

MINUTES FOR THE THOMASVILLE CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023 AT 4:00 PM AT 7003 BALLPARK ROAD, THOMASVILLE, NC.

Elected officials in attendance: Mayor Raleigh York, Jr.; Mayor *Pro Tempore* Wendy Sellars; and Council Members Ron Bratton; Doug Hunt; Lisa Shell; Jeannette Shepherd; Hunter Thrift; and Payton Williams.

The following staff members attended the meeting: City Manager Michael Brandt; Assistant City Manager Eddie Bowling; Finance Director Thomas Avant; Recreation Director Cory Tobin; Interim Police Chief Dustin Carter; and City Clerk Wendy Martin.

1. **Call to Order** - Mayor York called the Briefing meeting of the Thomasville City Council to order.
2. **Additions and Deletions to the Agenda** – City Manager Brandt asked that item 6. *Discussion of Recreation Programming/Facilities* be moved to item 8, so that the current items 7. and 8. could be discussed first.

Council Member Thrift moved to approve the agenda as amended. Council Member Hunt seconded. *Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.*

3. **Recognitions and Presentations**

- A. **Black History Month** (February 2023)
- B. **National Developmental Disability Awareness Month** (March 2023)

4. **Public Forum** – A public forum will be held at the Council Meeting on February 20, 2023. Sign up sheets will be provided at the meeting.

5. **Public Hearings** – The following public hearings will be held on February 20, 2023:

A. **Request for Rezoning** (Z-23-01)

Applicant: Stephanie Barber
 Owner: Rhonda Murphy
 Location: 107 Leonard St.
 Parcel Number: 16078000D0011
 Existing Zoning: R-6 High Density Residential
 Requested Zoning: OI-CZ Office and Institutional
 Conditional Use: Daycare

The Planning Board held a public hearing on January 31, 2023 and voted unanimously 6-0 in favor of this request because they found that:

- *The site already has structures and land that would be suitable for a daycare;*
- *It is consistent with the 2035 Comprehensive Plan;*
- *The proposed daycare would fit in better with the neighborhood and would be a safe area; and*
- *The rezoning is reasonable and in the public interest due to its consistency with the comprehensive plan and, as a result, its furtherance of the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan.*

B. **Request for Rezoning** (Z-23-02)

Applicant: TSH Acquisition, LLC
 Owner: Scott Y. Curry, Executor under the Last Will and Testament of Elizabeth Clifton Myers (DC, NC File: 21-E-1809)
 Location: 726 Lake Road
 Parcel Number: 1633900000050
 Existing Zoning: RA3 Rural Agricultural & R-10 Low Density Residential
 Parcel Number: 1633900000087
 Existing Zoning: M-1 Light Industrial District
 Requested Zoning: R6-CZ High Density Residential
 Conditions: Uses shall be limited to multi-family residential and permitted accessory uses.

Development

Conditions:

The maximum density shall be 442 units.

Other Conditions:

- 1) The apartment buildings shall be limited to 3 stories and the town home buildings shall be limited to 2 stories;
- 2) Dumpsters shall be screened;
- 3) The recommended improvements found in the TIA submitted with the application shall be constructed by applicant; and
- 4) Fencing is required around all storm ponds.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on January 31, 2023 and voted 4-2 in favor of this request because they found that:

- *Rezoning the property is the highest and best use of the property;*
- *This rezoning does not conflict with the adjacent properties in any way;*
- *The conditional use of the property keeps the area stable and protects the essential characteristics of the area; and*
- *The rezoning is reasonable and in the public interest due to its consistency with the comprehensive plan and, as a result, its furtherance of the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan.*

Interim Police Chief Dustin Carter reported that a traffic study they did on Lake Road in a 35 mph zone revealed an average speed of 42 mph outbound and 41 mph inbound. During a 7-day study, 16,092 cars came in and 16,284 went out.

Council Member Sellars asked what the anticipated change would be after the 442 units were added.

City Manager Brandt advised that the standard estimate is that each additional unit would add 10 trips. It may be a bit more for multi-family housing. Therefore, an additional 3,000 – 4,000 trips could be added on a daily basis, so it would have a substantial impact. However, the Transportation Impact Analysis already has turn lanes into and acceleration lanes out of the development, as well as a left-turn lane into Baptist Children's Home, as required by the NCDOT, since this is a State-owned road. Lighting will also be added, which will help with visibility.

Council Member Williams asked if the pump station would be inspected before the City takes responsibility of it. City Manager Brandt said it would be built to our standard and inspected by our engineers.

C. "Generic" First Public Hearing – North Carolina Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant Program

City Manager Brandt explained that this is required annually to get the public's input regarding the CDBG program, in order for the City to be able to hear requests for CDBG grants throughout the year.

6. Discussion of Recreation Programming/Facilities - Cory Tobin spoke regarding:

A. Old Plant B Site – On January 24th, there was a meeting at the Bethel Church for the public's input regarding the Old Plant B Site. This site is in a floodplain for the 100 year and 500 year levels.

City Manager Brandt explained that this meant there is a 1.0% (100) or 0.5% (500) chance that this site will flood every year. He added that floodplains can change, and there is a lot of potential state and federal funding available for environmental improvements.

Mr. Tobin advised that the public would like it to be used for an 11-acre public park space near the heart of town.

This couldn't happen until after NCDOT straightens out the sharp curve on Fisher Ferry Road in that area. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by 2024.

He said the public wanted green space, trails, open space, gathering areas and a creekside park.

He explained that this would be a costly project, but there is potential that we could receive grant funding and some environmental money and local funding, as well, if the City were willing to provide matching funds.

He said there aren't a lot of lakes/creeks in this area, so PTRC recommended getting the cement industrial walls out of the creek and restoring it back to its normal state.

He also said it was suggested that the rail trestles be left and perhaps turned into a bridge.

Mr. Tobin was happy to report that the Baptist Children's Home gave permission for the public to come on their campus. They have a wonderful wooded area that would be a fabulous part of the trail system. That would give another area for people to get on the walking trail.

NC State's RRS helps local governments find grants. That would be necessary, if Council goes forward with this project, because it will be very expensive.

City Manager Brandt explained that after next year, the Aquatic and Community Center won't take up as much of the 3-cent tax set-aside for Recreation, so reserves will start to grow. Council may want to begin planning for this project now so that they will be ready when the opportunity arises.

Mr. Tobin said that early planning could also help acquire grant money. They like to give money to people who are actively working on a project. He added that there are a lot of opportunities for 'urban stream restoration,' and Plant B would qualify for that.

Council Member Williams asked if we have to wait to plan anything until after the Fisher Ferry road straightening. Mr. Tobin said the meeting on February 14th would give him more information. He added that, "If funding comes, we have to be ready for matching grants." Therefore, it would be helpful if the planning began as soon as possible.

Mr. Tobin said Recreation is accomplishing great changes! In 2019/2020, the gym renovations were completed. In 2023, the Aquatic and Community Center will be completed. It is a good time for Council to decide what they want to do next. He suggested using some ARPA funds for landscaping to enhance the facilities that already exist. Within a month, he is going to request quotes for services and interview architects for ideas. He plans to review existing conditions and survey where dog parks can go.

He doesn't plan on letting Recreation's Master Plan sit on a shelf and get ignored. He will be reaching out to the community and stakeholders to see what they want. Then, in 4 – 5 months, the plan can move forward.

Council Member Bratton wanted the tennis courts to be updated to pickleball courts. Mr. Tobin said that could be done if they were resurfaced and the fencing and lighting were fixed. He said it would also be possible to fit three pickleball courts on one tennis court and leave the other as a tennis court.

