



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ROUND TABLE MEETING OF THE LAKE LURE TOWN COUNCIL HELD TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023, 6:00 P.M. AT THE TERRACE OF RUMBLING BALD

PRESENT: Mayor Carol C. Pritchett
Mayor Pro Tem David DiOrio
Commissioner Scott Doster
Commissioner Jim Proctor

William Hank Perkins, Jr., Town Manager
Michael Dydula, Project Manager
Stephen Ford, Finance Director
Laura Krejci, Communications Director

ABSENT: Commissioner Patrick Bryant

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Carol C. Pritchett called the round table meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. AGENDA ADOPTION

Commissioner Scott Doster made a motion to adopt the agenda, as presented. Commissioner David DiOrio seconded and all voted in favor.

III. TOWN UPDATES WITH TOWN MANAGER HANK PERKINS

Town Manager Hank Perkins and Project Manager Michael Dydula provided attendees with updates regarding staffing and staffing development, the sewer and funding, maintenance and technologies, Sunset Cove, the HDD Project, Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) & WWTP master planning, water system master planning, water meter replacement, Firefly Cove water system, dam and funding, drain valve installation, North Carolina Department of Transportation plans for the existing dam bridge, dredging, AT&T cell tower, Morse Park master plan and grants,

Green Space master planning, pedestrian connectivity between the Town of Lake Lure and Chimney Rock Village, and Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget preparation.

IV. PROJECT UPDATES WITH PROJECT MANAGER MICHAEL DYDULA

There were no additional updates from Project Manager Michael Dydula.

V. TOWN COUNCIL UPDATES

Mayor Pritchett reviewed the 2023 Events Calendar.

Mayor Pritchett noted that there will be another round table meeting this Thursday at Town Hall and thanked all in attendance.

VI. COMMUNITY QUESTION & ANSWER

An attendee asked about relocation of recreational amenities from Morse Park and Manager Perkins explained that the plan is to move the recreational amenities in a future phase of the plan, but not in the near future.

An attendee asked for details the timeline for the construction of the new dam and if there is any imminent danger. Manager Perkins explained that there is no imminent danger at all. Project Manager Dydula explained that the completion of the new dam could take about 8-10 years and explained how the dam and sewer are related. Project Manager Dydula also explained that it is considered a high hazard dam due to the potential results of downstream impact if there is catastrophic failure.

An attendee expressed surprise with the County's property tax re-evaluations and asked how that will impact Town tax rates. Finance Director Stephen Ford explained that Rutherford County is in the process of a complete re-appraisal and in North Carolina re-appraisals require that towns adjust the levies to collect or maintain revenues. Director Ford added that the Town's goal is to adjust the levy to create the amount of revenue that is need. Director Ford and Manager Perkins explained the concept of revenue neutral. Director Ford noted that he will be having continued communications with the County and that anyone is welcome to call him with any questions.

An attendee explained that he used to play golf at the municipal course on Thursdays and asked if there are any companies that would fix the greens and re-open the course. Mayor Pritchett explained that the Town is currently in the process of evaluating the needs and wants of all citizens of Lake Lure in terms of utilizing the Green Space property.

An attendee asked how many acres the Green Space contains and Manager Perkins answered just over 200 acres. The resident noted that she is noticing a trend of younger families moving to Lake Lure and that there is a lot that could be done with the Green Space to accommodate the needs of all residents.

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An attendee asked if the HDD pipes will be under existing dam or replacement dam. Project Manager Dydula explained that the pipes will initially span to the existing dam and that it is a process and there will eventually be a pipe that connects to the new dam.

An attendee asked if the new dam will produce hydroelectricity. Project Manager Dydula answered that the Town is unsure at this time and that Schnabel Engineering is looking into that possibility. Commissioner DiOrio explained that the Town is currently considered a miniature hydroelectric plant and that it would not be heavily regulated by the federal government, but a large plant would be. The attendee asked if Duke Energy would pay for the hydroelectric plant and it was answered that Duke would not pay for a plant. Mayor Pritchett noted that it will be a monetary decision based on comparing the revenues vs. expenditures of a hydroelectric plant.

An attendee asked about the anticipated amount of days that the lake will be drawn down for infrastructure projects. Project Manager Dydula answered that as of current, the Town is looking at drawing down the lake between November and April to give contractors five months of work. The attendee noted that this would impact the amount of days that boats can be used. Commissioner DiOrio explained that there are some things that we can do to reduce the number of days that the lake is unavailable. Commissioner Doster added that there are solutions ensure a quicker process to getting the boats in and out of the water. Mayor Pritchett added that the Town will never draw down the lake if it is not needed. The attendee noted when the lake was drawn down in anticipation for a hurricane that did not occur, the water was down for a long time. Commissioner DiOrio explained that there is an emergency plan in place that the Town must follow for events such as hurricanes. Commissioner DiOrio commented that the Town Council will take all necessary measures to keep the lake at full pond as much as possible. Commissioner noted that they always consider residents when making drawdown decisions.

An attendee asked how residents will get to voice their want for the Green Space. Manager Perkins explained that the Town will have a public input process including at least two public meetings and online surveys. Manager Perkins added that there will be recommendations to council from advisory committees based on surveys and public input. A resident asked if a vote will be tallied based on what resident feedback and Manager Perkins answered yes. Mayor Pritchett noted it will be similar to the process to the one that was used to update the Morse Park Master Plan in 2016.

An attendee expressed that there are more draws to the area than the lake including the mountains. The attendee asked if the hesitancy to accept the golf course proposal was because of need to gather input from all of the individuals. Manager Perkins explained that the hesitancy to date is for the purpose of balancing the needs of the entire town and that the proposer requires the entire footprint of the green space property.

An attendee asked for additional information regarding property tax increases. Mayor Pritchett explained that it is a County process to conduct property re-evaluations. The attendee asked if the state had any regulations on how high appraisals can be and Commissioner DiOrio answered no and that it is based on fair market value. Mayor Pritchett explained they must be done every 8 years, but the County does it every four years.

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An attendee asked about revenue neutral. Director Ford explained that on the tax bill, residents will have a county and a town tax, and that each have to show residents what the revenue neutral rate will be. Director Ford noted that the Town will show the revenue neutral rate and may adjust rates based on financial needs.

An attendee expressed concern regarding the timeline and funding of green space planning while there is a firm who wants to run the golf course now. The attendee expressed support for the golf course proposal. Commissioner Proctor noted that Mayor Pritchett and Manager Perkins had asked for additional information from the firm and that the firm did not provide the information and instead went directly to the public. Commissioner Proctor added that the proposal plan is attractive, but there is no substantial information that was provided. Commissioner Proctor also noted that the proposer's firm is not a LLC in North Carolina and they have delinquent reports with the state of Wisconsin. Commissioner Proctor explained his concerns from a business standpoint, citing that it does not include principles or firm numbers. Commissioner Proctor reiterated that the Town has asked for additional information and continues to receive no answers. Commissioner Doster explained that the proposer was hesitant to give additional information without letter of intent from the Town. Commissioner Doster added that the proposer would like to speak with the Town Attorney on how the Town might adhere to their needs. Commissioner Doster expressed concern with the Town signing a letter of intent without any additional information. Commissioner Doster noted that if the Town receives necessary information, the proposal could be re-evaluated but Council must consider the entire community regardless. Council members expressed that it is important to look at all options and make equitable decisions. Mayor Pritchett explained that the proposer had contacted Manager Perkins, and there was a meeting held. Mayor Pritchett added that the Council was unaware that the Chamber was involved until an additional meeting was held including members of the Chamber. Mayor Pritchett noted that Manager Perkins had received other proposals for the Green Space and his answer is the same to all inquirers. Mayor Pritchett reiterated that the Council has to accommodate everyone's wants and must protect the lives and properties of residents.

An attendee asked if everyone will get off of septic when the new sewer is installed. Commissioner DiOrio said everyone in tier one will be on the new system instead of septic, some in tier two may as well, but tier three likely will remain on septic. Manager Perkins explained connection regulations. It was answered that the Town would allow the use of septic for those who cannot connect to the sewer.

An attendee asked about new dam location. Manager Perkins answered that it will be near the existing dam. The attendee asked about the new bridge. Manager Perkins explained that the Town is meeting with NCDOT to determine the location of the new bridge, because NCDOT is responsible for funding and constructing the bridge. It was added that the Town is hoping that the new bridge will be relatively close to the existing one.

An attendee noted that it is their understanding that there will be a meeting with Sunset Cove residents. Project Manager Dydula confirmed that there would be a meeting with Sunset Cove residents regarding the most recent drawdown work, in which Ruby Collins did not make as much progress as expected. An attendee asked if there are liquidated damages with contracts such as the one with Ruby Collins and Project Manager Dydula answered that it is not always possible

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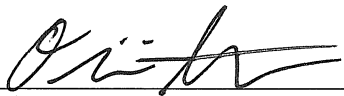
with North Carolina bidding requirements, but added that if there was an opportunity to add this, the Town would look into it would look into it. The attendee asked about substantial completion and Project Manager Dydula explained the substantial completion process for the dam and the sewer. Commissioner DiOrio noted that the important factor is that the Town continues to move forward. The resident expressed the need for transparency for setting project targets.

An attendee expressed that the Town has more capital needs than almost any other location and that the only way to fund these capital needs is through grants. The resident added that the funding schedules and grant awards would impact the timeline of the projects. Mayor Pritchett thanked Communications Director Laura Krejci for her work with grants administration.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Commissioner Doster made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. Commissioner DiOrio seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

ATTEST:


Olivia Stewman, Town Clerk


Mayor Carol C. Pritchett

