

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MAY 23, 2017

The work session of the Council of the Town of Altavista was held in the Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on May 23, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Council members

present:

Mayor Michael Mattox  
Mrs. Micki Brumfield  
Mrs. Beverley Dalton  
Mr. Timothy George  
Mrs. Tanya Overbey

Council members

absent:

Mr. Tracy Emerson  
Mr. Jay Higginbotham

Also present:

Mr. J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Town Manager  
Mr. Daniel Witt, Assistant Town Manager  
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Finance Director  
Mr. Dennis Jarvis, Economic Dev. Director  
Deputy Chief Kenneth Moorefield, APD  
Mr. David Garrett, Director of Public Works  
Mr. Tom Fore, Director of Public Utilities  
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney  
Mrs. Mary Hall, Administration

1. Mayor Mattox called the meeting to order and presided.
2. Mrs. Overbey, seconded by Mrs. Brumfield, made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Michael Mattox	Yes
	Mrs. Micki Brumfield	Yes
	Mrs. Beverly Dalton	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mrs. Tanya Overbey	Yes

3. Public Comments—Agenda Items Only

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone would like to speak on anything listed on the agenda.

Mrs. Carol Day, Bedford Avenue, approached Council in regards to the proposed trail behind the cemetery, stated she read land would be purchased in order to do this, and asked if this was correct.

Mr. George replied that this was not correct.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there is the potential to purchase adjacent property.

Mrs. Day expressed concern if the Public Works Department will be able to keep up the new addition along with all the other projects. All these ideas come up but no one has said how it would be taken care of and asked if other things in the town would be left behind because of the new addition. She referred to the \$40,000 in the budget and the \$20,000 in the FY2017 budget with no definite plans.

Mrs. Brumfield stated the \$20,000 has already be approved for the Recreation Committee; it just hasn't been used yet.

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone else would like to speak.

No one came forward.

4. Introductions and Special Presentations

5. Items for Discussion

a. Machinery & Tools Tax Discussion

Mr. Coggsdale advised at Council's last meeting, staff was asked to provide a comparison of the Machinery & Tools tax rates of local communities. He provided Council with a chart that shows each localities' rates; the assessment method and then the "effective rate" for each community. He stated the "effective rate" enables comparison between communities even though the assessment methods may vary. Mr. Coggsdale noted the Town of Altavista is projecting approximately \$1.6 million from this revenue source in FY2017. He provided the Real Estate tax rate from the same communities, as the business/industry also has to pay taxes for this purpose and this gives a truer picture of the total "tax" bill. He also provided a "scenario" of what a tax obligation would look like with the communities' rates.

Mayor Mattox asked if a comparison on water rates had been done.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he has not; the issue with water is if an industry is a high water user they are going to get a better deal here than anywhere else.

Mrs. Dalton noted the town of Altavista has the lowest rates in the region.

Mayor Mattox stated a former plant manager advised he did not look at the Machinery & Tools tax because the incentives offered up front offset the tax.

Mr. Jarvis noted there are various reasons why a company selects a particular location. Every scenario ran comes up with a different reason why one location was chosen over another.

Mayor Mattox presented Council with a Corporate Survey Ratings of site sectors and noted the "Availability of Skilled Labor" tops the list. He noted out of the 26 items listed, Machinery & Tools is not on the list. He did not feel corporations look for Machinery & Tools tax as a high priority.

Mr. Jarvis stated the availability of skilled labor is a high priority for potential businesses to the area.

Mayor Mattox noted the town only has a certain number of revenue streams. If the Machinery and Tools tax was removed or reduced, the Town would have to increase another source such as real estate taxes or utility rates.

Mrs. Dalton mentioned everything would have to be adjusted.

Mr. Coggsdale advised the Machinery and Tools tax is the largest revenue source on the General Fund side with the Meal's Tax being second. He felt there was a good balance. Machinery and Tool affects the industry side. The Meals tax affects people that don't live here and or don't own real estate.

Mrs. Dalton reminded Council utilities are feeding from the General Fund and has been done traditionally when needed; the operating side is about there but not the capital side. The industries are greatly benefiting from the utilities; we are using some of the Machinery and Tools tax revenue that the industry pays to give back to utilities. The utility side benefits everyone in the town; residents as well as industries.

Mr. Coggsdale suggested the Machinery and Tools tax be a topic for discussion at the Retreat.

Mrs. Dalton stated the first reason to look at the Machinery and Tools tax is to determine if it is a deterrent. Is it keeping industry from coming to this town? She noted in the past 12 to 18 months, there have been expansions and new business coming to Town. She did not feel the tax had been a deterrent.

Mrs. Overbey felt comfortable with continuing the discussion of the tax structure. She felt the Machinery and Tool tax was fine as is. She would be more interested in a discussion if the previous increase in the meals and cigarette taxes would allow for further reduction of real estate taxes in the future.

Mr. George stated the idea of cutting the Machinery and Tool tax looks like a good idea until you start looking at it; looking at lower real estate taxes and lower utilities is a good deal for corporations.

Mrs. Brumfield was in agreement with Mrs. Dalton stating Council doesn't know what the impact will be on what has been cut thus far. Council doesn't want to put themselves in a position of cutting all the taxes then not have any funds coming in.

Mayor Mattox stated the best way to lower tax rates is to increase the tax base.

b. ACTS Grants/Financial Management Policies/Procedures

Mr. Coggsdale advised ACTS is required to adopt an Operations Policy as part of their grant. He presented Council with a draft of the policy.

It was the consensus of Council to place the Operations Policy on the June 13<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting consent agenda.

c. Recreation Update (Master Planning and Trail Development)

Mr. Coggsdale advised the Recreation Committee would like to begin the process of requesting proposals for the Master Plan for both English Park and the town-wide sidewalk and trail plan related to the town's park system. In the FY2017 Budget, \$40,000 was allocated for the English Park Master Planning work; these funds have not been expended due to the Town only recently getting approval from the County concerning conveyance of the property. He noted a deed to the property has not been delivered to the Town, as the attorneys are working through a railroad agreement that needs to be addressed. He added \$40,000 is included in the proposed FY2018 Budget for the sidewalk/trail Master Plan. Staff would like to begin development of a Request for Proposals to address both the park and sidewalk/trail master plans.

Mrs. Overbey referred to the legal issues surrounding the conveyance and asked if this will all be worked out or is there something to be seriously worried about.

Mr. Eller stated he did not see anything that would stop the Town from acquiring the County's portion of the park. He noted there is a 12-page lease that the county entered into with the railroad involving the usage of the road under the train tracks. This lease includes \$200 annual rent; \$1,000 every 5 years, which is paid up until 2021. He noted \$750 administrative fee is due for any changes to the lease. Mr. Eller stated at this point he has not gotten in touch with the authorized personnel with the Railroad to address these changes. The County has entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth (Department of Conservation and Recreation) to reserve the park for recreational purposes in order to receive a \$75,000 grant that needs to be transferred as well.

Mr. Coggsdale asked Council if they wanted to move forward with the funding of the RFP for the Master Plan.

Council agreed with the funding of the RFP for the Master Plan.

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MAY 23, 2017

Mr. George mentioned that he found out today about a large parcel of land that runs along the river in Evington where the topsoil then white sand will be sold off. After this, the area will be turned into a reservoir or lake. He referred to Mr. Fore's idea of a reservoir at the park and felt it would be nice if the topsoil from there could be sold.

Mr. Coggsdale advised there is \$20,000 in the FY2017 budget for the "cemetery" trail and asked Council how they would like to handle. He mentioned he has been working with Councilman George and has received a call in regards to the Frisbee Golf noting this person designs courses. He presented Council with some maps of the proposed trail.

Mrs. Dalton stated her thought is minimal is better because what is being looked at is natural settings. There is plenty of land that is open down in the park for more open settings. She stated you want to be able to walk the trail, hike the trail, and asked is this to be for biking as well because that might call for a different set of standards.

Mr. George explained the presented map stating the trail starts behind the Mausoleum, hugs the edge of the cemetery and ends at a road that is already maintained by the Town, which comes out into the main loop of English Park. He said from what he is learning people like loops. He mentioned there are two very steep areas that have ridges, and would require drainpipes and at the bottom, bridges are being considered.

Mrs. Dalton stated developing something like that is a process. If Council knows what they want to do with the trails and park it would be helpful, don't want to over design it.

Mr. George stated he is working with Mr. Coggsdale and Mr. Witt to put together a bid package.

Mayor Mattox asked if these trails are being designed for locals, noting the mausoleum is there and there are two houses, this comes out in a R1 area. He asked if it would just be a trail.

Mr. George stated the trail would start behind the mausoleum noting there is room behind the mausoleum for vehicles to park. He stated people who are avid bikers and hikers will travel. He felt the trails would be an attraction and an amenity for people living in the town.

Mayor Mattox asked if there is the vision that people from outside of town would be parking their vehicles beside of the mausoleum and using this as a beginning point for the hike. He asked how many cars could park there.

Mr. Coggsdale stated this is all items for Council to discuss; is this an amenity Council wants to attach to this trailhead.

Mrs. Dalton asked if the car could be parked at English Park.

Mr. George stated there are some bikers that would do this because of the challenge.

Mrs. Dalton did not feel Council knew enough to give staff direction at this time.

Mrs. Overbey suggested the Master Plan be considered first and through that process, there may be answers to some of the questions.

Mayor Mattox stated there are a number of people that would like to see this happen and asked for a timeline for the Master Plan.

Mr. Coggsdale stated a RFP would have to be developed for the Master Plan; the Master Plan process could start in early FY2018.

Mayor Mattox suggested this be carried over to the FY2018.

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MAY 23, 2017

Mr. George stated the Parks and Recreation Committee has been discussing this for 4 ½ years. It is 75 acres of land that has nothing to do with English Park. The Committee did not see this as part of the Master Plan but might connect to the Park at a future date. He stated the property is so nice and is remote. The consensus at the last Recreation Committee meeting was to move forward with this project.

Mrs. Overbey verified that the Recreation Committee wants to treat this as a separate project from the Master Plan.

Mr. George stated the Recreation Committee is looking at conducting surveys to get input from residents for the Park. The trails would be a different issue and not a part unless Council deems that it needs to be.

Mayor Mattox did not feel it would be much of a delay.

Mrs. Brumfield asked if the \$20,000 would take care of this.

Mr. George stated it is unknown until the bid packages come in.

Mrs. Dalton felt Council should plan if the trail is going to connect to the park and it is town property.

Mr. George stated the trail plan was in place before the idea of acquiring the English Park portion from the County.

Mrs. Dalton felt planning and then putting the bids out to do all at one time makes more sense.

Mr. George stated at this point it has not been determined what would be put in the English Park portion, which would not affect the proposed trail.

Mrs. Dalton stated from the concept of being the funding body, it's the dollars. She is looking at it as an all-encompassing recreation piece.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there are two Master Plans that are being thought about; one that is just the County's portion of English Park, which could also encompass the town's English Park. There is a second component Master Plan that involves pedestrian and biking creating connectivity in town. The Master Plan would tell how everything fits on a piece of property versus the connectivity of where to put trails.

Mrs. Dalton stated the trails could affect planning and it affects the dollar to which Mrs. Overbey was in agreement. Prioritizing with the Master Plan could save dollars.

Mr. George stated he was ready to move forward with the trails. He respectfully disagreed with waiting for the Master Plan.

Mrs. Brumfield said she was okay with moving forward, she thought Council would be moving forward with the Recreation Committee using the already budgeted \$20,000.

Mr. Coggsdale noted the \$20,000 is dedicated to the trails at this time. The staff wants Council to know where it is proposed and a picture in their mind of what it will look like when it is built.

Mrs. Dalton stated this was the original idea but things have changed. She felt this topic is divided and should not be placed on the consent agenda.

Mayor Mattox asked how long it would take to get the Master Plan.

Mr. George stated it could possibly take a year because the Recreation Committee wants to conduct surveys to see what citizens want.

Mr. Coggsdale related the process of getting a RFP out there getting a firm on board could be started and possibility take 60 days, then the work starts of developing a process. It may take a while to get everything in place up to the Master Plan and noted there is a long list of wanted items from the Recreation Committee. He clarified if Council wants to have the Master Plan, the trail will not be built in three months; six to twelve would be more accurate.

Mayor Mattox asked if there was to be two plans developed; a town wide master plan for hiking and trails then there is another plan that could be part of this plan or separate with the development of the park, which is a long-term plan. He asked if there was any opposition to waiting for the Master Plan for the town wide to be completed.

Mr. Coggsdale clarified that the two Master Plans would need to be split.

Mayor Mattox stated this was just a suggestion. He thought there was a contingency to move on with the plan but also a contingency of how it will work in the big picture.

Mrs. Dalton suggested that this be discussed at the June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 regular meeting.

Mr. Coggsdale clarified this would be put on the regular meeting agenda to discuss the Master Plan and how Council wants to do a trail plan now or the Master Plan.

Mrs. Dalton felt Mr. George was interested in doing both; proceed with the trail plan while proceeding with the Master Plan. Mrs. Dalton stated she likes it all but would like to master plan first then trail plan next.

Mr. George offered to meet Council members at the site, he noted nothing happens fast and this has been talked about for 4 ½ years. He thought Council had approved the concept and details would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

Mrs. Brumfield did not feel the trails would be intrusive upon the residential area and if a small section was completed, the citizens could see what it is all about, use it and be more receptive to another section of trails.

d. Staunton River Memorial Library Renovation Project

Mr. Coggsdale advised Mrs. Nan Carmack, Campbell County Library Director, concerning a proposed project, contacted staff. The project would convert the existing "Teen Central" space to a "Community Conference Room". This would be achieved by adding a partition with a door between the current space and the Children's area of the library. Staff visited the space and sees no issues with the request. The library will be funding the project with their own funds and would handle the project.

Council was in agreement with the proposed project and asked that this be added to the consent agenda.

e. Town Hall Generator

Mr. Coggsdale advised staff is seeking direction concerning repair or replacement of the emergency generator at the Town Hall location. The repair would cost approximately \$4,700, while a new generator would cost approximately \$18,500. The generator is 21 years old and replacement parts are difficult to obtain. He added it is staff's recommendation to replacement the generator. Funds have been identified in the FY2017 budget to cover the cost of a new generator.

It was the consensus of Council to replace the generator at Town Hall at a cost of \$18,500.

f. Budget Amendments

Mr. Coggsdale presented Council with a memorandum and budget amendments for Council's consideration. The budget amendments include receipt of Byrne Justice Grant funds, insurance claim funds, and funds for replacement of a pump for the WWTP press system (previously approved by Council). In addition, staff was authorized to transfer funds in a departmental budget to meet the needs of the department.

g. Fund Balance/Reserve Policy Discussion

Mr. Coggsdale advised previously Council has discussed methods by which to utilize undesignated funds to fund future projects. Staff has reviewed the current Reserve Policy and would ask Council to consider amending the current policy for the General Fund. Currently, the policy states that the General Fund Reserves will be 100% of the previous years audited recurring revenues; staff feels that 50% of the previous years audited expense (except Capital) would be adequate. This action would free up funds that could be utilized to fund projects, with a possible agreement to pay the funds back with interest. Mr. Coggsdale noted the "rainy day" fund at this point is \$6.6 million; \$5.2 is in the General Fund.

It was the consensus of Council to discuss this item at the Retreat.

h. Project Updates

Mr. Coggsdale advised Mr. Fore is working on a RFP for "On call" Electrical Services". He mentioned First Baptist Church will be holding their Vacation Bible School in June and request blocking 10<sup>th</sup> Street for this event. Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council, staff would be seeking adoption of the proposed budget at the June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting.

6. Public Comments

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone would like to comment on anything not listed on the agenda.

Mrs. Day, Bedford Avenue, asked if the "For Sale, Mattresses" sign could be removed from above the newly painted mural on Seventh Street.

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone else would like to speak. No one came forward.

7. Adjournment

Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

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Michael E. Mattox, Mayor

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J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Clerk