Mayor and Council Workshop
6 p.m. October 8, 2024
Law Enforcement Center, and livestream

MINUTES

The Holly Springs Town Council met in a workshop session on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at the Law Enforcement Center and via livestreaming. Mayor Mayefskie presided, calling the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established as the Mayor and five Councilmembers were present in the room as the meeting opened.

Council Members Present in the room: Mayor Sean Mayefskie, Mayor Pro Tem Dan Berry, Council members Tim Forrest, Danielle Hewetson, Annie Drees, and Chris Deshazor.

Council Members Absent: none.

Staff Members Present in the room: Randy Harrington, Town Manager; Linda McKinney, Town Clerk (recording the minutes); Daniel Weeks, Assistant Town Manager; Scott Chase, Assistant Town Manager; John Schifano, Town Attorney; Kameron Womack, IT; Jesse Dixon, IT; Corey Petersohn, Director, Budget and Strategic Planning; Tina Stroupe, Director, Finance; Matt Beard, Parks and Recreation; Cassie Hack, Director, Communications and Marketing; Irena Krstanovic, Director of Economic Development; Greg Sponseller, Sustainability Coordinator; Kendra Parrish, Executive Director, Utilities & Infrastructure; Kimberly Keys, Utilities & Infrastructure; Carrie Kennedy, Utilities & Infrastructure; Bhavi Joshi, Utilities & Infrastructure; Elizabeth Goodson, Development Services; Paige Scott, Director, Public Works.

Mayor Mayefskie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Overview: Randy Harrington, Town Manager, gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

2. Eagles Landing Park Design Check-In

Carrie Kennedy, Utilities & Infrastructure, said that the purpose of this item was to provide updates on Eagles Landing Park project and solicit feedback on Council's recommended exterior elevation. She outlined the timeline of what had happened to date, where the project is now, and what items were to come. She said the project is on schedule at this time.

Matt Beard, Parks and Recreation showed the updated site plan, summarizing the amenities that would be included and those that would be bid alternates. He said the public art was something that had received a substantial amount of public engagement and was not a bid alternate. He showed where the three water drop statues would be, and some updates on their wording. He outlined the inspiration given to the architects for the design of the rec center: bald eagle, creeks & springs, wind blowing through trees. He then showed two options for the elevation of the recreation center and walked through how each reflected these sources of inspiration.

Ms. Kennedy gave an overview of the floor plan for the rec center. She said the farmhouse on the property was sold in an open bidding process and will be removed by a professional house moving firm later this month to a place outside of Holly Springs town limits, where it will serve as the primary residence of the purchaser. She asked for Council's preference between the two front elevation/entryway designs.

Council discussed the placement of the town logo, and how a door at the rear would mirror the main entrance. They asked for information on the functionality of the fins and were told that they are fixed, but the way the building is angled they would block the sun and assist in cooling the lobby. They discussed that staff was pursuing naming rights so the building could eventually be named “The so-and-so Recreation Center at Eagles Landing Park.” Council asked about pricing and staff said that materials had not been chosen yet so they did not have any numbers, but the two options would likely cost about the same.

Council’s consensus was to go with Option A.

Ms. Kennedy said next steps would be bringing a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for site grading, utilities, and roadwork to Council at their November meeting, and taking the request for the first half of the Bond to the Local Government Commission in January of 2025.

3. Composting Overview

Greg Sponseller, Sustainability Coordinator, said this item was to respond to Council’s request for information about composting and organics collection options. He defined composting and said benefits to the Town include diverting waste from the landfill, reducing municipal solid waste hauling costs, reducing strain on sewer, pump systems and the wastewater treatment plant, and creating organic fertilizer that can be used locally.

Mr. Sponseller explained what options exist in Holly Springs now and what neighboring municipalities offer. He said we could leverage existing resources without requiring excessive staff time or funding by: updating the website to include educational resources and information about existing collection sites and programs; promoting the County convenience center’s drop-off option; formalizing the Farmers Market drop-off program; promoting the annual County compost bin sale; and exploring partnerships with community experts for resident workshops. He said that future options which would require more resources could include a town-owned drop-off site serviced by a private hauler. This could be at the yard waste convenience center, the Ops Campus or at a park. There could be a curbside residential collection program, serviced either by a private hauler or the Town; or the transfer site could be upfitted to receive and process organic material. Mr. Sponseller asked for Council’s feedback on short- and long-term options.

