

MINUTES
TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH
LONG RANGE PLANNING WORKSHOP/SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2010
8:30 A.m.

Members Present

Mayor Ron Klein
Mayor Pro-Tem Lou DeVita
Councilman Bob Bobinski
Councilwoman Karen Joseph
Councilwoman Carol Scott
Councilman Wilson Sherrill

Others Present

Gary Parker, Town Administrator
Kim Cochran, Town Clerk
Donna Rogers, Finance Director
Jeff Curtis, Building Inspector
Chris Barbee, Fire Chief
Lisa Massey, Police Chief
Dustin Graham, Public Works Director

1. FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

Parker discussed information in the packets and the projections for upcoming years. He reminded them these figures were projections only and will be changed as needed.

Scott had questions about the bike and pedestrian paths and the North Shore and Main St. appearance and what the committee had in mind. Parker confirmed they would discuss that further into the meeting under the bike path section.

Parker explained the forecast and mentioned the six firefighters had been added in the 5th year, or possibly sooner. He then asked Fire Chief Barbee to explain his requests. Chief Barbee stated that the idea was to hire three firemen every other year. Right now, there were three being hired with or without the SAFER Grant. They needed them because the town would soon have two stations and adequate staffing was needed to meet requirements. He was concerned that if someone were to go on vacation they would have to shut one station down.

DeVita inquired about the actual figures to date and asked Parker if he had done this projection assuming there would be growth. Parker confirmed he did. Scott too, suggested extreme conservatism and no increase in staffing.

She felt the reevaluation was going to decrease values on higher cost homes, at a greater percentage than

lower to mid-valued housing, which would result in property tax receipts dropping more than we currently project. This will require tax adjustments that will not have an equal impact on our citizens.

Parker said he was projecting roughly the same tax amount for this coming year and next year roughly a 2% increase, then 4% increase each year from there on.

Sherrill felt it was not realistic and Devita agreed that a 2/3% increase projection was not an accurate assumption. This plan was projecting a picture of recovery that they were not certain of. Sherrill stated there was no building going on and the reevaluation was coming up. The market had a supply of 24 to 32 months of re-sales, and many were not listed because people were waiting to see what the recovery would be. When it picked up again it would be resales of homes, not newly built ones.

Parker replied that the initial forecast study for Brunswick County, but not necessarily the state, was going to be better than most other places because of its unique character. He stated he would be hard pressed to find a state that was in a better position or had better prospects for future economic growth. He stressed that these projections were not concrete and he was mindful of the fact that it would have to be revisited and possibly made more conservative.

Scott felt it was imperative that the town not burden the citizens with higher taxes. The Federal government and State were likely to raise taxes, and she did not want local taxes raised also.

DeVita asked if the firefighters grant and vehicle replacement was factored into the forecast. Parker replied it was not. He stated also that neither was the retirement increase because the increase notification came after he had completed the plan.

2. CIP

Parker stated he was starting with the \$8 million to be conservative. The plan shows debt services in addition to other projects. FY 09/10 shows debt service obligations of Fire dept. ladder truck. The upcoming year shows the 10/11 ladder truck debt service and the actual projects for this year are bike trials, sidewalks, street paving, mainland and island resurfacing and sunset blvd. enhancements, brush truck and memorial enhancements. There was discussion of the memorial being moved to a later time.

The County had anticipated sewer moving sooner on the island but it had been adjusted and now they were looking at bidding out and starting September of this year. So the sewer won't be completed until Oct. 2011. Devita felt they should start working on the new restrooms sooner rather than next year.

There was much discussion of improvement plans and changes they may want to consider such as adding \$100,000 to bike path instead of \$10,000 since this project will be started soon. They would also be going after grant dollars to help defray costs.

Council had no major problem with the proposals as it was subject to change when it came time to actually do them. They discussed the Town policy of assessing property owners 100% of original street paving. The town is responsible for the upkeep. Sherrill felt the mainland paving would not happen until the FY 11/12 because of the slowness of the sewer contractor.

Parker then mentioned the 5 acre site proposed for a park. He stated if they proceeded with the 5 acres, he would be applying for PARRTF and CAMA grant, of which each was \$500,000. He was anticipating receiving *at least one*.

Devita asked why the Fire department and Town Hall was in the CIP's as they were debt service.

Parker replied it was, but wanted to show it as it was such a large number. DeVita stated it couldn't be in budgeted in both places, because it was in the expense forecast also. Parker replied he would remove it and then show the additional first year 09/10 and the next years lesser amounts but add it to the fund balance.

3. BUDGET PREPARATION PROCESS

Discussion of how the budget works and how to decide expenditures and revenues. After the discussion of all items, the budget will be changed to fit.

4. BEACH PARKING AND RESTROOM FACILITIES.

Curtis began by agreeing that the signage on the beach was confusing. Council had asked him to pursue restrooms and changing stations and he had three scenarios that would work in the parking area. One would require more land. If they redesigned parking, they could get 116 more parking spaces. There were several options.

Scott spoke of a lot further down that was cheaper than the one they were looking at and it was double the size. She felt that we should consider creating a parking committee to discuss such ideas as improved signage, possible parking fees, parking meters, parking permits, limiting parking in non-regulated areas and other way to improve parking and resolve safety issues..

Joseph stated the first thing they should do was improve the signage.

Council discussed approaching Ed Gore to see if he would consider selling a corner of the pier parking lot for the restrooms as an option. They authorized Parker to make an initial contact with Campbell or Gore. They would put in a number to cover the cost of something they knew they would be doing. Parker suggested holding a workshop to start discussion on how to go forward. Council decided to create a beach parking committee of people from both the island and the mainland to study parking issues and make recommendations to Council. Scott would outline the scope of authority and have a mission statement ready for March's meeting. Council authorized Parker to solicit quotes for potential land purchases and have something ready by April if possible.

5. STREET PAVING SCHEDULE AND COST

Parker provided listing of streets and the order in which they would be paved after sewer comes in.

He also provided the annual routine schedule. Monies were a combination of General and Powell Bill Funds.

12:00 BREAK FOR LUNCH

1:00 RESUME MEETING

6. BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN

Jeff Curtis presented a plan for bike and ped/paths. The cost to Compass Pointe for the survey would be \$27,050 and \$25,000 for the engineer. Council agreed they had been planning this for years so they may as well start now with the work. They recommended approval for Parker to start with the survey and engineering portion as the funds already had been set aside for this. All four phases were shown, with the knowledge that each phase would be done separately. Parker added the order may change based on the sewer construction.

Anita and Leon August (Planning Board Member) were introduced. He and Anita had been diligently working on contacts and grant writing procedures, and finding out what was available. They suggested going ahead with the application process. By the time it was decided in April of next year, they could then go on to the next source. They stressed that the Council should begin now with the \$121,000 they had put in reserves, so they could leap the process by one year. Some grants were just ped paths, some only bike paths, some both. She was taking the gold standard application to begin with, and tweaking it each year to fit each application. She was also taking courses in grant writing.

Anita stated she needed the approval from Council to go ahead and use part of the money set aside, the

manager's approval by Resolution at the March meeting, a formal commitment for matching funds, (usually 20/80) and to Council's agreement to set aside more than the \$10,000 annually they've been appropriating. Curtis confirmed they were ready to begin with the plans.

Council concurred and will add this item to the March Agenda.

7. ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICERS

Chief Massey had requested two additional officers. The Police Dept. has not hired any additional officers since 1999 and the full time resident count had more than doubled. Council discussed the need for more officers. Scott said she would like to see four more officers to deter crime and increase patrols.

8. TOWN CHARTER REVIEW

Parker stated he believed this should be put together in a cohesive manner in the ordinance book like most towns do.

Motion by Joseph to approve the contract with Municode to create and assemble the Charter, Seconded by Scott. Motion carried unanimously.

9. COMMUNICATONS

Joseph stated she had been working with the Town Clerk on various ideas for the website to ensure greater and better communications between the town and its residents. Scott asked that the time allowed to speak at public meetings be increased, that public comments be moved to the beginning of the meetings, and Council answer questions if they came up. Council responded her that they were allowed to set a time limit for comments and discussed the problems that would arise if it became a debate between them and residents. They felt there was a way this could be done differently and better, by other meetings, or a "forum" two or three times a year to hear citizen comments.

Scott inquired about increasing the size of the Council Chambers. Curtis stressed the wall could not be removed as it was a load bearing wall. DeVita raised the question of overflow crowds. Parker verified that the size of our room was sufficient for our population and there were only certain meetings that had overflow. They could certainly hold outside meetings, such as "open house forums" and POA meetings, which were very effective. Also, if they knew a particular meeting was going to be large, it could be moved to another location. DeVita stated it simply was a matter of utilizing our POA's, website, advertising, etc., to get the word out if it's going to be moved. Council decided to track attendance at Council meetings for a years to see if the size of council chambers is in fact an issue. Joseph suggested and discussed many ways and ideas to have informational meetings. Scott said she would draft a plan to set up meet and greet sessions for the public.

10. SEPTIC TANK ORDINANCE/WAIVER OF FEES

Parker confirmed with the State that the abandonment of tanks were neither detrimental nor toxic to the environment as per the State. They leave this decision up to each municipality. Scott, who was concerned about leaving septage in the ground, stated she would research the environmental issues and find out whether or not this is a problem and report to Council on her findings Council agreed to take this up again at the research.

Motion by Scott to waive all permitting fees regarding the connection of sewer *only* in the first year of hook-up. Seconded by DeVita. Motion carried unanimously.

11. DISCUSSION OF ANNEXATION

Discussion of annexing the west side of Sunset Beach that was abandoned. A couple of Council members

still wished to proceed with the annexation of the Calabash side of Sunset Beach up to the river.

12. BOAT RAMP SITE

Parker stated the NC Wildlife had introduced an Interlocal Agreement which made them (Wildlife) responsible for the boat ramp, parking design, mowing, trash pickup, etc. and he felt this was the best way to go. There was discussion of whether the town would have control over the quality of the ramp, such as open hours, and the ability to enforce parking.

Parker replied no, but reminded Council that if we didn't sign it, it made us responsible for everything to do with maintenance and repairs. After more discussion, Council agreed to go with the agreement and authorized Parker to execute the agreement.

DeVita added that a lot of people had expressed "love" for the old bridge, and wondered how a major portion could be incorporated maybe as a fishing pier or something. Saving part of it would do a lot to preserve history. Some had requested pieces of the bridge and the plaque be given to the Ocean Isle Beach Museum. Council was opposed to this as the bridge belonged to Sunset Beach, not Ocean Isle. They stated maybe the Museum could have the lights or something, but was opposed any other major part being donated. Parker was instructed to look further into this and try to have information by March.

13. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn by DeVita, Seconded by Scott. Motion carried.

Adopted this ____ of April, 2010.

TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH

Mayor Ron Klein

Attest

Kim Cochran, Town Clerk

