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## **MINUTES**

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Conference in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 14th day of January, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Heikkila called the Meeting to Order at 5:30 p.m.

### **PRESENT**

Mayor Larry Heikkila  
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball  
Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock  
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya  
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant  
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash  
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle  
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman  
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **1. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE GRIFFIN MASTER PLAN.**

Mr. Marty Shukert, Community and Regional Planning, RDG Planning and Design, opened the presentation by stating that the planning team had been working on the Griffin site for approximately a month and this presentation included both previously reviewed content and recent refinements. The presentation focused on four major areas: site analysis (opportunities and constraints); development “building blocks” (streets and residential layout); four design concepts, and implementation strategy.

Mr. Shukert highlighted constraints and opportunities.

Key Constraints: drainage issues, especially in the southwest; existing historic structures; topographical depression (“moderate crater”) of unknown origin.

Key Opportunities: preservation and reuse of historic structures (chapel, Hope Hall, administration building), potential for an arts and cultural hub, and integration with surrounding green space (Francis Cate Park, Sutton Wilderness, Bishop Creek).

Mr. Shukert said development assumptions and goals included mixed-use residential community with 5–8% of projected city housing demand (approximately 1,600–1,800

units); emphasis on affordability, walkability, and connectivity; integration with existing neighborhoods and parks, and the design should support artistic and cultural expression.

Mr. Shukert said the street design - 25-ft residential streets with sidewalks and tree lawns. Housing modules - 40'x70' lots allowing flexibility for single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and small multi-unit buildings. Alleys and Garages: rear-loaded garages with alley access to maintain pedestrian-focused streetscapes.

Mr. Shukert present four conceptual design schemes.

#### Scheme 1: The Green Belt

- Continuous greenbelt through the site.
- Central “ellipse” for historic buildings and a main street connecting features.
- Production studio concept introduced for southeast corner.
- Estimated 1,785 units.
- Some concern over overuse of Texas donut buildings (multi-story buildings with internal parking).

#### Scheme 2: Water Feature Focus

- Emphasized a large waterway and pedestrian features.
- Town Square concept with mixed-use and apartments.
- Better integration with downtown.
- Reuse of Central Kitchen as a restaurant.
- Estimated 1,670 units.
- Highlighted a mixed-use plaza concept modeled after projects in California.

#### Scheme 3: Walk-Up Refinement

- Refined town square concept, preserved main administration building.
- More emphasis on walk-up apartments and surface parking.
- Incorporates a gateway interpretive pavilion.
- Estimated 1,840 units.

#### Scheme 4: Curvilinear Pattern

- Returned to curvilinear street layout from Scheme 1 with updated elements.
- Expanded open space with a central composition featuring chapel and historic buildings.
- Included a pier and small-scale flex commercial or “maker” spaces.
- Switched from a film studio to an enterprise zone model.

#### Implementation Considerations

- Unified development is critical to avoid fragmented outcomes.
- Master developer, potentially a nonprofit or development corporation, will guide cohesive planning.
- Design guidelines are essential for consistency.
- Emphasis on catalytic projects and phased development (10+ year timeline).
- Need for community engagement and financial structuring.

Mr. Shukert said Council and staff engaged in an in-depth discussion about the proposed redevelopment concepts for a site within the city, drawing inspiration from projects such as the Wheeler District in Oklahoma City. The key points of discussion included site access, internal connectivity, historic preservation, environmental remediation, design preferences, and implementation strategies.

### **Key Comments and Feedback:**

#### *District Connectivity and Design:*

- Councilmembers expressed appreciation for internal site connectivity and vibrant, walkable districts.
- While pedestrian access into the area was praised, concerns were raised about external connections, comparing them to isolated areas like Shields Boulevard in Oklahoma City.
- Emphasis was placed on creating an active, internal district that does not rely on major arterial access.

#### *Environmental and Structural Concerns:*

- Members noted significant redevelopment barriers, including asbestos and other hazardous materials in existing buildings.
- There was broad interest in preserving historic structures where feasible, with a focus on maintaining architectural integrity.

#### *Design Scheme Preferences:*

- Scheme 2 received praise for its regional detention feature and its integration of stormwater management as an amenity.
- Scheme 3 emerged as the preferred concept due to its refinement of Scheme 2, higher housing unit count, preservation of the existing administration building, and strong pedestrian and aesthetic elements.
- Elements such as rear-loaded corridors, corner design features, alley access, and avoiding surface parking along major roads were well-received.

#### *Architectural Standards and Historic Compatibility:*

- Council emphasized the importance of new construction blending architecturally with existing historic structures.
- Suggestions included adopting design standards or overlay zoning to maintain architectural consistency across the site.

The site is located in an Enterprise Zone, providing opportunities for leveraging design guidelines through tools such as Planned Unit Developments, Architectural Review Boards, and design overlays similar to those used in University North Park and Center City. Staff discussed the potential to zone the entire site prior to sale and outlined barriers such as engineering costs, platting requirements, and identifying a development partner or applicant willing to assume upfront costs.

Item 1, continued

Tax Increment Financing Considerations

- Discussion included the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for:
  - Site acquisition
  - Utility and sewer infrastructure
  - Environmental remediation (asbestos abatement, demolition)
- The state remains interested in being the applicant for the TIF.
- Staff recommended establishing a specific redevelopment vision (favoring Scheme 3) to guide TIF revenue projections and support potential financing.

**Council Comments included:**

- The importance of preserving historic elements.
- Concerns regarding environmental hazards (e.g., asbestos).
- Connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and downtown.
- Appropriate amount and location of commercial development.
- Preference for neighborhood-serving businesses over large-scale commercial.
- Favorable feedback on mixed-use, artistic, and pedestrian-oriented features.

Ms. Jane Hudson, Director of Planning and Community Development, said Staff will send the PowerPoint presentation to Councilmembers for written comments for further refinement. She said a future working session (possibly in March) will be scheduled via a Doodle poll to enable open dialogue, reduce duplication of efforts, and coordinate Council feedback.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

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ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk



  
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Mayor