discuss concerns in the Recreation and Water Resources Departments.

(A copy of the agenda is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment one.)

Recreation Department.

A. Updates

a. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant for Mendoza Park.

We did not receive funding from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for the Mendoza Park Project. 80 projects applied for the funds and only 20 projects were awarded. Out of the 80 projects we ranked 54. We will get help on how to improve our application for next time.

b. Mutzberg Property.

We are still trying to get an access point for the Mutzberg Property. The access point is required prior to receiving funding from Clean Water Management Trust Fund. There may be an access point from Highway 210 and this is being looked at.

B. Department Overview

Mr. Metcalf reviewed the Recreation Facilities, Key Programs at each facility, Open Activities, Special Events, Town Sponsored Special Events, Other Events/Activities, Other Services and Other Miscellaneous Program Information. It was clarified that the programs listed for seniors is open to anyone; however, the cost is higher for non-

seniors. He also gave an overview of department staff and areas they work. There was some discussion concerning the Program Coordinator's position and the turnover in the Recreation Department.

(A copy of the Department Overview is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment two.)

C. Proposed Updated Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Mr. Metcalf provided the Board with a proposed updated Capital Improvement Plan for Mendoza Park, Town Hall Area Park and Aquatic Center. He stated that changes made had not been seen by the Recreation Advisory Board. For Mendoza Park he proposed to use Field A as a multipurpose field to help our chances of receiving a grant next time around. He also proposed renovations of dugouts, installing fencing, paving the parking lot, installing a walking track, improve the concession and shelter structures, and add more playground equipment and border fencing. It was questioned how the dollar amount was determined and Mr. Metcalf stated that he had a contractor help him with the prices on buildings and on equipment he researched and used his personal knowledge.

Mr. Hoover reported that the Amphitheater has extensive termite damage and is not worth fixing. The bathrooms do not work, the electricity must be redone and there is no potable water supply. He stated that from a Building Inspector's perspective the structure is unsafe. He stated that the Board would have to declare the structure surplus to our needs and requested guidance on how to proceed. The Board's consensus was to have the building demolished.

Mr. Metcalf stated that the tennis courts do receive use but is in need of repair due to tree roots growing into the court. He proposes to remove the trees, remove the existing fencing and asphalt and construct a new tennis court with new fencing. Mr. Hoover also reported that there are several other areas that need trees removed. He stated that we have marketable timber and has spoken with a company who will come in and remove the trees that need to be removed. He stated that he would bid the project and market the timber instead of paying someone to come in and cut down the trees which has been done in the past by the Town. There was concern expressed about cutting old trees and not replacing them with something. He requested guidance from the Board as to how to proceed.

Mr. Metcalf stated that the County School Board owns property near Mae Rudd Williams School. They have agreed to allow the Town to use the property to build a neighborhood park. There is no real recreation in this area of Town and this would provide a much needed service to the citizens of that area. He stated that the School Board will prepare an agreement for Mayor Clark to sign.

(A copy of the CIP detailing the improvements is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment three.)

D. Staffing Level Issues

a. Consideration of Filling Program Coordinator's Position.

Mr. Metcalf stated that the Recreation Department is really feeling the strain of not having a Program Coordinator. He requested the Board's consideration in funding this position. Alderwoman Sutherland stated that citizens have stated that we need this position. She believes the Board needs to look at it and consider funding it to help facilitate and promote programs.

b. Part-time Employee Request for Full-time status

Mr. Metcalf stated that Ms. Logan has been with the Town for 10 years and has consistently worked 40 hours per week. She has requested that her position be considered for full-time status with benefits. Alderwoman McCoy stated that she would like to see part-time employees who work 40 hours be classified as full-time. Alderman Hogans stated that we need to consider all the part-time positions before making a determination. He suggested that Mr. Metcalf bring a staffing proposal based on what he needs and let the Board make a determination at that time. Alderwoman Sutherland stated that we need to be careful about singling out one employee. She feels that if the position needs to be a full-time position then the position should be advertised and filled with the most qualified person. Mr. Coats requested that he and Mr. Metcalf identify positions that need to be full-time along with budget implications and proceed from there with fair and equitable hiring procedures. This will include the Program Coordinator position.

Water Resources Department.

Mr. Gerald stated that he would like the Board to consider rescinding the letter of intent we provided Harnett County. He stated that the information he received from DENR DWQ was that there is no such thing as a non-binding letter of intent when it comes to whether or not you are going to dispose your waste water into a waste water treatment plant. He stated that Mr. Tart gave the Board inaccurate information.

Alderman Higgins stated that he specifically questioned the Attorney about the non-binding letter to make sure we were not agreeing to something we did not intend to agree to.

Mr. Gerald presented a PowerPoint Presentation on regionalization and how it will affect the Town of Spring Lake. There was discussion about where the regional waste treatment plant will be constructed and that regionalization seems to be the path of the future. Mr. Gerald stated that other municipalities who regionalized are not happy because they did not receive what they thought they would receive. It was questioned if we had done our homework regarding the cost of both options because we will at some point either have to connect to a regional plant due to outgrowing our capacity or expand our plant. Discussion included the fact that if we do not have money to pay for connecting to the regional plant then how will we have the money to expand our plant when we get to that point. Long term costs need to be determined.

Mr. Gerald stated that the Plant Analysis Study that is being done through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) will answer all the questions that the Board has raised. He provided a preliminary engineering report to the Board. Several Board members asked about information they had received concerning signing the letter of intent and whether that would keep the Town from obtaining grants in the future.

Alderman Hogans requested clarification on whether the Board is being requested to rescind the letter of intent that was sent to Harnett County. Mr. Coats stated that he is not recommending at this time to rescind the letter because we do not have all the information we need right now. He is basing his opinion about the letter of intent on the advice from the Town Attorney at the meeting where Mr. Tart gave the proposal and feels that the Board is not locking itself into a permanent situation. Mr. Gerald stated that he is requesting the Board to rescind the letter of intent. Mr. Coats stated that he did not realize this was Mr. Gerald's intent and understood there were questions raised about the letter and the impact it might have on the Town's future funding. He contacted CWMTF and was told that if the Board should decide to connect to the regional plant, they would not fund any future requests. As far as the letter of intent is concerned, the only opinion he has is that of the Town Attorney which was provided at a previous meeting stating that the letter is non-binding.

Mr. Gerald stated that the letter itself does not state that it is non-binding. Several Board members expressed concern about being misled and questioned if there are any detrimental implications of the letter. Mr. Gerald clarified that the letter does not bind Spring Lake to go into the regional plant but it does allow Harnett County to say, when they go to solidify their flow that they have an additional 1.5 MGD from Spring Lake and here is the letter. His concern is that when we go to get funding for our facility it looks like we have already regionalized with another facility. Mr. Coats stated that he had been assured by CWMTF that the non-binding letter of intent would not impact our ability to access funds in the future from them unless we were agreeing to go into the regional plant and shut our plant down. There is a lot of number crunching and assessing before the Board will be asked to make a decision about the waste treatment facility.

During this discussion Mr. Jackson arrived at the meeting. He stated that there should not be any negative implications from the letter of intent so long as the Board does not enter into an agreement with Harnett County. It was determined that we need to move forward with the study. The Board's consensus was to rescind the letter of intent in the Regular Meeting.

(A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation and Preliminary Engineering Report is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment four.)

The meeting ended at 6:55 p.m.

**Rhonda D. Webb, MMC
Town Clerk**

ATTEST:

**Ethel T. Clark
Mayor**