

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
WORK SESSION AND CLOSED MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 30, 2018 – 5:30 P.M.**

A WORK SESSION AND CLOSED MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA, ON JANUARY 30, 2018 AT 5:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Bradford Stipes; Samuel M. Bishop; Harry Collins; Steve Huppert; Merissa Sachs; Henry Showalter. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Planning Director Andrew Warren; Director of Engineering Wayne Nelson; Assistant Director of Engineering - Land Development and Operations Steve Palmer; Director of Public Works Jim Lancianese; Fire Chief Billy Hanks; Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation Charlton McCoy; Superintendent of Streets Travis Moles.

WORK SESSION

- I. Call to Order by Mayor Barber
- II. Discussions by Mayor and Council Members
 - A. Truman Wilson Property (Future Town Park)

Director of Finance/Treasurer Val Tweedie presented Council with Master Plan Cost Estimates for development plan options for the Truman Wilson Property, as presented by Gay and Neel, Inc., on December 12, 2017. During the December 12th work session, Council requested phasing options and projected costs for development that would give high priority to open space, rectangular ball fields, and an all access playground. In presenting the cost estimates, Mrs. Tweedie stressed that it was important to understand that: (1) the estimates provided were based on concept drawings that had not been fully designed or engineered, and were subject to change, and (2) estimated engineering, architectural, and other professional fees were in the \$1M range and would require an RFP.

Development Option 1 included the amenities highly prioritized by Council, required accessories, mass grading and infrastructure, and soft costs for a total cost estimate of \$16,120,000. Funding sources were estimated to net \$9,000,000, with a net cost to finance of \$7,120,000. Mrs. Tweedie talked about the various options for financing the debt and explained the differences between bond versus bank financing. She noted that interest rates were approximately the same, but bonds cost more to issue, and bank financing offered more flexibility in terms of payoff options. She further noted that the structure of the financing would depend on the outcome of the sale of the outparcels. Included in the cost estimate for each option was a five-year projection of revenue and expenditures that provided the amount of annual support that would be required from the General Fund.

Development Option 2 included most of the amenities in Option 1, but did not include the all accessible playground. The projected budget estimate for this option was \$14,880,000; however, funding was estimated to be approximately \$2M less than in Option 1, because the majority of community contributions/donations/sponsorships were based on the availability of an all access playground. Council agreed to not consider Option 2.

Development Option 3 provided mass grading to the entire site, but utilities to only half the site, no ballfields, and limited access trails and roads. Total project budget estimate was \$8,930,000, and Mrs. Tweedie noted that grant funding would be less due to fewer roads.

Council spent time talking about various details of the park development such as the number of ballfields and the cost of grass versus artificial turf, parking availability, and estimated annual operation and maintenance costs that included additional Parks and Recreation employees versus outsourcing maintenance needs. John Neel agreed to provide a cost estimate to Council for grass versus turf ballfields, and Mrs. Tweedie will provide an estimate on the cost for new employees versus outsourcing maintenance needs. Council also talked about revenue that could be expected from renting the ballfields.

Councilman Stipes, Councilman Showalter, and Councilman Huppert voiced support for moving forward with Option 1, and expressed that the numbers presented were feasible through a phasing process. Councilwoman Sachs commented that the Town would lose close to \$1M per year on the park property if designed under Option 1, in addition to the money lost each year from the aquatic center. She questioned how this was feasible for the Town, and said to construct the park in a responsible way would be to raise the funding first, then build. She further stated that she did not want to see real estate taxes increased for something that not all citizens would use. She agreed that the plans for the park were good, but she wanted to see funding built up prior to construction. Council talked about the recreation facilities in Christiansburg that were offered as a service to its citizens, and a draw for those outside the community, that were not meant to generate revenue or be self-supporting.

Councilman Stipes requested that each Council member voice their support or opposition to proceeding with the park development process under Master Plan Cost Estimate – Option 1. Councilman Stipes voiced his support. Councilman Showalter stated that the Town needed a concrete plan in place before sponsorships could be obtained from the community, but expressed support for seeking sponsors prior to breaking ground. Councilman Showalter voiced support for moving forward under Option 1. Councilman Huppert said he valued Mrs. Tweedie and Mr. Wingfield's advice as to the feasibility of the project. He voiced support for moving forward under Option 1 and recommended Phase 1 be mass grading of the site. Councilwoman Sachs said the park was not a priority for her at this time, and she didn't believe that it was a priority for many in the Christiansburg community. However, she said she could support moving forward with Option 3, which was more cost effective, and expanding the park in the future. Councilman Collins said he had a better perspective of the project from tonight's meeting and expressed support for moving forward under Option 1. Councilman Bishop said that while he liked the layout of Option 1, he had concerns with the estimated costs for the project and the ongoing operation and maintenance costs. His main concern was that many citizens would not use the park property, but may be forced to pay for it through increased taxes. Councilman Bishop voiced opposition to moving forward with the development of the park property. Mayor Barber stressed that the Town was not considering any tax increase at this time and would only have that discussion after all other options were exhausted. Mrs. Tweedie said the next step would be an RFP for design services and all costs would come before Council for approval.

III. Closed Meeting

- A. Councilman Stipes made a motion to enter into a Closed meeting in accordance with Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(3) for the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, seconded by Councilman Collins. The Closed Meeting pertained to discussions regarding recreational property in Montgomery County; and

- Councilman Stipes made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, seconded by Councilman Collins. The Closed Meeting was held for discussion of the town manager position. Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
- B. Reconvene in Open Meeting. Councilman Bishop made a motion to reconvene in Open Meeting, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
- C. Certification. Councilman Stipes moved to certify that the Town Council of the Town of Christiansburg, meeting in Closed Meeting, to the best of each member’s knowledge, discussed only the matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law and only such matters as are identified in the Resolution to enter into Closed Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Collins and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes - Aye.
- D. Council action on the matters. No action was taken on either matter.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 7:25 P.M.

Michele Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor