

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL RECREATION, PARKS, & TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018 AT 7 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN.**

PRESENT: Council Member Cherrix (Chair) and Council Committee Member Massoud, Nicholson (arrived at 7:35 p.m.), and Reynolds.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Pearson, Economic Development & Marketing Manager Bixler, and Clerk of Council Keller.

**Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

**Action Item**

**1. Approval of Minutes, August 16, 2018**

The minutes of the August 16, 2018, Recreation/Parks/Trails Committee meeting were approved as presented.

**Discussion Items:**

- *Master Park Plan*

**Chairperson Cherrix** said this would be a continuation discussion of the Master Park Plan. He reviewed what the committee had thought would be good to have in the park.

**Town Manager Pearson** said the Master Park Plan did not come out of the blue, but was one of the strategies made by the previous Council. Also, there has been a park maintenance fund in the budget for the past two years so we want to wisely invest these funds.

**Town Manager Pearson** showed the 2001 Master Park Plan, but noted that it didn't focus on what people use the most. He showed the Urban Development Plan map. The town received a grant that was to project growth in the next 40 to 50 years. The reasoning for why the town received the grant was given. He showed where the plan says growth should happen in town. He also pointed out the "Green Spine" which is somewhat like a park area; it is a multimodal connectivity type of path. **Chairperson Cherrix** thinks this makes a lot of sense except for the crossing from Route 55. Work would have to be done on this crossing. He thinks it would be good to put something on a vision board. **Town Manager Pearson** said he is in hopes the vision board will become the master park plan as we don't have a good document that encompasses all the recreation needs. **Town Manager Pearson** then showed the Comprehensive Plan map. He pointed out places where future recreational areas have been looked at.

**Town Manager Pearson** said they would like a recommendation from the committee to move forward with a master park plan.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** presented a layout of what she felt the committee had looked at previously and how it could be accomplished. She said engaging stakeholders was one of the most important aspects of the plan since it is the community's plan. They need to be a part of the process. She also said we need to have some professional staff guiding

everyone through the process.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** expounded on what she meant by engaging stakeholders. She said we should be going to the skate park meetings, etc. In the CDBG project, there was a group of people who gave recommendations on how to proceed in the process. Surveys could be given at events.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** said there is a lot of data that can be used to make recommendations on amenities at a park. If we look at other parks, we can see how people travel. We need to look at permitted land uses. A huge portion of our park is in the flood zone so what can we do in those areas needs to be addressed. We need to address accessibility. Once all of this is discussed, it needs to be put down on paper so we can show the people what we have. She explained some of the steps in getting to the Master Plan.

1. Get more technical --- look at drainage issues, what can the landscape support. We would probably need help with this as far as expertise. We need to see who goes to the park and see what they do there. At this point, we haven't even done a traffic count through the park. A needs analysis should be done, too. All of this takes a lot of time and staff is stretched now. After going through step 2, you go back to the community.
2. Prioritize – get an action matrix. As money comes off our debt load, we could possibly take on other projects. **Council Member Massoud** asked what the debt load is and it was not known exactly.
3. Take the plan to Council and ask for adoption.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** said for most of our plans, we have had to go out for help. **Council Member Massoud** said we are basically hiring someone from outside and spending money to find out what we already know. **ED&M Manager Bixler** said we are asking for help in managing the project. **Council Member Massoud** said we know there is a need. **ED&M Manager Bixler** said it is how we move forward.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said we have a map and the park has not changed in 10 years so he feels we have a good base. He wants to engage the community. He thinks the next step is to divide the entire “circle” and decide what needs to be done and what has been done. A 10 year plan could turn into a 30 year plan. He said we could chop the plan into two-year portions. **ED&M Manager Bixler** agreed and said you put it all out there and prioritize.

**Town Manager Pearson** said the usual way of reaching out to the community would have been with a meeting at a park, but people don't engage this way anymore. **Council Member Massoud** liked the survey done last year. **Chairperson Cherrix** said we need to figure out the best way to get the information out to engage the people. It was asked if we could “live stream” meetings. **Town Manager Pearson** said a professional consultant would be able to tell the best way to get the information out to the public. If we were to break it up into the components and then Council changes, it is hard to move forward.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said there is one giant vision, but we want to do it in two-year

increments.

**Lana Le Vine**, citizen, asked if there would be anyway developers could be part of the payment for the master plan. **Town Manager Pearson** said the developers of Cedar Valley are looking at the section through their property.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** said if you have this all laid out, we can go to companies and ask for assistance. It is stepped, costed out, etc. **Town Manager Pearson** said it is a requirement of grant applications to have a plan.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said we had a great group of volunteers for the planting and we could ask for help from companies.

***Citizen Comments:***

**Lori Crabill** asked that from the study done in 2001, what was accomplished from the plan. (Members of the audience came and looked at the plans).

**Council Member Nicholson** said when she was previously on Council, they tried to do an amphitheater at the gazebo. Basketball and tennis courts were renovated. Shelters were built. Parking lots were established. The playground was built and then rebuilt.

**Ms. Crabill** said the concerns of the skate park committee is that this will take a long time and then we will be back to where we are. They are financially further along, but they don't know where the skate park will be located.

**Chairperson Cherrix** asked if a person should be brought in to see where the best spot would be. **Town Manager Pearson** said we should have someone come in and look at the entire picture.

**Council Member Massoud** said we will be bringing in the skate park so we need to move it through since they have been waiting so long. If we do a master plan, it will take a long time.

**Town Manager Pearson** said we need to work with a consultant first.

**Council Member Reynolds** said at the last meeting, we zoomed in on the area from the pool to Queen Street so maybe we could bring in a consultant and ask them to focus on that part.

**Council Member Nicholson** said it was easier with the first plan when Council could see the whole picture. We need to go bigger and then go smaller.

**Town Manager Pearson** said he may have changed his opinion for zooming in on the Town Park proper.

**Brandy Boies**, member of the Skate Park Committee, said they are at a tough spot. They are ready to send out letters for donations, but they don't have an exact location. Plans can't be drawn since they don't know where it will be. It will be easier to go to a company if there is a plan. She feels we need a nice fancy map that can be taken out to the companies. From a citizen point, she would like to have the master plan done. It would be great to see the momentum build. The engaged stakeholders go beyond the town limits.

**Council Member Massoud** said to assume we don't need a master plan. What would happen if we put the skate park in the park and then did the master plan? **Town Manager Pearson** said he can't say for sure it would be a wrong location, but we need to know what the highest and best use is for all things in the park.

**Council Member Massoud** asked how long the Master Plan would take. **Town Manager**

**Pearson** said we could put it in the RFP that they look at a pad spot for the skate park. **Council Member Massoud** asked how long the procurement would take and it might be three months. The master plan could take 12 months, but **ED&M Manager Bixler** said the skate park could be worked on simultaneously. The skate park committee members said they can't do their master plan until the town does theirs. **Chairperson Cherrix** said the consultant will need to know how big the skate park will be so the group should let Council know that. **ED&M Manager Bixler** said the skate park process could be started now and then seamlessly move into the master plan.

**Marty White**, a member of the Skate Park Committee, said he thinks there needs to be a simpler way to come up where the foot print of where the skate park should be. Once it is off the ground, he thinks it will be funded quickly. **Chairperson Cherrix** asked if there was a spot picked out and **Town Manager Pearson** said there was a spot, but from the town's perspective, we have to bear the weight of the decisions. We need to take a larger look at where this should be. We have to consider drainage, parking, etc.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said we have a master plan so can we bridge from this and cut down on the consultant time and cost. **Town Manager Pearson** said the answer is yes, but you won't see the incremental parts. The consultant can work off of the existing plan, but it isn't going to make it substantially faster or cheaper. **Town Manager Pearson** said a ballpark cost for the plan could be \$20,000 to \$30,000.

**Lori Crabill**, a member of the Skate Park Committee, asked if the skate park could be in the town park proper. If we start with that, would you have to pay for the entire \$20,000? **Town Manager Pearson** said this would still be working on this incrementally.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** asked if they know what kind of park they need to be successful. **Ms. Crabill** said to do this, they need to have a size. They know they want a concrete park. They want to put together a committee of skaters and they can't do that until they have the land.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** said it is hard to know exactly what they are shooting for. How have they reached out to the community? **Ms. Crabill** said she has talked to the athletic director who will send this out, but they need to know the space.

**Council Member Nicholson** asked how big of a park they are looking for. **Ms. Jennifer Williams**, a Skate Park Committee member, said former **Chief Sutherly** came to her and said there were issues happening with people skating. They had kids draw out what exactly they wanted in the park. They had a plan drawn out, but it is in a vicious cycle.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said our consultant should see the conceptual plan of what they want. **Ms. Williams** said they have three different sizes and it depends on how much land they are given.

**Council Member Reynolds** said if the town has the square footage, then this could be given to the consultant and this would help get them what they need.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** said usually a skate park is based on the users so which of the plans would they want to have. **Ms. Williams** said they were told they could only have

so much space. **Town Manager Pearson** said this conversation lends him to think that we might not be looking at the right location. **Ms. Boies** asked if the town's consultant would help the group find out what the usage would be. She said the job of finding this out is daunting. **Town Manager Pearson** said if Council would support this, then this could happen. He doesn't think anyone would start on this until after the holidays.

**Council Member Massoud** would like to know when we could break ground on this. **Mr. White** asked if everything came together, could ground be broken within a year and **Town Manager Pearson** said it is an ambitious thought, but it isn't impossible.

**Town Manager Pearson** said we will frontload the skate park in the RFP, if Council wants to fund this.

**Chairperson Cherrix** asked which direction the committee wants to move.

**Town Manager Pearson** said staff's request is to see if the committee would support the idea of a consultant for a Master Park Plan.

**Chairperson Cherrix** asked if we should go with a whole master plan or break it up into parts.

**Council Member Massoud** – break it up and prioritize the skate park

**Council Member Reynolds** – whole picture and prioritize the skate park.

**Council Member Nicholson** – incorporate the old with the new and look at the whole picture.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said it sounds like the committee wants to do an update to the master plan with prioritization given to the skate park. **Council Member Nicholson** said we need to have plans of the skate park now.

**Council Member Nicholson** suggested to the Skate Park Committee that if they can't do the entire skate park now, put some in now and then build on it.

**Town Manager Pearson** said the money is in the budget to move forward with the consultant.

*Old business:*

**Council Member Nicholson** said we need to prioritize the maintenance schedule of our facilities.

**Chairperson Cherrix** said the committee will be meeting on the first Thursday of each month.

**Chairperson Cherrix** would like to have a meeting to discuss the pool and have a tour of the facilities.

Being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.