

**City Council of the City of Greenville  
Work Session**

**Monday, March 15, 2021  
3:00 p.m.**

*Greenville City Hall is currently closed to the public.*

**Virtual Meeting Viewing**  
<https://www.greenvillesc.gov/meeting>

**Remote Viewing Location:**  
**Greenville Convention Center, 1 Exposition Drive**

**MINUTES**

**CITY COUNCIL:** Mayor Knox White; Councilmember Lillian B. Flemming, Councilmember Kenneth C. Gibson, Councilmember Wil Brasington; Councilmember Russell H. Stall; and Councilmember Dorothy H. Dowe  
Absent: Councilmember John M. DeWorken,

**CITY STAFF:** City Manager John F. McDonough; City Attorney Michael S. Pitts;  
City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Mayor White called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matter.

**Unity Park Update**

City Manager John McDonough introduced the agenda item and presented an overview of today's discussions as provided in a presentation located in Council's Agenda packet. Mr. McDonough stated the information will address design, construction, river restoration, fundraising and donor recognitions, and financial updates. Mr. McDonough also stated that opportunities for future phases will be discussed including Eastern Wetlands, Western Wetlands, the tower, and park maintenance facility.

**Phase 1**

*Design Update.* Darren Meyer with MKSK provided updates on minor changes including the parking lot and overflow lot, bollards helping to guide visitors to the parking lots, and lighting fixtures for parking lot, pedestrian, and street areas.

*Construction Update and Schedule.* City Public Works Director Mike Murphy introduced the team members involved in the discussion. David Wise with Harper provided an update on the construction sequence and stated it is similar to the one presented in June 2020. Mr. Wise advised they have effectively completed Zone 1 which includes construction of the permanent parking to serve Welborn Street and access to the parking lot. Mr. Wise also advised they have made great progress with Zone 2 which includes major earth work on the river restoration and the great lawn and preliminary work on the spray ground and the visitor's center. Mr. Wise commented that the foundations for the bridges are commencing this month and the fabrication of the bridges is going well. Mr. Murphy provided aerial photographs of the information presented by Mr. Wise and commented on undergrounding of power lines along Welborn Street and Hudson Street. Mr. Murphy stated the public parking lot includes 180 parking spaces. Mr. Murphy referred to dirt from the project being relocated to Mayberry Street and the County using it for the trail project.

*River Restoration.* Neil Wilson with Harper provided an overview of the double tiered level created along the river as well as the aquatic bird habitat. Barrett Armstrong with MKSK commented on the purpose of the redevelopment and the stability it will provide for major storm events. Mr. Armstrong also commented on implementing native plant material along the banks and providing a habitat value for native animals.

Mr. Meyer presented information regarding the restoration of Mayberry Field, story-telling artwork to be implemented in the park, the Auro pedestrian bridge, and bridge intersections with the trail and the river. Mr. Armstrong commented on developing a new pedestrian bridge that will connect with Hudson Street. Mr. Murphy stated the trail is anticipated to be relocated a few feet to accommodate for the restoration and widening of the river bank. Mr. Murphy referred to the new trail on the Commons side of the river that is being developed at this time.

Councilmember Brasington asked about infrastructure needs for pedestrian and bicycle access to the park. Mr. Meyer responded there may be a desire to consider a standalone capital project for some of those accommodations. Councilmember Brasington also asked for information regarding the welcome center. City Urban Designer Jeff Waters shared that the facility is approximately 5,000 square feet and will include a main arrival room, event space, catering kitchen, restrooms, and offices. Mayor White requested the story of the area be included in that space and be interactive for the visitors.

Mayor White asked for information regarding work on the southside of the river. Mr. Wilson responded they anticipate starting work in the next month and they will begin construction with the river restoration and undergrounding. Mayor White stated he finds the Mayberry side to be important in terms of the large passive green space area and predicted more people will prefer the south side of the river when it is completed.

*Fundraising and Donor Recognitions.* Velda Hughes and Bill Fox with Hughes Agency provided an update on fundraising efforts. Ms. Hughes stated they have raised over \$10 million, including \$3 million that was raised during COVID. Ms. Hughes also stated they have met with 161 individuals and 100% percent have given or are giving money towards the project. Ms. Hughes advised Phase 1 is completed and they are moving forward with funding the Wetlands. Mr. Fox provided an update with the fund amounts raised and referred to funds involving naming rights, sponsorship, and other miscellaneous gifts and undesignated fund opportunities.

*Financial Update.* OMB Director Matt Efirm provided information regarding the project to date budget and stated the project as currently budgeted is about \$60 million, which includes the preconstruction phase, the construction phase, and the first phase of the undergrounding. Mr. Efirm reviewed the appropriated revenue and financial items that will need to be appropriated by City Council. Mr. Efirm reviewed the fundraising efforts and stated that funds received are at 36% percent which is good. Mr. Efirm stated because of those efforts, the City can make the 2000 bond payment next year. Mr. Efirm referred to the Harper project contingency and stated the City and Harper will split the remaining contingency at the end of the project, with the City retaining 70% percent of the savings.

#### Opportunities for Future Phases

*Eastern Wetlands.* Mr. Meyer provided information regarding the Eastern Wetlands area of the overall master plan and stated they are looking to see how to restore the area for habitat value and to create a strong edge along Meadow Street. Mr. Meyer commented on how to restore the

creek/tributary and incorporate some boardwalks and educational components. Mr. Fox referred to the fundraising efforts and stated the estimated cost for design and construction is approximately \$2.825 million.

*Western Wetlands.* Mr. Meyer stated they have not completed a preliminary design of the Western Wetlands, but he believes it would be approximately the same construction cost for this area, minus the boardwalk and shelter, because it is more evasive to clean-up and it is a larger area. Mayor White stated the objective is to complete the Eastern Wetlands and if they pursue the Western Wetlands, to possibly have a vista or a deck for that area. Mr. Meyer responded the Eastern Wetlands is totally under city ownership while the Western is not, and it is more visible to the neighborhood and main entry. Councilmember Dowe asked if it would be beneficial to permit both Wetlands at the same time. Mr. Armstrong responded it would make sense, however, should changes be made, it would have to go through the permit process again.

*Observation Tower.* Mr. Meyer presented a proposed design and landscape of the tower at an estimated construction cost of \$8 million. Mr. Fox advised \$1.5 million has been raised to date and they have been in active discussions for a lead gift. Mr. Fox presented a fundraising schedule from April 2021 through May 2022, with the Unity Park grand opening occurring in Spring 2022.

Councilmember Brasington asked about the long-term value of having the tower as well as trade-offs and cost of investment. Mr. Meyer responded there has been a lot of work done by the trust for public land and many studies performed that quantify the economic return on parks. Mayor White stated the tower has been included as an iconic piece since the beginning. Mr. Fox agreed and stated there will be a certain expectation for a tower to be included.

*Park Maintenance Facility.* Interim Parks and Recreation Director Angie Proser provided information regarding a proposed parks and grounds maintenance shop in the park area. Ms. Prosser discussed the proposed location and aesthetics to conceal the resources of the building. Ms. Prosser stated the facility would be home of Unity Park and the tourism district crews, including Liberty Park. Regarding unallocated resources, Mr. Efird presented \$5,455,497 of potential resources available for addressing those items. Mr. Efird reviewed the items discussed and stated the additional amount needed to cover those items would be \$3,489,503.

Councilmember Dowe asked about the difference in the parks facility funds, and Mr. Efird responded the difference is a change in the concept which was originally anticipated to be a parks and recreation headquarters. Mr. Efird stated the savings from the original concept are still included in the current funding amounts. Mr. Efird presented the next steps involving funding.

Mr. McDonough stated the City has a very valuable asset and we will be moving into the next phase which is community outreach. Mr. McDonough also stated he believes we will have a better visibility on the asset allowing for consideration on future phases and future projects. Mr. McDonough referred to a potential multi-county park for Council's consideration. Mr. McDonough shared that information distributed to the media earlier today is being updated and redistributed.

Mayor White stated the idea has always been to consider selling the property along Mayberry Street to help pay for the park. Mayor White asked that staff continue to work on the location and architecture of the maintenance facility.

In closing, Mr. McDonough stated the objective of the presentation was for Council to receive the updates as well as information on potential future projects. Mr. McDonough stated the City is in a

good place with the Wetlands to move forward, if Council so chooses. Mr. McDonough advised the next item will be for Council to discuss and consider an ordinance to appropriate funding for some of the items. Mr. McDonough asked for direction in moving forward with design fees for the observation tower, property acquisition, and investment in the Wetlands design.

Mayor White suggested using funds already collected for the tower on the tower design. Councilmember Brasington provided his support for the park and stated the Western Wetlands would be at the bottom of his priority list. Councilmember Dowe stated she does not feel good about spending money on the design without having the full pledge for construction. Councilmember Flemming agreed with the comments made and for holding up on the Western Wetlands until a later date.

Councilmember Brasington asked what the process is when the City is contemplating construction for the City's benefit when it comes to design costs. Mr. McDonough responded we attempt to find design money when Council states they want to move forward on a project. Mr. McDonough stated this project is a little different and we want to make sure we are focused on obtaining the financing and working through the construction.

Council commented in general about designs, park amenities, and fundraising efforts. Mr. McDonough thanked Council for the feedback and stated staff will continue to work on updates. Regarding the tower, Mr. McDonough stated he is hesitant in pursuing expenses for a full design at this time and asked what Mr. Fox needed to move forward with the fundraising campaign.

Mr. McDonough recommended having an update at the next meeting. Councilmember Gibson asked for a chart showing the full amount staff is requesting Council to commit to regarding designs. Councilmember Flemming asked if there has been anything regarding a concept competition for the design. Mr. McDonough responded no one has expressed opposition to the current design. Councilmember Gibson stated he supports it; however, he is hesitant at this time because the City needs a lot more funding.

Mayor White referred to the designer and stated he has worked hard on the project and that it has gone through approximately five design changes. Mayor White recommended inviting the designer to attend a future Council meeting.

Councilmember DeWorken joined the meeting at approximately 5:10 p.m.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS  
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on March 12, 2021