

## MINUTES

### Regular Business Meeting of the Southern Pines Town Council February 11, 2014, 7:00 PM, Douglass Community Center, 1185 W. Pennsylvania Avenue

**Present:** Mayor David McNeill, Mayor Pro Tem Mike Fields, Councilmember Fred Walden, Councilmember Jim Simeon, Councilmember Teresa VanCamp

**Absent:** None

Call To Order

#### Pledge of Allegiance

##### 1. Manager's Comments

Town Manager Parsons gave an overview of the items on the Consent Agenda.

##### 2. Consent Agenda

- A. Adopt Agenda Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2014 and Regular Business Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2014 as written.
- B. Budget Amendments
  - Fund Balance to Special Appropriations       \$5,000
- C. Board Appointments
  - Appearance Commission
    - Harry Neely       02/12/2014 – 10/31/2016
- D. Acceptance of Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Annual Audit
- E. Camden Villas Performance Bond Renewal:       \$54,338
- F. Resolution: Moore County Transportation Committee

Upon motion by Councilmember Walden, seconded by Councilmember Simeon and carried unanimously, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

##### 3. Architectural Reviews

- A. AR-01-14 Outback Steakhouse, 100 Southern Rd., Landon Bradshaw, Petitioner

Mayor McNeill gave a brief overview of the proposed architectural review.

No discussion ensued.

Upon motion by Mayor Pro Tem Fields, seconded by Councilmember Walden and carried unanimously, AR-01-14 Outback Steakhouse, 100 Southern Rd. was approved.

##### 4. Public Hearing

- A. Community Development Block Grant Applications

Town Manager Parsons gave a brief overview and commented that the hearing is to announce the Town's intention to apply for CDBG funds and the hearing is required prior to submitting specific applications. Town Manager Parsons

continued by commenting the next public hearing will be held next month regarding an application for funds for a project in the Southern Pines Corporate Park.

There were no public comments.

Upon motion by Mayor Pro Tem Fields, seconded by Councilmember Walden and carried unanimously, the Public Hearing was closed.

## **5. Miscellaneous**

### **A. Pool Park Plans Presentation: Recreation & Parks Director Robert Reeve**

Mayor McNeill commented that this project dates back a number of years and Council desires to inform the public of what is to occur with Pool Park and to allow comments regarding the plans.

Recreation & Parks Director Robert Reeve gave an overview of the 2005 Aquatics Services Study and Pool Park Master Plan and commented in 2005, a decision was made to close the pool that due to its age and low attendance issues. Director Reeve continued with an overview of 3 options in the Aquatics Services Study that would continue pool operations and commented the Aquatics Task Force suggested constructing a new aquatic facility at an alternate site with a splash pad if the Town decided upon installing a new pool.

Director Reeve spoke regarding the process of compiling the Pool Park Master Plan and commented when the process reached the point where funding could be researched, the suggested elements in the plan would be pursued and a fund was created 2 years ago to allocate funds toward designing the first elements of the master plan to proceed in installing a splash pad with the understanding that the pool would be unavailable for public use.

Director Reeve commented they are at the point to build a splash pad and it is the first priority in the process. Director Reeve continued by commenting bids for the proposed performance stage are expected to be received in the next couple of days.

Councilmember VanCamp asked Director Reeve to address safety concerns. Director Reeve commented that 4 lifeguards are hired each year due to the extreme liability of a pool, but lifeguards are not necessary with a splash pad due to no standing water.

Councilmember Simeon inquired what types of safety issues the Town would institute to include a splash pad in the park. Director Reeve commented rules and regulations would be posted at the park and the splash pad could be supervised during certain group events. Councilmember Simeon inquired how the safety issues would be implemented. Director Reeve responded by commenting the splash pad is an element just like any other park element and could be supervised by adults or age limitations could be set with adult supervision and that the splash pad could be staffed if desired.

Councilmember Simeon commented anytime there is water, there is the same liability or safety concern that is not present with a basketball or tennis court.

Councilmember Walden inquired the present condition of the pool. Director Reeve responded by commenting that a typical pool has a use of approximately 25-30 years and the Town's pool is almost 51 years old with several issues. Director Reeve continued by commenting the pool and the decking have significant cracks which pose tripping hazards and the changing rooms are not ADA accessible along with other issues. Director Reeve commented significant funds were not invested towards the facility due to the idea of moving forward with the new park elements.

Director Reeve commented the cosmetic issues need to be addressed but underground issues such as the pipes have not been discussed and the pool is showing its age.

Councilmember VanCamp inquired what communities in Moore County have a public swimming pool or a splash pad. Director Reeve responded by commenting he was not aware of any other splash pads and that Taylortown may have a public pool.

Councilmember VanCamp commented the loss of providing swimming lessons is a negative and inquired if arrangements could be made to provide swimming lessons. Director Reeve responded by commenting that he has contacted other pools in the area for providing swimming lessons and they seem willing to make accommodations.

## B. Public Comments on Pool Park

Cheryl Mensch, 20 Hunter Court, commented that she thinks that kids growing up should always have an available pool and a splash pad does not compare to a swimming pool. Mrs. Mensch continued by suggesting investing the money for the alternative park elements into renovating the pool or building a new pool.

Deeca Miller, 829 S. Mechanic Street, commented it was irresponsible to allow to the pool to get it in its present condition and kids don't have anything to do during the summer. Ms. Miller continued by commenting she doesn't think it is fair to the low-income single parents because the pool is an outlet and they need the pool.

Arthur Mason, 795 W. New Hampshire Avenue, commented he thinks the splash pad will be too dangerous for children without supervision and he would hate to lose the pool.

Roy McCoy, Pastor, Worship Center, commented discussion regarding closing the pool should not occur unless a new pool is to be built and demolition should not be considered due to the citizens not having anywhere to go. Mr. McCoy continued by commenting that it is a slap in the face when all citizens are not being considered and it is an embarrassment to the Town to not want to fund the repairs and lifeguards for the pool.

Sinaya Lawrence, 829 S. Mechanic Street, commented that safety is a concern with a splash pad.

Tessie Taylor, 937 N. Ashe Street, commented in her opinion, a splash pad is ok for little kids and for it to be effective, parents would not have the freedom to allow their kids to go to the splash pad unsupervised. Ms. Taylor continued by commenting when there is water and children, there is danger and she thinks the splash pad would increase the Town's liability.

Ms. Taylor inquired if half of the proposed \$1.7Million could be invested in rebuilding the pool at its current location and if CDBG funds could be applied for to renovate the pool. Ms. Taylor continued by commenting she thinks there is a concerted effort to create an insignificance of West Southern Pines and it appears that all major Town upgrades occur east of the bridge.

Ms. Taylor commented it is difficult for a people to have their identity slowly stripped away due to dollar signs when the dollars belong to those people.

O'Linda Gillis, Moore County NAACP President, requested county and municipal budgets for the pool in the Southern Pines Pool Park and commented she was told the Pool Park was a neighborhood park and that it does not match up in comparison to other Town parks. Ms. Gillis continued by requesting total federal, state, and local funds used for operational expenses for all Town parks and commented that funds can be found to renovate and keep the pool and that there are no sponsor signs in the Pool Park as in other Town parks.

Michael Lawrence, 829 S. Mechanic Street, asked for Council to keep the pool open.

Dorothy Brower, 102 Eastman Road, commented that she is upset with the school and pool closings in West Southern Pines and that those are two community assets that the citizens are very proud of. Ms. Brower continued by commenting a lot of labor and love went into both of those institutions and she thinks the pool is closing due to intentional neglect.

Ms. Brower spoke regarding pools in Asheboro, Sanford and other counties and commented that federal, state and local funds can be applied for and that she sympathizes with the Town regarding funds being spent to maintain the pool but she thinks it is due to no prior preventative maintenance.

Ms. Brower spoke regarding opportunities to make more money at the pool and commented there are groups and individuals that are willing to donate funds to ensure that kids can swim who want to. Ms. Brower continued by commenting that whatever is done needs to be more attractive for children.

Ms. Brower inquired if the Town is in violation for keeping the pool operational in its current condition without making proper repairs and commented that no one has complained because the kids are happy to be there. Ms. Brower continued by commenting that she thinks the priority should be in community building and providing the resources for people who move to Town.

Oliver Hines, 635 W. Michigan Avenue, spoke regarding the importance of the pool's location and commented the location is important and is awesome. Mr. Hines continued by commenting that at some point a change will have to be embraced but it can't be now.

Mr. Hines spoke regarding kids dressing inappropriately and commented there is no security for the splash pad and we can't create situations that we can't control and we are asking for something we don't need. Mr. Hines commented you have to think about safety and the concern of others.