Council discussed the short-term options, and consensus was to provide education on the website and information about existing resources. They asked staff to continue to explore what would be necessary to do any of the long-term options. Council member Drees added that there will be composting at Sugg Farm as part of the community garden, so that should be integrated into the educational piece.

4. Avent Ferry Road Phase II Update

Kendra Parrish, Utilities and Infrastructure, said this item was to share an update on the state’s Avent Ferry Rd. Phase II widening project and components of an existing municipal agreement between the Town and NCDOT to administer design and construction for the project. She reminded Council that this concerned the area between Ralph Stephens Rd. and the Cass Holt Rd. area, although the Town has explored with NCDOT extending it to Holly Meadow Drive. Ms. Parrish said that this project was included on the 2024-2033 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The proposed cross section for the .69-mile segment between Ralph Stephens Rd. and Cass Holt Rd. includes a 4-lane median divided highway with sidewalk on both sides. The Municipal Agreement between NCDOT and the Town was executed in 2017 and is set to expire in 2025. The current cost estimate provided by NCDOT (100% reimbursement) is $17.3 million, however staff will be meeting with NCDOT soon for a more inclusive final budget. Staff would like to make sure this gets done and paid for by DOT, which means a new Municipal Agreement.

Ms. Parrish outlined the risks and advantages of moving forward. The municipal agreement is likely less than half of the funds needed to complete the project, however, the allocated funds are enough to advance design and right-of-way (ROW). It will require internal resources to manage and deliver the project, but it accelerates design and ROW acquisition and therefore will provide the town with a shovel-ready project for additional funding consideration, and increase the chance of the project being higher on the STIP. Without extending the Municipal Agreement, the committed funding is in jeopardy and the project may fall off the STIP and would likely be delayed to beyond 2029. Reimbursements will occur for project expenses up to $7.3 million without requiring project completion. But NCDOT cannot commit to additional funding beyond the municipal agreement.

Ms. Parrish said that staff recommendation is to move forward with the project design and right-of-way based on allocated funding in the existing municipal agreement. This will position the project to gain priority in the upcoming STIP.

Council asked about the timeline. Ms. Parrish said construction would start in 2027 and complete in 2029. There was discussion of what would happen if certain parcels along the area develop, and that this is a necessary road improvement that cannot wait. Consensus was to pursue this and update the municipal agreement.

Randy Harrington, Town Manager reminded them that part of our posture with NCDOT is that we are advancing the design, but we are not going to fund any part of their road. They need to fund it and fund any cost overruns if we are going to administer it.

5. Downtown Investment Grant (DIG) Policy Finalization

Irena Krstanovic, Economic Development, said that this item was coming back to the workshop at Council's request for final feedback and direction. She said that after the last workshop the three things they heard were altering the targeted industries; make it easier for small businesses; and clarify the application process. The targeted industries had been adjusted to remove Entrepreneurship and combine Arts, Entertainment, and Hospitality into one category. She reminded Council that businesses must fulfill at least 3 additional criteria to be considered. She said the proposed policy looked at two categories of investment opportunities: new construction/renovation or a tenant leasing within an existing building, with the dollar amounts being less for the second category. She walked through the step-by-step process for awarding a DIG, and the differences between the process depending on the amount requested and whether it was new construction/renovation, or a tenant. She said that funds would be earmarked at approval, but not paid out until the final acceptance of public infrastructure (in the case of construction/renovation) or after the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy (in the case of a tenant upfit.)

Council discussed desiring transparency in the applications. They discussed how much was in the PAYGO fund and that awards could be given for partial amounts if the full amount was not available.

Consensus was to move forward.

Ms. Krstanovic said that the policy would be presented to Council at their October 15th meeting for final approval. Once approved, the updated DIG policy and online application would be launched on the Economic Development website.

