

Town Council Work Session, February 22, 2022

The February 2022 Work Session for Altavista's Town Council was held in Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on February 22, 2022, at 5:00 PM.

Mayor Mike Mattox called the meeting to order and presided.

Town Council

Members present:

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett
Mr. Jay Higginbotham
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mayor Michael Mattox
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Absent member:

Mr. Tracy Emerson
Mr. Timothy George

Also Present:

Mr. Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
Mr. Thomas Merricks, APD Chief of Police
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. Tom Fore, Public Services Director
Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to the proposed February 2022 Council Work Session Agenda, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried:

VOTE:

Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

Councilman Tim George entered the meeting at this time, 5:05pm.

2. Recognitions and Presentations

2.1 Avoca Museum Annual Report and Fund Request

Mayor Mattox welcomed Caleb Lafoon, Avoca Executive Director, as well as several Avoca Board Members attending the meeting that evening.

Mr. Lafoon shared a PowerPoint presentation with Council and gave a brief overview of Avoca's activities in 2021, which included a list of "major events" held on the property.

- May Day - Community event with low entry cost to reach more people
- Volunteer Picnic - Acknowledgment of Avoca volunteers
- Where the Rivers Meet (previously known as the Avoca Wine Festival) This is Avoca's largest annual event with several hundred usually in attendance.
- Christmas at Avoca - Low-cost traditional event. Double the turnout from 2019
- Volunteer Dinner - Acknowledge volunteers
- Mill Mountain Theatre - collaborated with the YMCA
- Help with AOT's BBQ festival held at English Park
- Chamber of Commerce - TGIF events

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Mr. Lafoon also shared Avoca's revenue sources outside of the town's annual contribution.

- Membership remained the largest contributor to the budget at 38% in 2021
- With undesignated contributions coming in second at 34%
- Facility Rentals at 15% were down, due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Mr. Lafoon continued his presentation with a list of items that Avoca intended to improve upon or include in their annual schedule moving forward.

- Reach more citizens in the community
- Host new events to bring more people to Altavista
- Offer more family and child friendly interactive exhibits and events
- Create new exhibits to expand the museum's current offerings
- Build on existing assets to grow the Avoca Museum and property into a regional attraction and destination
- Forge partnerships with public and private K-12 schools
- Partner with local colleges, non-profits, and businesses to build Avoca's community network

Mr. Lafoon moved forward and presented Council with two funding requests from Avoca for Council's input and approval consideration.

Mr. Lafoon informed Town Council there was a significant amount of rotting wood on the mansion's exterior, which needed to be replaced prior a painting project scheduled for May 2022. He stated he discussed the matter with Public Works, which indicated they were unable to complete the entire scope of work prior to the scheduled painting date.

Mr. Lafoon stated that he solicited bids from fifteen (15) contractors, received three estimates, and out of the three, Brumfield Construction submitted the lowest bid at \$14,700. He said Brumfield also had the most experience with Avoca's type of woodwork, which was important when repairing historic structures like the Avoca mansion.

Mr. Lafoon stated, over the past couple of years the COVID pandemic had decreased the amount of revenue Avoca usually takes in, so they were unable to pay for the wood repair themselves at that time. He asked Town Council to consider allowing the cost of the wood repair project be covered through the Avoca Reserve Maintenance Fund (funded by the sale of the old EMS property and allocated specifically for maintenance of Avoca).

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions regarding the request.

Councilman Mitchell asked who conducted the regular maintenance for Avoca.

Mr. Lafoon stated Altavista's Public Works Department conducted most of the basic maintenance for the facility and on the property, however, any "specialized" maintenance was outsourced to contractors with knowledge of each specific area in need of attention.

Mayor Mattox reminded Council that, if approved, the cost to repair the rotting wood at Avoca would come from the Reserve Maintenance Fund allocated specifically for Avoca maintenance and CIP projects, therefore would not affect the FY2023 budget process; to which Altavista Treasurer and Finance Director Tobie Shelton confirmed.

Councilman George asked how much money was currently in Avoca's Maintenance Fund.

Mrs. Shelton stated there was \$172,000 remaining in the fund at that time, before the proposed project presented to Council that evening.

Mr. George asked Mr. Lafoon if the proposed project also included repairing the damaged shutters or were they just going to be replaced as needed.

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Mr. Lafoon stated the professional opinion of several contractors he contacted had been not to remove and replace the shutters, but to repair the shutters in place.

Councilman Higginbotham informed Mr. Lafoon of a couple of wood shutter manufacturers that may be able to replicate Avoca's old historic shutters for replacement and suggested he obtain a quote to compare with the price of repairing them.

Mr. Higginbotham suggested Mr. Lafoon also contact David Garrett, recently retired Public Works Director. He stated Mr. Garrett had the most knowledge of what maintenance was done to the Avoca property over the past ten years and may still have contact information for local contractors that specialize in historic restoration.

Vice Mayor Bennett shared his favor with Avoca's proposal/request. He stated he believed Avoca was an asset for the Town of Altavista and encouraged them to diligently maintain the property for historic prosperity and valuable knowledge for future generations.

There was a consensus of Town Council to authorize Avoca's Executive Director to utilize the Avoca Reserve Maintenance Fund to pay for repairs and some replacement of rotting wood on the exterior of their main facility (the mansion) by Brumfield Construction Company in the amount of \$14,700. Council recommended the work be done before the upcoming scheduled painting project of the mansion. Council also recommended Avoca implement an "Annual Maintenance Plan".

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Lafoon and the Avoca Board of Directors for their diligent efforts in preserving the Avoca Museum and property for Altavista and its visitors.

Mr. Lafoon stated that Avoca intended to transition from a local event space to a regional attraction with their new "Community-based Vision", which included:

- Longer operational times and more outreach beyond the Altavista area
- Create a closer relationship and integration with the Town of Altavista
- Larger emphasis on "community events", open more to the community
- Organizing volunteers for community events
- Work more closely with Altavista on Track and the Chamber of Commerce
- Integrating and offering a large attraction across the entire town of Altavista (with events spanning from Avoca to English Park)
- Drawing more involvement from local businesses and artists for events

Mr. Lafoon shared Avoca's second item of request for Council's consideration that evening, to change the part-time Events Coordinator position to a full-time Director of Event Planning and Community Engagement.

Mr. Lafoon stated the part-time position had a high turnover rate, with three different Coordinators, since 2012, leaving for full-time positions. He shared some of the duties that would be added to the full-time position if approved.

- Transition the position full-time and benefited (from 11, to 40 hours per week)
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce, AOT and other community organizations (YMCA etc.) to ensure no overlap when organizing and planning community events
- Organize local entertainment for events, including local artists and performers
- Partner with local businesses to ensure involvement and collaboration with events
- Work to double the number of events at Avoca by adding events during "off-season"
- Plan three new large community events in the spirit of Uncle Billy's Day, including a Fourth of July event, River Festival, and third event which has yet to be determined
- Build and manage a network of community volunteers to support and be utilized by both Avoca and the town during community events
- Create a regular newsletter in both print and electronic format to promote community events and happenings at Avoca
- Manage gift shop volunteers, inventory, and purchases

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Mr. Lafoon stated he believed transitioning to a full-time coordinator would benefit both Avoca and the Town of Altavista by promoting cohesion between community events. He stated it would also help grow Avoca's community presence and be an additional asset to the town when promoting Altavista as a great place to live.

Mr. Lafoon stated growing Avoca's presence would be a boost to local businesses and artists, which would in-turn produce additional revenue for the town.

Mr. Lafoon shared his favor with having a full-time coordinator, which would allow him, as Avoca's Executive Director, to pursue more partnerships with local schools, businesses, and organizations. He stated building those relationships would be key in building Avoca into a regional attraction for visitors.

Mr. Lafoon concluded his request presentation and thanked Council for their consideration.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any comments or questions concerning Avoca's request.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked if Avoca had discussed the proposed partnership for community events with Altavista On Track (AOT) and the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Lafoon said he spoke with both the town's Main Street Coordinator and the Chamber's Executive Director about the collaboration among town partners and the idea was well received. He stated he believed the cohesion would help produce more quality events for the community, as well as draw more people to town for the events. Mr. Lafoon stated the Avoca Board also supported the proposal.

Community Development Director Sharon Williams reminded Council that she and AOT's President, Reverend Ed Soto proposed a collaboration between Avoca, the Chamber, and AOT during a previous meeting two years ago. She stated they were all in support of the collaboration and had been trying to meet regularly to create a cohesive partnership. She said she would be opened to discussing Avoca's proposal further.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the town's previous attempt at starting a Steering Committee, which was intended to promote collaboration between all of the town's partners, but due to the COVID pandemic was unable to remain organized. He shared his favor in having a "mechanism" to promote collaboration between the town and its partners and he applauded Avoca for bringing a proposal to Town Council in an effort to fill a void that he believed was needed to create the town's desired collaboration.

Mr. Mitchell referenced Altavista's annual Uncle Billy's Day Festival, which had not been conducted for the past two years due to the COVID pandemic. He stated, if the town intended to continue the festival and "town brand", he believed having a full-time events coordinator on staff may be beneficial for that task.

Mr. Mitchell also stated he believed the proposal needed to be discussed further with the Town Manager, as it would be up to his "vision" for his staff and their responsibilities.

Councilman George asked how soon Avoca needed to hire an events coordinator.

Mr. Lafoon stated, in order to start executing the future vision of Avoca as the board desired, they would pursue a full-time person immediately after Council approval.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if Avoca intended to continue offering its facility and property as a wedding venue.

Mr. Lafoon stated they did. He stated weddings continue to be a good source of revenue for Avoca and he intended to retool the process to improve on the wedding service that Avoca offers in order to be more competitive with other local venues in that category.

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Mr. Higginbotham suggested that Avoca utilize the talent from the many local colleges for the program it currently offered and its intended future growth. He stated that he considered Avoca as an economic asset and marketing tool for the Town of Altavista.

Councilman Lowman stated he appreciated Avoca, not only partnering with the town and its other partners on the events currently offered, but also intending to create new events.

Dr. Lowman stated, if the town intended to expand its list of events in order to grow as a community, it would be beneficial to consider and potentially support such proposals that would help move that desire forward.

Mayor Mattox stated, with this being his first few months as Avoca's Executive Director, he suggested Mr. Lafoon take the opportunity to learn the Town of Altavista and its partners and organizations and allow them to get to know him as well.

Mayor Mattox stated, since the town was already in the middle of its annual budget process, he suggested Avoca start building partner relationships/collaborations now and bring the proposal back to Council at the beginning of the next fiscal year's budget process.

Mayor Mattox informed Mr. Lafoon that he would discuss Avoca's request with the Town Manager and the town's Finance Director, but he believed the item would be better suited for consideration if redirected as a request during the next fiscal year budget process.

Councilman Mitchell suggested allowing staff to figure the cost of what the proposed full-time position would be and to place the item on a future work session for further discussion once Council had the additional information.

There was a consensus of Council to place this item on their March Work Session Agenda.

2.2 Davenport Presentation - Town of Altavista Comprehensive Financial Review

Assisted by Town Staff, Davenport & Company conducted a comprehensive financial review for the Town of Altavista. Mr. R.T. Taylor, Davenport Vice President, presented Town Council with a brief overview of the draft report that was compiled with the results from the review to date.

Mr. Taylor referenced Davenport's provision of financial services to the Town of Altavista since 2006, and its last Comprehensive Financial Review for the town in 2019. He stated the 2022 review would bring forward the same concepts, and how it relates to the town's progress on its major Enterprise (Utility) Fund capital needs.

Mr. Taylor stated the report was comprised of three main categories:

- General Fund Overview
- Enterprise (Utilities) Fund Overview
- Overview of the town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Program and Pro Forma

Mr. Taylor informed Council that Altavista's General Fund and Enterprise Fund were currently "in good shape", however, he encouraged Council to keep in mind that inflation had continued to increase over the past few months and to be mindful of that factor when considering any potential borrowings, rate increases, and CIP projects during the FY2023-2027 Budget and CIP process.

Mr. Taylor stated that the goals and objectives for this financial review were to provide the town with perspective pertaining to its General Fund and Enterprise Fund with respect to historical operating trends and peer comparison. He stated the review would also help determine whether the town's planned utility rate increases were sufficient or if some adjustments needed to be made.

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Mr. Taylor shared observations for the General Fund noted in the report document. He stated town revenue and expenditures had both grown over the past five years, however, the town had remained compliant and well above its current target of 50% over the same timeframe for its Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB) Policy.

Mr. Taylor shared an “analysis” for UFB by taking the town’s FY2021 ending UFB, minus the minimum 50% for policy reserves, leaving approximately \$6 million that could potentially be utilized towards the town’s capital improvement needs. He reminded Council that Best Practices dictate, and credit lenders expect to see come cushion over and above policy should the town ever experience an economic downturn.

Mr. Taylor stated Council had discussed a plan during the town’s 2019 financial review to allocate \$2 million of its UFB to the Enterprise Fund (Utilities) to help fund capital improvement needs and to help smooth out the impact related to utility rate increases.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their input on this matter.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with doing so. He asked why the Enterprise Fund’s percentage was currently below the Town Policy.

Public Services Director Tom Fore reiterated the 2019 plan to allocate \$2 million to the Enterprise Fund and stated the plan was approved but never implemented, therefore leaving the low fund balance.

Mr. Mitchell asked Altavista Treasurer/Finance Director Tobie Shelton if the \$1 million Council approved for the Vista Theater Restoration Project was in the “committed” portion of the General Fund or the unassigned, to which she confirmed it was in committed revenue.

Mr. Taylor stated the \$2 million would be considered an allocation and transfer from one fund to another. He stated it would be Davenport’s recommendation to transfer the funds to bring the Enterprise Fund’s balance back up to Town Policy of 50%, and the General Fund would still maintain a balance over and beyond the policy.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Taylor if he thought interest rates might climb over the next year or so while the economy adjusted to the recent market increases.

Mr. Taylor informed Council that interest rates had been “ticking up” over the last few months, which was increasing the town’s ability to increase its investment earnings.

Mr. Taylor continued observations in the General Fund with the peer analysis in budget and population for both regional and state comparatives. He shared Real Estate Tax rates from fifteen surrounding localities, ranging from 0.07 to 0.22, with Altavista having next to the lowest rate at 0.08 percent.

Mr. Taylor stated Altavista also offered many public services that were not being charged but a free service to its citizens, such as trash and bulk pickup and leaf and snow removal. He referenced Altavista’s Key Debt Ratio; the existing tax-supported debt to its assessed value. He stated Altavista had the lowest debt to assessed value among its peers.

Mr. Taylor stated these assets were a “brag sheet” when promoting Altavista as a good place to live, and also gives Altavista a favorable rating with lenders, if needed.

Mr. Taylor moved forward in his presentation with an overview of the town’s Enterprise Fund. He informed Council that Enterprise (Utilities) revenue had grown 5.1% annually over the past five years, and Enterprise expenditures had grown 4.9% over the same period.

Mr. Taylor reminded Council that the VRA (State Bank) required at least 1.15% of debt coverage in reserve. He stated, as it pertained to Best Practices, the Town of Altavista continued to maintain its debt service coverage above the 1.25% mark.

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Mr. Taylor continued overviewing the Enterprise Fund with its Capital Improvement Plan over the next five years and comparisons between fund uses and fund resources. He shared a summary of assumptions for pay-go (cash on hand) and debt-funded projects, with a total of \$12,778,500 funded by debt service.

Mr. Taylor concluded his presentation and stated he would be happy to answer any questions that Town Council may have in regard to the Comprehensive Financial Review.

Mayor Mattox referenced the fore-mentioned discussion of transferring funds from the General Fund to the Enterprise Fund to maintain town policy. He stated Council would need to vote on the item to make it official.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tim George, to approve the transfer of \$2 million to the Enterprise Fund from the town's General Fund to bring the account back up to town policy (50%).

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Tim George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or comments for Mr. Taylor pertaining to Davenport's 2022 Comprehensive Financial Review of the Town of Altavista.

Councilman George stated he was happy to hear that the town was financially stable.

Vice Mayor Bennett shared his appreciation for the town's continued efforts of maintaining its financial stability without having a tremendous impact to its citizens. He stated he believed it was a remarkable accomplishment to offer so many services for such a low cost.

Councilman Mitchell asked Mr. Taylor if there was anything he believed the town could improve on pertaining to financial practices.

Mr. Taylor stated "he tipped his hat" to Town Staff and Town Council for being in sync and paying close respect to town policies. He suggested Council be mindful of the continued rise in inflation as well as the current decrease in availability of contractors.

Councilman Mitchell shared his appreciation for Tobie Shelton for the "miraculous" job she does as Altavista's Treasurer and Finance Director, to which all Council members concurred and applauded Mrs. Shelton.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Taylor for his time and the presentation of Davenport's Comprehensive Financial Report for Altavista.

3. Citizen's Time

Mayor Mattox opened the meeting floor to any citizen(s) wishing to address Town Council, to which there were none.

4. Items Referred from Previous Meetings

There were no referred items to discuss.

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5. Discussion for Items New and Unfinished

5.1 English Park Wayfinding Signs and Jenks River Trail Bridge #2 – Funding Request

Altavista’s Public Services Director Tom Fore reminded Council of their approval, in a 2021 meeting, to move forward with implementing the Wayfinding Signs Project and the installation of the second bridge on the Jenks River Trail in English Park, but no funds were identified at that time to fund these projects.

Mr. Fore stated, under recommendation from Councilman George, also a Recreation Committee member, Staff was asking for Council’s consideration of using the funds that were originally earmarked in the 2022 CIP for the bathroom addition in English Park, which due to Flood Zone issues, would not be built, to fund the Wayfinding Signs Project and 2nd Jenks River Trail bridge. The allocated amount for the bathrooms was \$125,000.

Councilman Mitchell asked for the estimated cost of each fore-mentioned project.

Mr. Fore stated the Wayfinding Signs Project was estimated at \$52,000, with included mile markers along the entire trail system; and the 2nd Jenks River Trail Bridge Project was approximately \$50,000, half of the amount was for the new bridge and the other half for preparation and installation of the bridge.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if funds had been allocated to extend the existing trail from the 1st Jenks River Trail bridge to the River Overlook on Eagle Trail, to which Mr. Fore answered that funds were not currently allocated for that project.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Councilman Jay Higginbotham, to approve reallocating the funds (\$124,000) from the Eagle Trail Bathrooms Project, which, due to flood zone issues was no longer a CIP item, to cover the cost of the Wayfinding Signs Project, \$52,000, and the 2nd bridge for the Jenks River Trail Project, \$50,000. The motion included also reallocating the funds for repurposing the back fields of English Park to be combined with the remaining Jenks funds to begin extending the Jenks River Trail to the new River Overlook.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Tim George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

5.2 Garbage Truck Repairs #1091(newest)

Altavista Public Works Manager Jeff Arthur reminded Town Council that the town had a new Garbage Truck on order, however, they continued to wait on the new truck to be delivered for the garbage body to be installed.

Mr. Arthur informed Council that the town was working diligently to keep both old garbage trucks functioning in order to get up garbage 4 days per week, but the cost to maintain these vehicles had continued to rise.

Mr. Arthur stated Staff was seeking Council’s consideration to allow a transfer of \$5,000 from the Sanitation Garbage Can Replacement CIP line item, not currently needed, and \$5,494.88 from Reserves, to cover a \$10,494.88 emergency repair to the newest of the two old garbage trucks (2016 Peterbilt).

Councilman Mitchell stated he believed the Public Works Department should have an Emergency Fund to cover such costs.

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Councilman Higginbotham referenced the matter of the Town of Altavista collecting garbage for the Town of Hurt and asked where the revenue from that contract was placed.

Finance Director Tobie Shelton stated a portion of those funds were appropriated for the purchase of the new garbage truck, and the other portion in that department's budget.

Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any additional questions, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell, to approve Staff's request and authorize \$5,494.88 from Reserves, and the reappropriation of \$5,000 from a CIP item not currently needed, to cover the cost of repairing the town's 2016 Peterbilt Garbage Truck.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Tim George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

5.3 FY2023 CIP Item – Order/Deposit Request

Background:

At the January 25th Work Session, Council requested a listing of various equipment included in the proposed FY2023 CIP, for consideration of moving forward with the purchasing process. At the February 2022 Regular Meeting, it was the consensus of Council to allow staff to move forward with ordering selected equipment on the listing after revisions were made, due to increasing costs and delayed delivery times.

Public Works Manager Jeff Arthur stated that Hawkins-Graves was the lowest quote received for the new Site Dumper (a FY2023 CIP item).

Public Services Director Tom Fore informed Council that Hawkins-Graves was requesting a ten percent deposit of \$4,420 to order the item at the current price of \$44,200. He stated Staff was asking for Council's consideration of approval to order the new Site Dumper with a ten percent deposit, not to take delivery until July 1st.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Jay Higginbotham, to approve Staff's request and authorize \$4,420 from Reserves to cover the cost of the deposit for the Site Dumper.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Tim George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

5.4 Spark Innovation Center Update and Contractor Completion Date Extension Request

Background:

On August 13, 2021, the Town issued a Notice of Award to Piney Ridge Consulting and Contracting to renovate the vacant fire station at 508 7th Street for use as a business incubator, accelerator, and coworking space to be known as the Spark Innovation Center.

Community Development Director Sharon Williams reminded Council that the original Substantial Completion date for the Spark Innovation Center was March 6, 2022.

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Ms. Williams informed Council that Staff granted two extension requests, based on the recommendation of the design team, which moved the Substantial Completion date to April 19th. She stated, when the contractor (Piney Ridge) requested an additional extension until June 1st, Staff asked the contractor to provide an update to Town Council on the project and share their explanation for the extension request.

Ms. Williams referenced the one-year, \$100,000 USDA Rural Business Development Grant, received by the town to purchase furniture and fixtures for the Spark Innovation Center. She stated, due to the extended completion date, staff requested and received a one-year extension on the grant until June 30, 2022.

Ms. Williams stated staff was concerned that the funds would not be expended by this date if the completion date continued to be extended. She stated that staff was also concerned that another grant extension request could hurt the town's standing on future grant applications, as questions may be raised about the town's capacity, due to the delays on this project.

Ms. Williams asked for Council's input and direction on this matter.

Mayor Mattox suggested staff move forward with ordering the Spark Innovation Center's furniture and equipment and utilizing the Booker Building to store the items until needed.

Councilman Higginbotham asked for the lead time on the delivery of said items. He stated some of the equipment was delicate in nature and was not a good idea to move often.

Councilman Mitchell shared his dislike with using the Booker Building to store said furniture and equipment. He reminded Council, with spring approaching, that "rentals" of the facility would be increasing soon.

Public Service Director Tom Fore informed Council of a large storage "box" located at Public Works that could be utilized if needed.

Mr. Higginbotham asked if the Spark Innovation Center would be far enough along to hold the items, if ordered now and delivery was requested closer to June 1st.

Mayor Mattox asked the project's contractor (present that evening) for confirmation that the project would be completed by June 1st, if the additional extension was granted.

The contractor confirmed it would be, except for the interior doors, which would be the last things they installed.

Ms. Williams stated she believed some of the more sensitive equipment needed to be in a climate-controlled area, not in a storage building.

Councilman Lowman concurred with Ms. Williams and stated it would be best to have that type of equipment delivered directly to the Spark Innovation Center.

Councilman Higginbotham recommended Ms. Williams move forward with ordering the Spark Innovation Center's furniture and equipment in order to "lock-in" the current prices, and when doing so, specify the best dates suited for delivery.

There was a consensus of Town Council for staff to move forward with Mr. Higginbotham's recommendation.

Councilman Mitchell stated, per Mr. Fore, any equipment that needed to be installed could be done and the remainder of the items be placed in storage at Public Works if needed.

Mr. Higginbotham asked when the Spark Innovation Center was scheduled to open.

Ms. Williams stated, if the extension request was approved, the opening date would be moved to July 1st, 2022.

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Councilman Jay Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman, to approve the extension request by Piney Ridge for the Spark Innovation Center Project, making the Substantial Completion date June 1st, 2022.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Tim George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

5.5 Vista Theater Update

At the August 24, 2021, Town Council Work Session, Council directed staff to work with the Vista Theater Project's design team to put a new roof on the Vista Theater, to ensure it was weather tight and prevent any further damage and/or deterioration to the facility. It was understood that this would include any repair to the roof structure that might be required to support the loads of a roof-mounted HVAC system. A Preliminary Condition Assessment was performed by Master Engineers in May of 2020 and subsequent inspections have been performed by Dominion Seven Architects and Master Engineers. The Town Manager, Dr. Scott Lowman, and the Community Development Director met with Dominion Seven and Hurt & Proffitt to discuss the project and it was recommended that Town Council receive and update and provide direction to the team.

Community Development Director Sharon Williams stated, as the design team seeks clarification on the next steps to proceed, she introduced Jacob Caldwell, Dominion Seven, to update Council on the progress of the roof replacement for the Vista Theater.

Mr. Caldwell shared photos with Council showing the interior and exterior roof of the Vista Theater. He informed Council there were layers built up on top of the original roof lying underneath the visible metal roof; and that the framework holding the metal roof was not up to current State Code standards and would need to be replaced, not just repaired.

Mr. Caldwell stated there was also concern for the integrity of the roof structure itself, due to the previous fire, water leakage over time, or considering the age of the structure. He stated they would be removing the underlying ceiling to better assess the condition of the condition of the roof structure.

Mr. Caldwell informed Council that he had contacted the Department of Historical Resources (DHR) to inquire if the restoration work to the roof would affect the town's ability to qualify for historic tax credits on the Vista Theater Project, to which it did not.

Mr. Caldwell stated rooves of that age usually contained asbestos. He stated samples had been taken from the Vista Theater, and the team was awaiting the results of that test.

Mayor Mattox asked if the theater roof overlapped the General Store's side of the building.

Mr. Caldwell confirmed that it did, however, to avoid potential issues, the team would make sure the contractor removing the old roofing material did not disturb that side/area.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the roof replacement would be "phased" in order to ensure there would not be leaking issues into the interior space.

Mr. Caldwell confirmed the process would be phased and each section of new roof structure would be sealed before moving forward to the next section, with new roofing material being installed immediately after the roof's new support structure was completed.

Councilman Higginbotham reminded Mr. Caldwell of the town's desire to have the Vista Theater's new HVAC system located on the roof of the facility.

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Mr. Higginbotham stated the town was looking to Dominion Seven, Masters Engineering, and Hurt & Proffitt to find a viable solution to that task.

Mr. Caldwell stated there would be an indoor and outdoor unit to the new HVAC system. He stated, if the roof did not support the weight of the outdoor unit, then a “plan b” would need to be considered, which would include housing the unit on an overhead structure in the alley, off the rear exterior wall of the building.

Mr. Higginbotham stated, at that point in the project, the main goal was to get the building (Vista Theater) “dried in” and sealed tight to resist water from entering and to allow the HVAC system to serve its purpose throughout the entire facility.

Mayor Mattox concurred with Mr. Higginbotham, stating, without knowing the future use of the facility, that was the town’s main goals of Phase I of the project.

Councilman George asked if there was room in the existing layout to accommodate an ADA bathroom or would the floor plan have to be changed.

Mr. Caldwell confirmed there was enough room to add an ADA bathroom in the existing layout, however, they would need to reconfigure one side of the main entrance from Main Street in order to accommodate ADA access into the theater.

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger asked if the roof renovation qualified for Historic Tax Credits.

Mr. Caldwell stated Historic Tax Credits could only be used on a project once, so he suggested utilizing the credits during Phase II of the project, exterior and interior design.

Mr. Shanaberger asked how many seats the facility would hold.

Mr. Caldwell stated that the number had been estimated, but he did not have the information with him that evening. He stated he would share that information with the Town Manager through email the next day.

Mayor Mattox asked if state and federal tax credits could be separated for use on different items of a project.

Mr. Caldwell stated state and federal tax credits were combined as one package and required to be used together.

There were no further questions or comments from Town Council regarding this item.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Caldwell for the progress update on the Vista Theater Project.

5.6 Planning Commission Request for Consideration – Student Ex-Officio

Background:

At its February 7, 2022 meeting the Planning Commissioners discussed adding an Ex-officio Student Representative to the Commission, to encourage participation from younger members of the community.

Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director, shared with Council that a vacancy recently occurred on the Planning Commission, and while discussing the vacancy for a possible recommendation to Town Council, the Commissioners all agreed they would like to have someone younger appointed.

Ms. Williams stated, at their February 7th meeting, she shared with the Commission that, in some localities, a student representative is appointed, in a non-voting capacity. She stated, the idea was favored and a consensus made to request Council’s consideration of having a Student Representative Ex-Officio Planning Commissioner.

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Ms. Williams asked for Council's input and direction for allowing the Planning Commission and Town Staff to discuss the potential new position with the Altavista Combined School, and thereafter, present a list of names to Town Council for their consideration of appointment.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor with the idea/request and suggested having two student representatives on the Planning Commission.

Ms. Williams stated it would be up to Council how many student representatives to allow.

Councilman Mitchell reminded Council that the Planning Commission only asked for one student representative.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his favor with the request and suggested Council start with one student at that time and, if successful, allow other committees to also have a student representative if they desired to do so.

Ms. Williams suggested, if the school approved the program, obtaining two students, with one serving as an "alternate" if the other was not available. She informed Council that, if Council approved the request, there would also need to be a code change to authorize an additional Ex-Officio on the Planning Commission, as the current code only allows the Commission to have one.

There was a consensus of Town Council to authorize the Planning Commission to proceed with discussions with the Altavista High School and present the opportunity of a Student Representative as an Ex-Officio member of the Planning Commission; and allowing two students, with one serving as an "alternate" in case the other was not available.

5.7 Request for Use of Shreve Park for Cruise-In Events

Community Development Director Sharon Williams referenced a Special Event Permit recently requested by Backwoods Rods & Customs to use the Altavista Trade Lot, adjacent to Shreve Park, for their 1st Saturday Cruise-In/Car Shows.

Ms. Williams reminded Council that the organization originally held the events at the Trade Lot but were asked to find another location due to other events happening in the park on the same days. She said the organization had done so for the past couple of years, however, there was an issue with the restrooms being so far away from the event site for elderly members and event goers when using the alternate location.

Ms. Williams stated Backwoods Rods & Customs was seeking Council's consideration to allow them to return to the Altavista Trade Lot at Shreve Park for their Cruise-Ins.

Mayor Mattox asked what time of day the Cruise-Ins started, to which Ms. Williams answered the events started at 4:00 pm.

Mayor Mattox suggested, for an additional revenue opportunity, the Band Booster should consider opening their concession stand, located at the Trade Lot, during the Cruise-Ins.

With a motion by Councilman Jay Higginbotham, seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman, Town Council approved the Special Event Permit request by Backwoods Rods & Customs, to hold their Cruise-In/Car Shows at the Altavista Trade Lot on the first Saturday of each month, April through October 2022, from 4:00-8:00pm.

VOTE:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

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5.8 Town of Altavista – Policy Discussion

Public Services Director Tom Fore stated, it had been brought to his attention that the town did not have a policy pertaining to allowing Industrial or Commercial entities to install driveways coming from town-maintained streets.

Mr. Fore stated staff was seeking Council's input and permission to draft a policy pertaining to ingress and egress for Commercial properties for their consideration.

Councilman Mitchell asked if there was currently a town policy pertaining to the same subject for residential properties, to which Mr. Fore answered there was not.

Mr. Fore informed Council that the subject had never been required by the Commonwealth of Virginia. He stated the matter does not impact residential properties as it does commercial and industrial properties.

Regarding ingress and egress of Commercial Properties, there was a consensus of Town Council for Town Staff to draft a viable policy for their review and consideration. Council recommended referencing VDOT's existing policy on the matter.

6. Updates and Informational Items

- Town Manager Gary Shanaberger referenced the upcoming Bluegrass Festival being held at English Park. He stated the event was originally scheduled for two days, Friday and Saturday, however, it had been shortened to only one day, Saturday, April 23rd. he stated Town Staff would be meeting with the organizer of the event the following week and he would keep Council up to date on the progress of the event.
- Chief Tommy Merricks informed Council that the new speed limit radar sign recently arrived and had been placed on Lola Avenue. He stated he believed the item would help deter and decrease speeding in certain areas of town.

7. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

There were no public comments on this date.

8. Matters from Council

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional comments or items for discussion, to which there were none.

9. Closed Session

I move that the Altavista Town Council convene in closed session in accordance with the provisions set out in the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended,

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett and seconded by Councilman Wayne Mitchell.

Motion carried.

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes	Mayor Michael Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes	Vice Mayor Bennett	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes	Mr. Timothy George	Yes

Town Council went into Closed Session at 7:25 PM.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 7:37 PM.

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FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman, to adopt the certification of a closed meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the town council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the town council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the town council hereby certifies, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the town council.

VOTE:	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes	Vice Mayor Bennett	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes	Mayor Michael Mattox	Yes

Notice was given to Town Staff that, during Closed Session, Town Council voted 6-0 on both accounts to appoint Megan Bolling to the Altavista Planning Commission; and appoint Deborah Lewis Robinson to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

10. Adjournment

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any additional comments or concerns from Town Council, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox adjourned this portion of the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Michael E. Mattox, Mayor

Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager/Town Clerk