Mr. Hines commented we need options before we consider closing the pool and we shouldn't close places in the community that the citizens are used to and it is not a good time to close the pool.

Maurice Holland, Jr., 346 Midway Road, Aberdeen, commented that the Town of Aberdeen built the Lake Recreation Facility with grant funds and the Town could look into the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation for grant funds.

Hugh Mensch, 20 Hunter Court, commented he never heard of the Aquatics Study while serving on the Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee and the West Southern Pines Committee and continued by commenting a splash pad might be good for younger children but he doesn't see anything in the plans for the older kids.

Mr. Mensch commented he hasn't heard anything regarding operational costs for the pool, which seems to be the main objection and he thinks Council should look for a comparison of what can be done to keep the pool open or other sources of funds to keep the pool open. Mr. Mensch continued by commenting that it seems the community wants to keep the pool and that the needs of the families in the community to have a pool are justified.

Marsh Smith, 568 San Tee Road, commented as long as he can remember the Town pool and Elks Club pool has always been here and the Elks Club pool is maintained by a small group of volunteers and looks pretty good. Mr. Smith continued by commenting that the Town can maintain the pool and should fix the parts that have fallen into disrepair.

Mr. Smith commented the Town can take pride in keeping the pool going and that the pool allows people to learn to swim and surely the Town can find funds to pay for lifeguards.

Cynthia McDonald, 893 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, commented that kids look forward to the pool in the summer.

Mayor McNeill commented this was not a public hearing but an opportunity for public input and the item was presented to Council at the January Worksession. Mayor McNeill continued by commenting there is disconnect between what is recommended in the plan and what the community wants.

Councilmember VanCamp thanked those who spoke and provided input.

Councilmember Walden thanked everyone for attending and commented that the discussion regarding closing the pool took place 9 years ago due to decreased usage. Councilmember Walden continued by commenting that Council must have reason to justify its decisions they make and that numbers reveal a lot of things and the pool's use was way down last year. Councilmember Walden presented pool use statistics and operational cost for 2013.

Councilmember Walden commented he was looking for the users of pool to express the value of the service the community is receiving and it doesn't seem the community is using the pool as we have the sentiment in keeping it open and it seems the sentiment is ownership.

Roy McCoy commented there is a lot that can be done as a community and we can come together to receive funds and grants.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields gave an overview of the operational and repair cost for the pool and commented it could cost approximately \$100,000 to open the pool this year. Mayor Pro Tem Fields continued by commenting revenues in 2013 totaled \$1,800 and he understands the importance of the pool and what it means to the community, but Council has to be careful with the tax dollars and he is concerned with the cost to open the pool and if it is reopen, he thinks the rest of the Pool Park plans need to be scrapped.

Councilmember Simeon commented he still has the opinion that a mechanism needs to be found to keep the pool open or to have a viable alternative and that swimming pools were significant parts of the community he grew up in and spoke regarding public pools in other communities.

Councilmember Simeon commented he thinks a pool and what it does for a community is tremendous and the lessons learned in swimming are transferrable to other areas of life. Councilmember Simeon commented he thinks the Town needs to look into alternative revenue possibilities and do what is possible to keep the pool open. Councilmember Simeon commented he looks at learning to swim in the same way as he looks at learning to read.

Councilmember VanCamp commented she is working with information she was given and there were surveys and studies done where people were interested in a splash pad but she is not sure that is presently the case. Councilmember VanCamp continued by commenting she understands that a pool is an outlet for kids in the summer.

Councilmember VanCamp commented the decision is difficult but she would refer to the community that uses the pool to help make the decisions and if the community would possibly forgo a year of pool use. Councilmember VanCamp commented she doesn't have all the answers but she looks at the potential and everyone will have to make difficult decisions if this is going to happen.

Mayor McNeill commented he thinks the 2009 plan was well-intended but disconnect is present between what was planned and where we are today and inquired if the splash pad contract has been executed.

Town Manager Parsons responded in the negative and commented there was no intent to move forward until a decision was made by Council.

Mayor McNeill inquired if there are any penalties for not executing the contract. Town Manager Parsons responded in the negative and commented there are no financial penalties other than what has been spent on design and engineering.

A motion was made by Mayor McNeill for Council direct staff to not proceed with the splash pad, for Recreation & Parks Director Robert Reeve to determine the cost to open the pool for the 2014 season, for Council to form and appoint a 5-member committee to review the Pool Park Master Plan to make sure the Pool Park plans are consistent with the desires of the community, and research to be conducted for potential funding sources, such as the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, as well as Community Development Block Grants.

Town Manager Parsons inquired if Mayor McNeill would include in the motion not to proceed with opening of bids for the performance stage until the long-term plan for Pool Park is determined. Mayor McNeill was in agreement.

Mayor McNeill commented he thinks a committee needs to be formed to work with staff in reviewing the Pool Park Master Plan.

Motion was seconded by Councilmember Walden.

Councilmember Simeon commented the Mayor's proposal gives the opportunity to evaluate available options and he encouraged Council to proceed.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields commented an Aquatics Study was done in 2005 and a redevelopment plan in 2009 where 500 people spoke regarding closing the pool and its alternative and commented he has been under the assumption that the pool would close and a splash pad would go in its place.

Mayor McNeill commented he did not hear any of the 500 people speak about the position they were in 5 years ago and the redevelopment plan in 2009 was well-intended and the perception was another pool would be built, which did not occur. Mayor McNeill continued by commenting he thinks the proposed committee will review the Pool Park Master Plan and make recommendations to Council at a Worksession for discussion and they will also work staff researching funding opportunities and he thinks it is worth pursuing.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields commented he is concerned that Council is just 'kicking the can down the road' again because a vote was called in 2005 to close the pool.

Councilmember VanCamp commented it would be ridiculous to have this happen all over again and that a time limit or specific goals should be set but with more community involvement.

Councilmember Simeon commented that Council has to look at the alternatives of renovation cost or building a new facility in a new location. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields commented Council has reviewed some of the alternatives which are very expensive and tough decisions will need to be made on where the funding will come from and what services or programs will not be provided to the Town to help fund a new pool.

Mayor McNeill commented he does not look to the Town to be the sole-provider of a new swimming pool and he can't see the Town undertaking such a large project without outside assistance.

Councilmember VanCamp commented she thinks a 5-member committee is a good idea as long as they have time constraints.

Mayor McNeill commented the committee will bring recommendations to Council prior to spending any money on opening the pool.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields commented the process to open the pool has to start now and he doesn't think the committee has time to deliver recommendations. Discussion ensued.

Councilmember VanCamp commented she would like to see the \$100,000 put towards something new and Council needs renovation totals to review.

Town Manager Parsons commented he will ask staff to compile the bare minimum totals for opening the pool for this year.

Discussion ensued regarding delaying opening the pool.

Mayor Pro Tem Fields inquired if the Mayor's motion would include delaying opening the pool for 1 year while the information is compiled. Mayor McNeill responded in the affirmative.

Motion carries unanimously.

C. Budget Amendment

- Fund Balance to Pool Park Plan \$25,000

**6. Public Comments**

Marsh Smith, 568 Santee Road, thanked Mayor McNeill for his leadership and commented it was a courageous stand in keeping the pool open. Mr. Smith continued by commenting that the problem with keeping the pool open is symptomatic of the problems in West Southern Pines and the underlying problem is many residential lots in West Southern Pines have had intestate succession issues. Mr. Smith continued by commenting with intestate succession issues, banks will not issue loans for remodeling or renovations and the Town needs to consider helping the Southern Pines Land and Trust receive a grant to help the community cleanup ownership titles which will help with revitalization in West Southern Pines.

Dorothy Brower, 102 Eastman Road, commented that dialogue tonight was not directed at one particular person and that people weren't aware of the Aquatics Study. Ms. Brower continued by commenting that she does not think Council had the numbers of the community in regards to closing the pool and this new opportunity can be more inclusive.

Tessie Taylor, 937 N. Ashe Street, commented she was one of the original people who requested and initiated the Aquatics Study and the problem lies in the premise that we can wait until the time to hold these types of discussions and these discussions should occur months prior to decisions being made.

Ms. Taylor continued by commenting the communication lines need to open and we need to hear where we are in project processes and the citizens are looking forward to working with the Town to get the best dollar-value for the community.

O'Linda Gillis, President of Moore County NAACP, commented that people came to speak regarding the use and continued use of the pool and that the citizens cannot read Council's minds regarding what they are looking for. Ms. Gillis continued by commenting that due to weather conditions, more young people were not in attendance but more could have been present to speak against closing the pool.

As so incorporated to these minutes of February 11, 2014 are exact copies as so recorded in the ordinance and resolution books of the Town of Southern Pines as fully set out in the minutes.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

---

Phillip Britt  
Town Clerk