Both Council Members Bratton and Thrift wanted to fix up current spaces and discuss new ones. Mr. Tobin said other things that need improvements are our 40-year-old ball field at Myers Park and the metal building from the 1940's at Carver Park. It has a brick façade, but it needs repair.

Recreation Director Tobin said greenways and trails are a definite "wish," but they would be expensive. The ultimate goal is to get a sidewalk that connects with the greenway that goes to the YMCA for a 3-mile walking path. That would enable the City to have 5Ks and other events.

Council Member Bratton asked how we could get to the trails if the right-of-way is across private property? Mr. Tobin said that is an issue to consider.

B. Finch Field Update

City Manager Brandt asked Cory to advise how the City could get more use out of Finch Field.

Recreation Director Tobin said this baseball field can be used for many things, in addition to the Hi-Toms. JuCo (Junior Colleges) have expressed interest in using the field in the spring; colleges in the summer; and high school in the fall. It could also be used for drive-in movies and weekend tournaments. He did say it is important for the field to be cared for properly, so we wouldn't want to use it for carnivals or anything. And it gets winterized in the winter, so there aren't any heated bathrooms or activities on the field in the winter.

Wilson-Flemming Stadium, a similar stadium to Finch Field, gets paid \$17,000 annually for the use of their stadium from May 15 to July 31st. That's a base fee of \$9,500, a flat \$4,600 for utilities, \$2,900 for concessions. They charge additional fees for fall. Our current lease is from May 1st to October 1st for the stadium and field, plus the building 12 months a year.

City Manager Brandt said our current lessee is also making money on our field by subletting it out at much higher rates.

Mr. Tobin said we could get rid of a single lessee, but then we would be responsible for maintaining the field all the time. He said, "It is possible, but it would take work."

Council Member Bratton was in favor of getting rid of solo lessees and taking back the stadium, as well as all aspects of the golf course. He asked why we give so much for so little.

City Manager Brandt said if we took back the fall season, perhaps we could get help from the County to maintain it and Cushwa Stadium, since they fund the stadium in Lexington.

Council Member Hunt thought we should charge our lessee more for his exclusive use in the fall.

Mr. Tobin said we currently only charge \$300 per day, plus extra for lights, if needed. He feels we would have more opportunities out there if it were available.

Council Member Thrift asked him to continue negotiations.

Council Member Bratton said we need to get compensated at a fair rate.

Mr. Brandt said our lessee wanted a lease for 10 years with exclusive use all-year. That was denied to him. We are now negotiating a 3-year lease. Another question addressed by the new lease is what the lessee is allowed to do with our facility.

Mr. Tobin pointed out that we currently can use the field even during "exclusive" time – with notice.

Mr. Brandt said he would continue negotiations.

The following items were put on the Consent Agenda by the Council members for consideration on February 20, 2023:

7. Consent Agenda

- A. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Briefing Meeting on 01/09/23
- B. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Council Meeting on 01/17/23
- C. Consideration of General Fund Budget Amendment: Project Rabbit (2023-P8-01)
- D. Consideration of CDBG Grant Project Ordinance – Project Rabbit
- E. Consideration of CDBG Grant Project Ordinance – Project JT
- F. Consideration of ARPA Grant Budget Amendment – Financial Analyst Position

8. Regular Agenda - No items were put on the Regular Agenda.**9. Committee Reports and Appointments, Mayor's Report and Appointments, City Manager's Report, City Attorney's Report – To be done on February 20, 2023.****10. Closed Session – on February 13, 2023 for Personnel**

Council Member Thrift moved to go into closed session for personnel matters. Council Member Shepherd seconded. *Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.*

They returned to open session. No action was taken in closed session.

Council Member Sellars moved to return to closed session for personnel matters. Council Member Shepherd seconded. *Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.*

They returned to open session. No action was taken in closed session.

11. Additional Items – N/A**12. Adjournment – Council Member Sellars moved to adjourn. Council Member Hunt seconded. *Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.***




Raleigh York, Jr., Mayor



Wendy S. Martin, City Clerk