

MINUTES OF THE WOODLAND LAKE PARK ACQUISITION TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 10:00 A.M. ON AUGUST 20, 2009, IN THE TOWN OF PINETOP-LAKESIDE COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Norris Dodd, Councilwoman Leslee Wessel, K. Barbara Teague, L. Kelly Udall, John Jarchow, Sue Sitko, and Beverly Stepp.

COMMITTEE ADVISORS PRESENT:

Ed Collins, Lakeside Ranger District, USDA Forest Service.

TOWN STAFF PRESENT:

John Vuolo, Parks and Recreation Director; J. Kent Brooksby, Finance Director; and Susan Marie Stein, Deputy Town Clerk.

Chairman Dodd called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Item No. 1, Welcome and Task Force Introductions:

Chairman Dodd welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

Item No. 2, Approval of July 28, 2009 Meeting Minutes:

MS. SITKO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 28, 2009 MEETING. CHAIRMAN DODD SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item No. 3, Strategy to Acquire Woodland Lake Park based on Market Analysis:

Chairman Dodd gave a recap of the July 28th meeting. He distributed copies of the market analysis sheet to attendees. He stated the Committee could now move forward after receiving the numbers and focus their strategy. He distributed a draft short-term strategy for the acquisition of Woodland Lake Park. He said the three options contained in the proposal focus on education, preservation, and civic and economic development. He added citizens were supportive of the development piece in the Walnut Creek Node. He said this property is a potential use for a public/private partnership. He stated the Town could secure and move forward with civic and mixed-use development, which would also provide a gateway to Woodland Lake Park. He said this is a three-tiered approach with something for everybody and said the key is to work on each parcel acquisition concurrently. Leslee Wessel asked about the change in legislation to allow the acquisition of Big Springs and asked if it needs to be kept separate from the remainder. Chairman Dodd verified the 40 acres is a critical parcel and said that will be the focus. Ed Collins said the fine print in the Act states a school district can acquire up to 80 acres but it must be used for school purposes and if not, the land reverts back to the Forest Service. He said the strong argument is on the 40 acres and said if it is expanded beyond

that, the intent is lost. Chairman Dodd said resolutions have been passed supporting the acquisition of the Big Springs parcel and said the Nature Center has committed to take over the maintenance responsibility and work with the School District to develop more educational activities there. He said the refined Woodland Lake Park Master Plan would be crucial to the development as it fits the site, and said it would also assist in preserving the natural environment. He said the top priority for potential development is the acquisition of the Walnut Creek Node, without disturbing the preservation parcels.

Holly Hanson asked about the other acreage not included in the short-term strategy. Chairman Dodd said Ms. Sitko and others have been working on other approaches and said the remaining acreage is not at immediate risk. He said the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process needs to be done for the entire acreage which renders another layer of security. He added once the NEPA analysis is done, they can then move forward. Mr. Collins stated the 1998 Act says the tract can only be conveyed to the Town but said the wording can be changed by an Act of Congress; therefore it is not permanent. Chairman Dodd said as the Town moves forward, the risk potential is minimized as credibility is established.

Chairman Dodd asked if the concept is something the Committee would agree upon to present to the Town Council. John Jarchow stated he agreed. Barbara Teague said it is a good extraction from the master plan and said the concept contains feasible and logical steps to move ahead.

MR. JARCHOW MOTIONED THE COMMITTEE PRESENT THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE TOWN COUNCIL.

Ms. Sitko asked if a box should be included relative to the remaining acreage to make the public aware that it also is contained in the process. Chairman Dodd said he would add a box relating to the remaining acreage. Mr. Jarchow stated the Committee would be in effect until all of the land has been resolved.

MR. JARCHOW AMENDED HIS MOTION TO MODIFY THE STRATEGY TO INCLUDE THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE TOTAL 583 ACRES. BEVERLY STEPP SECONDED THE MOTION.

Ms. Teague asked if the Committee has considered the entire park development as seen in the master plan. Chairman Dodd said those things will come to the surface as the process progresses. Ms. Sitko said three options have been agreed upon as priorities now and the remainder of the acreage would be addressed in the future.

Kelly Udall said he appreciates the direction to take it to the Council which will allow staff to work on the details and concepts and then move forward. Mr. Collins said the process cannot move forward until after the environmental review is completed. He asked the Committee if their interest would be there if the Act is not amended and the Town cannot acquire the Big Springs parcel for \$10.00 per acre. He said they need to start thinking about the options.

Dennis Ahlman asked if the motion is for a recommendation to the Town Council. Chairman Dodd said this would be a recommended strategy to the Town Council but not recommend specific actions.

CHAIRMAN DODD CALLED FOR THE VOTE AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Dodd stated this strategy will be brought before the Town Council in the form of a resolution at the September 17th Town Council meeting.

Chairman Dodd distributed a proposed funding strategy to purchase the 98-acre developed Woodland Lake Park, and reviewed the Town's financial position and the current options. He stated the current appraised value of the 98 acres as of July 7, 2009 was \$6,050,000. He stated they need to make sure revenues are sufficient to satisfy the bond debt. He said sales tax revenue is disappointingly down from last year and said he hopes things turn around in a year. He said assuming they move forward, the land would be worth at least ten percent more and the amount to bond would be approximately \$6,700,000. He said the debt service is \$534,000 per year. Ms. Sitko confirmed this is a 20-year bond at 5 percent interest. Chairman Dodd said the previous strategy was to increase the Town's food and beverage tax in early 2013 after Mountain Meadow was completed. He said there was strong agreement from businesses not to raise the tax and maintain 2 percent. He said currently tax revenue generates approximately \$350,000 per year. He said the strategy was to raise the sales tax 0.2%, which would generate an additional \$300,000 per year. He added the average cost to homeowners is \$26.00 per year. Mr. Udall commented the numbers needed to be adjusted to reflect a truer picture. Chairman Dodd said the numbers will be updated before the strategy is presented to the Town Council. He reviewed other tax increase scenarios.

Mr. Jarchow asked if the Town would begin collecting the revenues after the NEPA study is completed. Kent Brooksby said they could not collect revenue until the Town Council passes an ordinance. Mr. Jarchow asked how long the NEPA study would take to complete. Mr. Collins said one to one and one-half years. Mr. Jarchow stated it is hoped the economy would improve by that time. Chairman Dodd said it is agreed it will take at least a year to complete the NEPA. He stated the Committee is endorsing this process as a feasible approach. He commented that people would like to see a commitment from the Town and said they are progressing from last year. He said they hope to begin the NEPA by this winter. He said the resolution would state the Council is committed to acquiring the 98-acre developed park through funding mechanisms including hospitality, food and beverage tax, and increased sales tax revenue once NEPA is complete and the economy improves. Mr. Jarchow reminded the Committee they are looking for a funding mechanism to not have the entire burden paid for by the citizens but by users of the facilities. Chairman Dodd said the Town is looking to bond under \$7 million. Mr. Jarchow added they need an equitable strategy. Chairman Dodd said the cost to citizens would be low because the majority of the sales tax revenue would come from second-home owners and visitors. Ms. Teague asked if the Town budgeted for the NEPA study. Mr. Udall confirmed the Town budgeted \$30,000 this fiscal year and said the Town would be looking for partners, possibly the Save Our Park Committee. He confirmed that the Town Attorney is moving forward with the Memorandum of Understanding and the Forest Service Agreement. He said the agreements would probably come before the Town Council for consideration in October. Chairman Dodd said the consultant will work with the Forest Service to determine the level of significance through an initial environmental analysis. He said \$30,000 most likely could get the Town through the first part of the process, but said they first have to go out to bid.

Mr. Jarchow asked if the numbers would be included in the resolution. Chairman Dodd said the intent would be to re-endorse the concept. He said the resolution would contain an appendix to include an update of the funding strategy. Mr. Jarchow asked how to insure the citizens and Council are aware that funding would be equitable and borne by the users of the parks, not just the property owners. Chairman Dodd confirmed this concept was recommended previously. Ms. Wessel said this should become part of the resolution. Mr. Jarchow agreed. Chairman Dodd said he will include that language in the resolution.

Mr. Udall said the timelines are different and said the commitment requires public support. Chairman Dodd commented they need to have the mechanism in place to begin and said they need a strategy with public buy-in to implement the process. Mr. Udall stressed the strategy has to be made very clear and to insure it is the correct strategy. Mr. Ahlman commented it is very encouraging that the Council approved the \$30,000.

Ms. Teague asked if the entire NEPA needs to be conducted at once. Mr. Collins confirmed it is much more efficient and he recommended the entire parcel be addressed at once; as it sends a signal to the Forest Service they are serious about the entire parcel.

Chairman Dodd said he will modify the proposed strategy to include a caveat that the timelines for each of the three strategies may culminate at different times, and said he will draft a resolution for the Task Force Committee's review next week. He asked the Committee if Mr. Brooksby's numbers should be included as a guide with the resolution submitted to the Town Council for approval. Mr. Jarchow said he thought it would be helpful to use as an example. Ms. Teague asked if the survey results would be included with the resolution. Chairman Dodd said the information was included.

CHAIRMAN DODD MOVED TO INCLUDE THE FUNDING STRATEGY NUMBERS AS AN ATTACHMENT TO THE RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE TOWN COUNCIL. MR. JARCHOW SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item No. 4, Limited Development Proposal as Part of the 98-acre Developed Park Acquisition:

Chairman Dodd said Tom Jernigan was not in attendance today and said his proposal would be discussed at a future meeting. Mr. Jarchow asked if the Town needed to acquire the land first. John Vuolo said this topic should be discussed in the future. Mr. Jarchow said this discussion would be based on a lot of assumptions. Mr. Udall said the Town is not in the development business, but could partner with a developer in the future.

Item No. 5, National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Analysis Status:

Mr. Udall stated the Town budgeted \$30,000 for the NEPA study and said he doubts this amount would cover the cost of the study. He said he is hopeful the Save Our Park Committee will help fund it. He added they are moving forward on two Forest Service documents: a Memorandum of Understanding and a Collection Agreement to reimburse the Forest Service for their cost. He said they anticipate presenting the documents to the Town Council in October. He stated after approval, the Town will have an RFQ to obtain bids to engage the project consultant. Chairman Dodd said they may be able to do an environmental analysis first to possibly save money. He

added if it is deemed they need to do an environmental impact study, then it would be more expensive. He said the Town has a commitment from the Forest Service and said the actual costs are unknown until the bids are received. Chairman Dodd stated the study should be implemented around January.

Item No. 6, Presentation to Town Council:

Chairman Dodd said the next Committee meeting is scheduled for **September 17th at 10:00 a.m.** He said that he will be out-of-town that day but would be available to participate via telephone. The Committee asked Mr. Udall to run the meeting and the Committee will review the draft resolution.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 p.m.

Dated this 8th day of September 2009.

WOODLAND LAKE PARK ACQUISITION TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

s/s **NORRIS DODD**, Chairman