6. Mayor & Council / Planning Board Joint Meeting Draft Agenda

Elizabeth Goodson, Development Services, said this item was intended to give a brief recap of the recent Planning Board training and to discuss topics for the upcoming Joint Meeting set for October 29th. She said that the Planning Board training centered on three broad areas. First was The Big Picture, which was an overview of the purpose of the Planning Board and its interactions with staff. The second was the Planning Board's role in decision making, and what factors they should consider when making recommendations to Council. The third area was best practices meeting participation, ethics, and communication.

Ms. Goodson said that in setting up the agenda for the Joint Meeting, staff considered what was asked for by Council and submitted a draft agenda that covered three key themes: Information Sharing & Analysis; Decision Making Alignment; and Council Direction for the Planning Board.

Ms. Goodson said that Information Sharing & Analysis could involve discussing available tools and resources; staff reports and consistency analysis; or discussing changes or differences in information received by Planning Board and Town Council.

Council member Deshazor said he was interested in what should Planning Board Reps be presenting when they come before Council so that there is consistency between Planning Board Reps. Council member Drees said that in the notes Council gets from Planning Board it says "we discussed x" but there is no context, so we don't know where they ended up and whether a conclusion was reached or not. Ms. Goodson said that might be an issue with extraction by staff, but it brings up a good point on how we can convey the resolution of discussions. Council member Forrest said if they are looking for Council's opinion, it needs to be consensus or it gets confusing. MPT Berry said the feedback from the training was great and as we go into the next one, he would like to focus on discussion, so the Planning Board gets clear on our focus.

Ms. Goodson said that Decision Making Alignment could include discussing expectations for Planning Board's evaluation and recommendation; the differences and similarities in the scope of review; or discussing when might recommendation and decisions differ. We could also discuss how often staff recommendation doesn't match Planning Board's and why that happens.

Council discussed that Planning Board's feeling that they don't get the same information as Council is more of a level set, and the change in process may clarify that. Council member Forrest said he wants to make sure that the Planning Board feels free to be vocal on their thoughts and processes. Council member Drees said getting Planning Board's approved minutes prior to the Council meeting is an issue. Ms. Goodson said that staff would look into the logistics of that. Council member Forrest said he would like more detailed minutes from Planning Board.

Ms. Goodson said that Council Direction for Planning Board could involve discussing the role of Planning Board's evaluation of development projects when considering areas such as infrastructure impacts, density and housing choices, community perspective, and/or public input. She offered data regarding how often decisions differ and if that is meeting expectations. Sometimes the difference of opinion is a good thing in that they are viewing from a different lens. Planning Board may have questions for Council around this.

Ms. Goodson asked if there were any other topics of interest to Council. She asked if, given the limited time, what Council's priorities were for to focus the discussion.

Council member Drees asked if all the Planning Board was at the training. Ms. Goodson said that most of them were there. Mayor Mayefskie asked if Planning Board meetings were recorded. Ms. Goodson said they have audio used for production of minutes but have not maintained a recording. Council member Deshazor said we will appoint new Planning Board members in January, so it may be worth a shorter session after the new people are appointed. It creates relationships between Planning Board and Council, and that is what makes us better. Ms. Goodson said they used to invite Council to attend their orientation, prior to COVID and there is a great opportunity to reset that as we bring new members on.

Mayor Mayefskie asked if anyone had something pressing before we go into closed session. Council member Drees asked the Town manager if it would be possible to get an update on Composting in 6 months in a Friday briefing or a workshop. Mr. Harrington said staff could do that.

7. Closed Session: The Council entered into closed session, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss three economic incentive packages, and pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss whether to opt out of a class action lawsuit.

Motion by: Forrest
Second by: Hewetson
Vote: Unanimous

Motion to leave closed session was made by Council member Forrest seconded by Council member Deshazor and passed with a unanimous vote.

7. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Council member Deshazor seconded by Council member Drees and passed with a unanimous vote. The October 8, 2024 workshop meeting of the Holly Springs Town Council was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully Submitted on Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

Linda C. McKinney

Linda McKinney
Town Clerk