

RECESSED MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina met in a Recessed Meeting from the Regular Meeting on December 3, 2007, at the Town Hall on December 10, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. with the following present:

Mayor Woodard H. Gurley; Mayor Pro Tem Bobby R. Wooten; Council Members Larry Gladney, Gregory Rouse, George Koonce, Elliott Sutton and Clifton Harrison; Town Manager, John P. Craft; Town Clerk, Nelda H. Johnson, CMC.

Absent: George Jenkins, Jr., Town Attorney

Guest: 18

ITEMS 1, 2, 3: CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, WELCOME

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and asked Council Member Sutton to give the invocation. Mayor Gurley welcomed everyone and then turned the meeting over to Manager Craft.

Manager Craft stated that there were two items that needed to be addressed:

- (1) Establish a date of January 2, 2008, to review a conceptual design that will be developed following this meeting's conclusion and copulation of the recreation surveys that were mailed.
- (2) The main purpose of tonight's meeting is to listen to our citizens regarding their wishes for a recreation complex. This is a strategy meeting in the early stages of the conceptual design. Members of the La Grange Recreation Association, the Lenoir County Parks and Recreation and citizens are present and will hopefully provide the Council with much needed insight with what the wishes of our citizens are as the Town moves forward with the project. Rivers and Associates was selected to perform the design portion of the project for the Town and also help the Town in completing the PARTF grant application that is required to be submitted by January 31, 2008, for hopeful funding for this project. The amount of funds/grant that the Town requests will depend heavily on information that is received this evening from our citizens. The Town needs to determine what is requested by our citizens currently and what may be needed in the future.

Manager Craft introduced Mark Garner with Rivers and Associates stating that he will be our main contact with the project; and also, introduced Travis Hill with Rivers and Associates.

Manager Craft turned the meeting over to Mr. Garner to explain the process that is needed to receive public comment.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC HEARING – RECREATION

Mr. Garner thanked the public for their presence and requested audience involvement as this was an informal meeting. Mr. Garner stated that the purpose of the meeting had to do with the PARTF grant program and it is required to have a public meeting that is about recreation in general in the community.

Mr. Garner began by asked the audience the following question, "For your community and the Town of La Grange, do you feel, yes or no, that the Town and programs that are available to the Town be it through County programs, or whatever, are sufficient programs available for recreation?"

Mr. Garner polled several guest in the audience and the answer was no. Mr. Garner's next question was, "Why?"

Comments from the audience included:

- Activities needed other than planned, organized sports such as health programs with nutritional plans and exercise programs
- Recreation center with gymnasium that can be opened for longer periods of time to help keep kids off the street.
- Offer programs such as ceramic classes and dance classes that would be designed for adults and younger youth
- Community Center with multipurpose space

Mr. Garner asked the audience, "Thinking about La Grange's overall population including in-town and surrounding areas, what type of recreational amenities or programs do you think might be needed?"

Comments from the audience included:

- Skate park
- Community pool
- Picnic areas with grills for cooking
- Playground equipment that would be designed for smaller children as well as additional playground equipment designed for older children
- Adult exercise equipment

The last question Mr. Garner asked the audience was, "Thinking about the residents that live in-town and surrounding areas, if in fact, it was the Town's desire to build a park, what is it about a recreation park that would best serve the Town?"

Comments from the audience included:

- Attract more people to the Town of La Grange. This would help with tax base; bring in more children, more businesses, and more jobs.
- Increase quality of life
- Multipurpose facility that may include gym, meeting spaces for various programs
- Volunteerism would increase in the community
- Adult baseball/softball program would bring life back to the community
- Girl's softball program
- Playing fields that would accommodate both youth and adults
- Tournaments would be beneficial to the Town
- The Town would be proud of a well-kept and well-organized facility

Manager Craft spoke at this time stating that he needed to make a couple of points so the public would be aware of what the Town can do concerning a new facility. The Town was fortunate to obtain property for a recreation facility through a Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant which limits what activities the Town can do there. The Town will be irrigating the facility with water that has been treated at our Wastewater Treatment Plant. This will not be bad water being sprayed on the property because the water is near drinking water quality. The Town has to use the vast majority of the land to accommodate that reuse water. The proposed new facility, as far as the Town is concerned, needs to be used to receive that water. A lot of activities would limit the ability to use the property for the purpose for which it was obtained, such as gym-type activities. In previous discussions with the Council, this is a two-part plan that would build a facility on the new property and free up some space on our old facility that might be more accommodating for multipurpose type activities. A lot of structures cannot be placed on the new property that would prevent the Town from irrigation. Open space fields such as ball fields would be better opportunities. There are limitations on the property that the Town is obligated to follow especially when the Town is using grant money to purchase this property.

Mr. Garner closed his audience/public participation by stating that he would utilize this information in the PARTF grant application by prioritizing the facilities that the people have spoken about tonight as well as the written surveys that have been received. All this information will be quantified and a meeting has been scheduled this Friday, December 14, 2007, with the Town Manager to review the results. As the planning project for a recreational facility on this property moves forward, what comes out of that process is where the conceptual design comes from. Mr. Garner thanked everyone for the opportunity to be at the Council Meeting and the audience for sharing their ideas and thoughts.

Manager Craft also thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and the exchange of their ideas.

Manager Craft addressed the Council stating that if any Council Member had anything specific that they wanted to be considered and put in the plan process, if not in this phase, but subsequent phases of the proposed recreational facility that were not discussed tonight to please let him know. The planning document is based on what we have heard tonight and what has been learned from the surveys. If there is any element not touched on tonight, he needed to know before this portion of the meeting concluded.

Mayor Pro Tem Wooten mentioned the possibility of soccer fields.

Manager Craft spoke stating that at least three elements must be in the PARTF grant application in order to be considered for funding. There will be a collage of at least three different elements that may include baseball, soccer, multipurpose fields, football, etc. The elements do have to be affordable to the Town.

ITEM 5: ESTABLISH DATE TO REVIEW CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR RECREATION FACILITY

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wooten, seconded by Council Member Koonce to recess tonight's meeting until Tuesday, January 2, 2008, at 7 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the conceptual design for a recreational facility. Motion carried 6-0 in favor of motion.

Nelda H. Johnson, CMC, Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor