



C O U N C I L M I N U T E S JANUARY 16, 2018, 7:00PM, COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Gail Dunham. Chris Johnson, pastor of Community Lutheran Church, provided the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present:

Council

Gail Dunham, Mayor
 Dena Barnes, Mayor Pro-tem
 John O'Day
 Teresa Pegram
 Todd Rotruck
 Reece Walker

Staff

Scott Whitaker, Town Manager
 Dee Hall, Finance Officer
 Lance Heater, Town Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Rotruck, seconded by Pegram and carried 3-2 (Walker and O'Day voting "no"), the agenda was approved as amended in order to move public comments before Council discussion.

PRESENTATION OF GORDON MEETING HALL AND MARTIN HOUSE PROJECTS

Jason Hart, of Cube Design + Research, introduced himself along with partner Chris Johns and project manager Jason Patterson. Hart explained that his firm had developed a concept to utilize the Gordon building as a town meeting hall and to develop restroom additions to the Martin house. The goal of the project is to maintain and strengthen the historic heritage of Summerfield. Steps taken to date were listed as follows: (1) responded to public Request for Qualifications (the project RFQ); (2) went through two interviews and Council approval of firm selection; (3) services contract negotiated with Town staff, attorney, and approved by Council; (4) documented existing conditions and performed preliminary assessments; (5) began interviews with community stakeholders to assess needs; (6) began preliminary design concept to aid initial opinion of cost; and (6) worked with third-party cost consultant to obtain an initial estimate on cost.

Hart and Johns presented the preliminary design concept for the Gordon building, which included an addition to the building and which would seat 166 with an additional 40 standing. Plans would include a fire suppression system, fire alarms, an elevator, restrooms, storage, electrical, plumbing, heating/cooling, water storage tank, landscaping, backup power, and conference rooms. Hart noted the plans were in accordance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He stated the firm had not designed the building, but had done a baseline layout to provide to the cost consultant.

Hart presented preliminary cost estimates for the project: \$750,000 – historic building stabilization, \$850,000 to allow the building to be occupied, \$2,100,000 support spaces for a total of \$3,700,000. The Martin house restroom additions was estimated at \$100,000. Hart stated that construction costs are especially high in the current market and provided some reasons and examples, but that the cost consultants had noted that savings were likely because the project would be subject to the public-bid process.



Hart listed 3 possible next steps: (1) approve the current direction and move into schematic design; (2) revise the scope of the project and obtain a revised cost estimate; or (3) set a target budget and work to revise the scope of the project in accordance with the target budget.

PRESENTATION OF MASTER PLANNING OF INTERSECTION AREA OF SUMMERFIELD RD. AND OAK RIDGE ROAD

Dunham introduced Frances Gallagher of WithersRavenel, who introduced Jay Clapp of Ramey Kemp & Associates. Gallagher explained that her group had been engaged in master planning of the intersection of Summerfield Rd. and Oak Ridge Road, which is an integral part of the potential Gordon building and Martin house projects. Gallagher stated that her group had two main objectives: (1) to develop a means to move traffic and pedestrians safely through the intersection, given the increased volume of both as a result of the projects; and (2) to possibly eliminate the current, span-arm traffic signalization at the intersection. Clapp introduced the concept of replacing the current signal with a mini-roundabout which would allow for the elimination of the signal, without placing current overhead utilities underground, as well as remaining within the current paved area. Clapp stated that his team had met with Town staff, emergency services providers, and communicated with NCDOT, all of whom had a positive, initial response to the concept. Benefits of the project were listed as improving vehicular and pedestrian flow, increasing safety with a one-way flow of traffic, and reduced speeds through the intersection. Clapp played a video of a similar mini-roundabout project that had been constructed in Harford County, MD.

PRESENTATION-RELATED PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

In response to a question from the audience, Clapp stated that the installation of a mini-roundabout should not cause traffic to back up from the existing signal at US-220. Also in response to a question from the audience, Clapp estimated the cost to install a mini-roundabout at \$250,000-\$300,000.

Frank Ficca, 6300 Westcott Drive, stated that parking had not been discussed and asked if blinking lights could be used at pedestrian crossings.

Gray Gables' Danielle Cottrell inquired about parking plans and questioned whether the Gordon building could adequately accommodate projected occupancy. Hart responded that the building, with addition, would be approximately 7000 square feet and that the facility was designed more as a meeting hall space rather than an event venue. Whitaker stated that parking was being reviewed by WithersRavenel, but a report was not yet ready.

In response to a question from Frank Ficca, Hart confirmed that the \$100,000 estimate for the Martin house was for restroom additions and associated infrastructure. Ficca expressed concern with proceeding with the addition absent a plan for the rest of the building.

A member of the audience asserted that mini-roundabouts were more dangerous to pedestrians than conventional intersections and suggested that further study be given to heavy pedestrian traffic with regard to mini-roundabouts.

Elizabeth McClellan, 7103 Lentz Court, stating she voted for the purchase of the Gordon building as a Council member, suggested that the architects be given direction to create a design at a lower cost.



Dwayne Crawford, 1106 Highway 150 West, stated the Town's comprehensive plan encourages historic preservation but does not require the investment of public funds toward that goal. He suggested that if there is a need for meeting space, the Town would be better served by purchasing property to construct a new facility, stating the Gordon building is not a good location for public meeting space.

Bill North, 3090 Pleasant Ridge Road, citing the cost per square foot for the Gordon building, suggested that the Town could get more value by constructing a new facility. He also expressed concern with the cost of converting the Martin house to a museum.

In response to a question from a member of the audience, Hart stated that, according to the cost consultant, the cost of a new building would not differ significantly from that proposed for the Gordon building due to current market conditions.

In response to a question from Jane Doggett, 7986 Highfill Road, Hart stated that the consultants had explored possible grant funding for this type of project; however, grants that are available are not currently funded by Congress and are small in relation to the total cost of the project.

Sean Dwyer, 5902 Mary Hall Court, expressed concern that the proposed design for the Gordon building detracted from its historical value and questioned the durability of the proposed mini-roundabout in relation to vehicles and snow plows driving over the center portion.

Elizabeth Kutz, 3092 Pleasant Ridge Road, expressed opposition to the proposal for the Gordon building, suggesting that the design proposed would eliminate its historical character. Kutz suggested the Town schedule open houses for the Gordon building and Martin house so that the public could have the opportunity to view them. She also expressed opposition to transforming the Martin house into a museum, citing a large number of house museums which have failed.

Sue Beeson, 5112 Medearis Street, expressed support for preserving and utilizing the Gordon building.

Don Wendelken, 3406 Windswept Drive, expressed concern about the costs of the project, stating that these should have been addressed when the properties were purchased.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Walker expressed appreciation for the proposed design but voiced concern about the estimated cost of the plan. He also stated that the Town's population growth has been affected greatly by annexation. In response to a question from Walker, Hart said the cost of a new facility with the same capacity would be approximately \$3.3 million. Walker said that despite his personal aversion to roundabouts, the proposed mini-roundabout works in the intersection.

O'Day said WithersRavenel had proposed a unique solution to a very difficult problem. He also praised the proposed design for the Gordon building, but noted the cost was too high. O'Day suggested that alternative funding options be explored along with possibly scaling back the project.

Barnes praised the proposed concept for the Gordon building as "forward thinking," but described the cost as more than anticipated. She stated that this was the first opportunity for citizens to view the project and invited citizen input so that Council could determine a path forward.



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Rotruck thanked the audience members for their attendance. He questioned why the public was not asked for input when the buildings were purchased. He stated that the proposed project did not fit the concept of limited-services government and suggested that it be scaled back in scope. He suggested that the process of community participation that had resulted in the renovation of the Town Hall be utilized with respect to the Gordon building.

In response to questions from Pegram, Clapp stated that the proposed mini-roundabout would be contained within existing pavement and that it should not cause traffic backups from the existing traffic signal at US-220 and Summerfield Road.

Dunham expressed appreciation to Cube, WithersRavenel, and the public. She noted that Council would be conducting a strategic planning retreat 1/27 from 9:00am to 5:00pm at Summerfield Farms and that Council would be further discussing these issues at that time. She distributed a "Memo from the Summerfield Mayor," which she stated contained her thoughts on matters relevant to the presentation, stating that she did not want to take up time during the meeting to discuss them.

With no further business, a motion was made at 9:01pm by Barnes to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Rotruck and carried unanimously.

Gail Dunham, Mayor

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk