
City Council Work Session January 16, 2024

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 5:00 PM

Members Present:

Mayor Mike Fuesser
Mayor Pro Tem Ed Brown
Councilmember Matthew Hickey
Councilmember Marion Ramsey

Councilmember Stephanie Jarrett
Councilmember Kellie Harrold
Councilmember Charles Brewer

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

City Manager Dalton Pierce
Municipal Clerk Amy Craig
Police Chief Brian Trail
Finance Director Jeff Wilkins
Planning Director David Breakfield

Fire Chief Mike Regal
Human Resources Director Sarah Ramirez
Utilities Director Ben Wright
Community Engagement Director Becky Mestas
Parks & Rec Director Chris White

Participants:

Others Present:

(See Sign-in Sheet)

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1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Mike Fuesser
 - Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm
 2. **PRAYER** Mayor Pro Tem Ed Brown
 3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Mayor Mike Fuesser
 4. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - 4.1. Jefferson Remembered 1888-1970

Phyllis Moore-Ward, Interim Chair for Jefferson Remembered 1888-1970, stated that the Jefferson group formed in July 2023 to document, commemorate, and preserve Jefferson's legacy. Membership consists of anyone that attended Jefferson for one day. The oldest living Jeffersonian is Mrs. Josie Guthrie, who is 103 years old and was in the graduating class of 1939. The group knows and understands that Jefferson Field Park is owned by the York School District and that the City of York has a lease on Jefferson Field Park. Mrs. Ward stated that her presentation is on behalf of the Jeffersonians because the group holds a deep love for Jefferson Field, and it has played a significant role for the group's time at Jefferson. Mrs. Ward's focus is the preservation of Jefferson. Mrs. Ward expressed her desire for the \$325,000 in impact fees to be reallocated to Jefferson Field Park.

Kelly Coxe, Superintendent for York School District One, stated that the school district does own the property at Jefferson Field and has no intention of disposing of this property. Mrs. Coxe further stated that with all of the growth within the district, especially within the City, there could be a time in which this property could be needed for expansion. Mrs. Coxe read three paragraphs from the

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lease agreement that pertained to the 10 years lease, which states, “the agreement would end in 2029, the City was obligated to maintain the property in a condition suitable for use as a public park and playground, and the City has the intent to purchase playground equipment and install on the property.” The district agrees that the City may install playground equipment on the property. Mrs. Coxe stated that she is asking that the City honors what is in the lease agreement that was signed.

Cynthia Bradford stated that the community has been outspoken in opposition to the current plan for the City to use thousands of impact fee dollars towards upgrading a dilapidated park that has been otherwise ignored and deprived of maintenance for decades. She stated that she understands the City’s intentions are in the right place and they appreciate the gesture, but their belief is one shiny, new park with a basketball hoop does not compensate for years of neglect in the southwest quadrant of York. Mrs. Bradford expressed that these funds would be more appropriately used to fulfill the promise of Jefferson Field, which is both geographically and sentimentally the heart of the City’s African-American community. Also, Mrs. Bradford recommended that the City build up in phases, for example, all the capital improvement features for the Green Street Park can be implemented for Jefferson Field Park, which includes a basketball court, play area for children, picnic pavilion, sidewalks, and benches. She stated that this could be considered as Phase I.

Holly Starnes stated that in 1977, her aunt fought to not have Jefferson High School torn down. She stated that one way to get a community to forget its strength is to remove the reminders of that strength, which in this case is Jefferson High School. Jefferson High School was a structure that symbolizes the resilience courage, and strength of this community. Ms. Starnes stated that she is surprised she is in front of Council again since Council had said they would take into consideration the requests of the Jefferson community back in September. She had two questions for Council, which were 1) Does the revitalization of the concrete slab on Green Street include a parking lot? 2) Are there going to be sidewalks and street improvements? Also, she inquired if this park would have the same items as the York Rec Complex, such as a walking trail, playground, picnic area, court, etc.? She requested that Council make their community a priority.

Melissa McKnight-Rouse, on behalf of the Western York County NAACP, stated that a letter was sent to City Council expressing concerns for Council to honor its intended lease agreement with York School District for playground equipment to be purchased and installed on Jefferson Field and allows for additional improvements. She stated that focus point 3 in the 2021 Strategic Plan addresses the community’s concerns, which is “A dynamic community which builds and maintains a community that is inclusive, attractive, family oriented, and supportive for all residents.” She stated that a playground at Jefferson Field would be a lifeline for children and adults as it would be inclusive, attractive, family oriented, and supportive for all residents. As citizens of the City of York, she asked that their needs be placed at the forefront instead of an afterthought by the governing body.

Council and Superintendent Kelly Coxe discussed the future of the land if turnover occurred within the school district or if the school district needed the land for expansion. It was confirmed that the lease states, “that if and when the lease should ever end or not be extended, that the City would return the property back to its natural state to the school district to be utilized.” It was clarified that the City would then have to remove everything on the property and the school district would build a new facility in its place. Council inquired if the School District would be open to extending the lease at least the life of the playground equipment, in which Superintendent Kelly Coxe replied that the item would have to go before the school board. Council stated that they are not opposed to putting money into the park. Council is only opposed to putting money into a park when the lease agreement is not friendly to the life of the playground. Superintendent Kelly Coxe stated that if

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Council were to propose an amendment to the lease that it could be taken to the school board for their consideration. The money would have to come from the General Fund, rather than the Impact Fees based on the grant regulations. Superintendent Kelly Coxe stated that the School District does not have any interest to expand on the property in question, but rather on Highway 5 near Ernest Road at this time.

5. DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Jefferson Field

A meeting was held for Jefferson Field on December 13, 2023, in regard to the Green Street Park Project. Council stated a lease agreement referencing the equipment to remain for its usable lifespan and open to the community regardless of school district would be necessary to make the investment worthwhile. An Interim City Manager signed the agreement previously and when it went before Council at a Work Session in November 2019, \$50,000 was allotted for playground equipment. In that Work Session, Council decided not to go further due to age appropriateness of the playground equipment. From 2019 until 2023, this issue was not brought to Council. The Mayor recommended that they should honor the lease or make adjustments to the lease. Council discussed the various Phases brought forth by the community. To include the walking trails and other items that would include seniors and children is a great idea, but Council cannot put money in something they do not own and lose it all. Council further expressed that Impact Fees cannot be used for rented property and it would be more reasonable to invest the \$50,000 originally allotted and build from there. Council stated they would like to have a meeting to discuss this matter with everyone at one time, rather than separately. Renovating the parks that the City did own was going to be a great start to making the communities more viable. The biggest issue is that the City does not own the property, which ties Council's hands.

City Manager Dalton Pierce provided a presentation of Green Street Park and potential renovations for it and other parks the City owns.

5.2 Anti-Fraud Policy

The auditors recommended that the City put into place an Anti-Fraud policy. The policy is to safeguard the reputation and financial viability of the City. It is a good regulatory tool to look back over policies as things change and evolve over time.

5.3 First Amendment Auditor Policy

Citizens have the right to walk into a building and video record and ask questions. Municipalities also have the right to regulate conduct to ensure the orderly operation of municipal functions and to protect the rights of their employees and private visitors. The step City of York has implemented is the electronic doors. Signs are being installed and more will continue to be installed.

5.4 Street Acceptance Policy

Street Acceptance Policies are Standard Operating Procedures, which allows the City to collect data needed and placed into record. Auditors will be able to see properties taken over by the City through the Minutes.

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Council inquired how the City was handling the inspections, in which Utilities Director Ben Wright responded that the City now has an Inspections Department that employees 2 people that will be trained and certified. Staff is working to have more education and credentials. The City is trying to provide as many safeguards as possible.

5.5 Capital/Fixed Asset Policy

City Manager Dalton Pierce provided a list of capital and fixed assets. The City is working towards having an accurate list of assets. This will help the City develop more internal controls.

5.6 Subdivision Speed Limit Standard

City Manager Dalton Pierce stated that York Police Department has done traffic studies for the new subdivisions. Statute 56-5-710 gives the City the right to set the speed limit in the subdivisions. Although the standard speed limit is 30mph, the study resulted in a safer speed of 20mph. This will be for all subdivisions and signs will be placed at the front of each one. Future subdivisions will be required to have the signs included with the specifications. Council inquired about speed bumps being used instead, but City Manager Dalton Pierce stated that the criteria is high for them to be installed.

5.7 Construction Debris Chapter 36 Article II Sec. 36-46 (a) 5 Amendment

City Manager Dalton Pierce stated that Public Works Director Chris Wallace recommends removing Construction Debris Chapter 36 Article II Sec. 36-46 (a) 5 Amendment due to the need for staff to have vast knowledge of remodeling costs for removal of debris at the road sides. The City does not have a fee for debris like it does solid waste. Council asked what could be done about the debris in the road that has been there for quite some time due to a mobile home being remodeled. The elderly must be considered since they are on a fixed income. City Manager Pierce stated that it should be up to the contractor to remove the debris.

5.8 Urban Camping Ordinance

The Urban Camping Ordinance will address some issues throughout the City, such as the areas next to Garden Café and Steve's Towing. Planning Commission, Planning staff, and York Police staff have been working on the ordinance. RVs that come into the City to be placed on properties within the City will be allowed for instances such as the holidays. The RVs will be gone within a few days, so there is no cause for concern. The tents and modified structures are the main concerns as they are built on private property. The focus of the Urban Camping Ordinance is for this purpose. Council inquired if other municipalities have the same standards for urban camping, in which Chief Brian Trail verified that Lieutenant Bailey researched other districts and Supreme Court rulings. Those items were given to City Attorney Mac Brice and then reviewed by Planning staff. Currently, the City has been using an agent agreement between the private property owners and the York Police Department to remove the modified structures. Council wanted to ensure the officers were good with the ordinance, in which Chief Trail stated they were.

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5.9 FY2025 Budget Schedule

City Manager Dalton Pierce has begun the beginning stages of the Budget process for FY24-25, and he stated that he wanted to allow Council more time to discuss the budget items. MASC recommends enacting the annual operating budget before the beginning of each fiscal year as best practices.

6. ADJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Brown made a Motion to Adjourn, which was Seconded by Councilmember Ramsey. With no Discussion, the Motion was adopted unanimously. The Meeting Adjourned at 6:21pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Amy Craig
Municipal Clerk