

SPECIAL MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in a Special Meeting at the Town Hall on November 13, 2007, at 7 p.m. with the following present:

Mayor Woodard H. Gurley; Mayor Pro Tem Bobby Wooten; Council Members Larry Gladney, Walter Ellis, Jr., George Koonce, Elliott Sutton and Jeff Thomas; John P. Craft, Town Manager; Town Clerk, Nelda H. Johnson, CMC.

Absent: George Jenkins, Jr., Town Attorney

Guest: 9

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the Special Meeting was the discussion of recreation and asked Council Member Ellis to give the invocation. Mayor Gurley turned the Special Meeting over to Manager Craft.

Manager Craft stated that this was a Special Meeting set at the Regular Meeting on November 5, 2007, for the purpose of hearing potential consultants present their qualifications for consideration to design a recreational facility master plan for an eventual submission to the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant opportunity. The deadline for application submissions to a PARTF grant is January 31, 2008.

Manager Craft stated that we have three firms represented this evening. All three firms are in the Council room so each can hear an overview of what the Council expects and make sure each firm understands our expectations. Each firm is asked to come and tell the Council about their company, their experience with this type of project, sizes of municipalities they have dealt with, and their experience in working with a project such as our Town needs.

The three firms represented are: (1) Rivers & Associates, Inc. (2) Site Solutions (3) The Wooten Company. Manager Craft has asked each firm to limit their formal presentation to fifteen minutes with an additional question and answer session afterwards. In fairness, only one presenter would be in the Council room at a time.

Manager Craft stated that the Town's objective tonight is to select a firm that can prepare an application grant and conceptual design for the Town. This first phase does not include construction design. The first phase will be to determine what our citizens expect out of a recreation facility. A citizen survey needs to be formalized and prepared very soon to be distributed in our December utility bills. Manager Craft stated that he will be asking the Council to set a Public Hearing on December 10, 2007, for the purpose of public comment on a recreational facility. This will give the public two opportunities to provide information to the Council on what they would like to see in a park.

Manager Craft stated that even if our time line goes well and the Town does submit a grant application by the January 31, 2008, deadline, it will probably be 2010 before the park will be used. Manager Craft stated that he did not want to exaggerate the Town's ability to prepare a park and put it into use before 2010.

Manager Craft introduced the first presenter as Mark Garner with Rivers & Associates, Inc.

Mr. Garner began by stating that he was one of the partners with Rivers & Associates and had been with them for 30 years. Mr. Garner gave a power point presentation for a new recreation complex master plan and Phase I Funding application. Mr. Garner stated that he would like to share four aspects (1) Who Rivers & Associates, Inc. are (2) Similar Project Experiences (3) Project Approach and (4) Current Workload.

Mr. Garner stated that Rivers & Associates was established in 1918 and now have 54 employees in the Greenville Corporate office and 18 employees in the Raleigh branch.

The company is organized in three departments, each with multiple project managers and teams. Also, available are in-house engineering, environmental, landscape design, planning, surveying and CADD capabilities. Mr. Garner listed six recent sites that his company had recently designed that are similar projects compatible to our needs as well as much larger recreation, parks, and athletics complexes. Mr. Garner briefly gave an overview of each project his firm had completed and showed slides from the power point presentation.

Mr. Garner stated that Rivers & Associates, Inc. goals were environmentally friendly development, user friendly and aesthetically pleasing facility, incorporate sustainable features as appropriate and feasible, incorporate community design values and meet stakeholder expectations. Mr. Garner further stated that their project approach has four concurrent steps; (1) Public Participation Process (2) Stakeholder Planning Session (3) Regulatory Scoping and (4) On-Site Environmental Investigation. Mr. Garner explained each step and stated that the PARTF grant is a competitive scoring application point system and a lot of the above information will be considered in the point system.

Mr. Garner continued to explain the grant application process and the January 31, 2008, application completion date works perfectly into Rivers & Associates, Inc. team workload schedule. Mr. Garner ended his formal presentation by relating to the Council that his firm has a qualified staff combining engineering, environmental, landscape design and planning expertise for recreation and parks and also desires a bonded relationship with La Grange.

During the question and answer session, Mr. Garner mentioned several other grant opportunities that are available other than PARTF. Mr. Garner thanked the Council for the opportunity for his firm to make the presentation to the Town.

The second presenters were Gary Hartong and Patricia Crissman representing The Wooten Company in Raleigh.

Ms. Crissman spoke first stating that she was a landscape architect and Mr. Hartong was a civil engineer and if The Wooten Company was selected for the recreation park project both she and Mr. Hartong would be working together on the project. Ms. Crissman stated that she understands that La Grange is in the early stages of planning for a park and the citizen survey had not been done yet. Citizens surveys would not be a problem and The Wooten Company could meet the deadline to mail out the surveys on the 22nd of the month and that is a great way to hear from the general public. Ms. Crissman stated that she knew that La Grange had a Recreation Association and met a couple of the members and they have a great feel for organized sports.

Ms. Crissman reviewed several projects and showed power point slides of these recreation parks that The Wooten Company had done within the last five years. These projects are from smaller Towns like La Grange and the cost range is from \$700,000 up to \$4,000,000.

Ms. Crissman stated that the La Grange park proposed list of facilities included 3 baseball/softball fields, 1-2 football/soccer fields, 2 basketball courts, perimeter bike trail, multi-purpose area, children's playground, picnic areas, utilities, access road/parking and reuse irrigation. The proposed facilities can be tweaked according to the citizen survey. For the PARTF application, there are a number of things the Town can get points for and one of those things is a comprehensive plan, but the Town is not doing the comprehensive plan. There are a number of other things to gain points from such as a concept plan based on an analysis of the site. The Wooten Company would look at the site to determine what are the good and the bad points.

Ms. Crissman stated that she had been to look at the proposed recreation site and it is close to NC 903, but would like for the Town to consider locating closer to Frink Middle School because there would be a possibility of doing some shared facilities with them as their parking lot is in really bad shape. There might be an opportunity to contact the school system about sharing the cost of a parking facility. The site has a nice relief and

not steep, not flat and at the top northwest corner is the high point which is close to NC 903.

Mr. Hartong spoke concerning the coordination with the reuse irrigation and noted the following points: (1) Town's WWTP currently produces reuse quality effluent (2) Town has CWMTF grant for reuse project (3) Reuse reduces discharge and nutrient load to Mosley Creek (4) Lessens demand on local water supply sources, especially for CCPCUA. Mr. Hartong mentioned two types of irrigation systems (1) Traveling Gun System and (2) Fixed Set System.

Ms. Crissman reviewed the steps that the Town needs to begin with prior to the NC PARTF application due January 31, 2008 as being (1) Public Meetings (2) Recreation Survey (3) Site Analysis (4) Concept Park Plan (5) Cost Estimates (6) Completed Application. Ms. Crissman also stated that The Wooten Company has qualified staff/experienced teams, recreation/park design experience, experience with Town of La Grange in other projects, shared passion for recreation, familiarity with funding sources/requirements, and close proximity/availability with Greenville and Raleigh offices.

During the question and answer session, Ms. Crissman and Mr. Hartong answered various questions by the Council.

The third and last presenter was Derek Williams representing Site Solutions.

Mr. Williams stated that Site Solutions is a landscape architectural, civil engineering and architectural firm located in Charlotte with about 40 employees in the office. Site Solutions focuses only on institutional type development and that includes parks and recreation and athletic facilities, schools and university work as well as health care facilities. Mr. Williams stated that he would be the project manager for La Grange; he founded this firm in 1985 and has 30 years experience.

Mr. Williams showed a slide presentation of the areas in North Carolina that his firm has completed projects for parks and recreation and pointed out the projects in eastern North Carolina. Mr. Williams reviewed several of the facilities.

Mr. Williams stated that his firm, Site Solutions, has a very strong record in helping communities, large and small, with PARTF and LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) grants. Mr. Williams stated that he felt that La Grange had an excellent opportunity with the PARTF grant and with their experience the firm knows what to look for in applying.

There are three steps in the planning approach. The first step is to develop a plan which is inventory and analysis. The PARTF is not just about developing a plan; it is about development of a document that includes a plan of what facilities the Town wants and how they are to be laid out. Information on site analysis, environmental, public meetings, information on how the Town plans to maintain and operate the park and a cost estimate must be considered. The second step is a preliminary plan on the conceptual design with public workshops. The third and final planning approach is the final master plan.

During the question and answer session, a water splash park was mentioned.

Manager Craft stated that all three firms were good and the Town would not lose by choosing any of the firms. All firms have been successful and there are advantages with each. Manager Craft stated that he had checked and all firms have a good relationship with PARTF.

Manager Craft stated that this is a big step for La Grange and a commitment needs to be made from the Town and a commitment from the volunteers through our Recreation Association. A Recreation Advisory Board needs to be formed utilizing our volunteers in the Recreation Association as well as senior citizens to learn what the public wants.

Manager Craft mentioned a water park stating that state laws prevent the use of reuse water for this purpose. This could be a future opportunity at our present Community Park.

Manager Craft continued to discuss at length with the Council the various phases of a recreation park and the commitment that needs to be made. The Town needs to select a firm to help with the planning, get surveys in the hands of our citizens, schedule a Public Hearing on December 10, 2007, a second Public Hearing on January 3, 2008, at which time a conceptual design will be presented. After that, the Town can move forward to submit a preliminary application to PARTF.

Manager Craft stated that the Council needed to select their first choice and second choice firms and to advise him to negotiate with the two firms on engineering services and then execute a contract based on their qualifications and estimated cost.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Sutton to select Rivers & Associates, Inc. as Council's first choice of engineering firm and instruct Manager Craft to consider their qualifications and cost estimates. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Thomas to select Site Solutions as Council's second choice of engineering firm and instruct Manager Craft to consider their qualifications and cost estimates. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Motion was made by Council Member Gladney, seconded by Council Member Thomas to set a Public Hearing on December 10, 2007, for the purpose of citizen comments concerning a recreation park. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

After discussion it was the consensus of the Council to locate the recreation park facility on 15 acres of the property site that is adjacent to the NC 903 side for better visibility, water and electric services.

Motion was made by Council Member Sutton, seconded by Council Member Gladney to adjourn. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Nelda H. Johnson, CMC, Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor