

Walterboro City Council
Work Session
May 16, 2017

MINUTES

A Work Session of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 4:00 P.M. with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds, James Broderick and Judy Bridge. City Manager Jeff Molinari, Assistant City Manager Hank Amundson, City Clerk Betty Hudson, and City Attorney George Cone along with his assistant Lindsey Pederson, were also present. Council Member Syfrett arrived at approximately 5:00 P.M. to the meeting.

There were approximately 8 persons present in the audience. The purpose of the Special Called Meeting was to review the proposed plans by the architectural firm of McMillan Pazdan and Smith for the Walterboro Wildlife Sanctuary Discovery Center located at 100 S. Jefferies Boulevard. Present on behalf of McMillan Pazdan and Smith were: Paulette Myers, (McMillan Pazdan Smith) Mr. Nick Galizia (McMillan Pazden Smith), Mr. Max Streeter (McMillan Pazdan Smith), and Mr. Warren Pruitt (ADC Engineering).

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the Work Session to order. He then stated that as Council knows, we had rethought some of the ideas about the plans for the Discovery Center. He believed that the City Manager had already talked to the architects about these changes. Before the Work Session began, Ms. Celeste Stone, a member of the Friends of the Great Swamp (FROGS) Committee requested that Council and the architects consider adding more restrooms because of the number of students who would be visiting the Center than was previously proposed.

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City Manager Molinari told Council that the members of the architectural firm were present and would present more detailed plans, some revised concepts of the facade, and new financial numbers on the Discovery Center.

The Mayor then asked the members of the architectural firm, do you have some new things you want to show us or do you want us to talk to you?

The Mayor then announced that he, Council Members Bridge, Siegel and the City Manager had met and looked at some other suggestions for the Discovery Center. I believe Jeff has already shared this information with the architects. We came up with some redesign ideas, discussed all of the access issues and the bathrooms. We talked about making the restrooms larger, and you (the architectural firms) were dealing with the question of how to shut off the exhibit area and the event area. If you have an event and the exhibit area was closed, then there would still need to be bathroom access for both places. I know you were trying to deal with that.

Council Member Siegel stated that at the last meeting, we had a discussion and I had voiced concern about the design of the facade, the one facing Hampton Street and its relationship to our architecture on that street, our history and the court house across the street and I thought that was a great start. The difference between that and coming over to this concept that you showed us with the very dark slats, it sort of looks like a box, essentially. We were hoping that we could find some concept that related more appropriately, in our opinion, to the rest of the architecture, particularly our court house. I realize that we don't expect to have some sort of Grecian Temple here, but we feel that we can relate to it in a better way.

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Ms. Paulette Myers, the team leader, then asked if they could go through some of the images. She noted that Jeff had talked to her about the suggested changes so the team went back and looked at different things. Using the overhead screen, Mr. Nick Galizia led the discussion on the proposed changes to the Discovery Center building. He also showed their proposed ideas for parking including handicap parking, access to the building, the number of restrooms and the building facade. Discussion followed on the amphitheater, using the County's parking lot next door to the Discovery Center building, the option of taking out the parking from the new proposal and the development of the landscaping.

Mr. Galizia pointed out that the City Manager had mentioned that the County seems amenable to turning the County Parking Lot property over to the City. If that happens, maybe we can look at the possibility of access through the north side of the building. But without that, I am not sure how we would meet code and provide that access.

Mr. Warren Pruitt pointed out that a bus could not be brought into the area and then get it turned around and back out. So, that has to be a one-way drive. We do have handicapped accessibility from the parking lot into the building, as well as from the wood deck, down the ramp, all the way down to another access ramp to the stage. So, we basically have handicapped accessibility from top to the bottom of the site.

Mayor Young suggested having an entrance for the buses to come in and have maybe a semicircular drive that would allow the buses to pull through and unload.

Council Member Siegel felt that the City could save a lot of money if we did not pave the entire left-hand side of the property and have to provide drainage for all that surface. If we could use this other parking lot (the County Parking Lot), if the County is willing to work with us on that, we really want to try to find a way to do that.

Mayor Young added, we also talked about the opening as you went out to Jefferies Boulevard, that front corner next to the building that would be a combination of landscaping. You could have a place to put up tents and have events right along Jefferies Boulevard. Council Member Siegel added, in other words, this means putting full landscaping where the road was.

Council Member Bridge stated that we talked about some circular movement for buses to unload the children, but also to consider some way to get catering venues into the event center, or even to the amphitheater for bringing in guests, lecturers or live animal shows, etc.

More discussion was held, and Mr. Nick Galizia gave the following information on the costs.

- 1) Schematic design, we were at \$1.5 million in developing the drawings, they are a little more refined. We added the structure at the back of the amphitheater, basically, the stage, the covered area with the stage lighting.
- 2) We got a little more detail with the exhibits, so our fee costs when up in relation to tank usage, like where we are going to have water and drainage.
- 3) We did add the one restroom. There was a detail in the drawings for the railings.
- 4) The cost went up about \$300,000, but if you take out the stage, the structure the roof and take out the parking, and we go back to a simpler railing, more wood railing verses the steel, our number comes back down to \$1,535,000. So, we really are not much further off than we were.

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- 5) There would be a savings of approximately \$77,000 to eliminate the parking based on our conversations with Warren.

Concluding the discussion, Ms. Myers felt that the directions from Council to complete more work related to this project included the following:

- 1) Send another scheme for the front elevation.
She stated that she could e-mail that to Council next week.
Mayor Young asked if it were possible to show us how it opens into that outside event area.
- 2) Delete the drive through the site. Mayor Young then said, it looks like to me we are going to have to count on our main access as being through that wall and through the County Parking Lot onto the deck. Right now, that's where everything is going to come. That's the easiest way to get in and out of there. Anything down behind the amphitheater that gives us the space to work with, but it also means everything has to go uphill to get to the outside events space. I think you need to consider that.

Mayor Young asked if we would go with the idea that the buses would pull into the County Parking Lot to unload, is there any point in looking at a scheme where there would be a semicircular drive off Klein Street? He pointed out if we keep adding to the site plan, then pretty soon, we are going to lose all our savings from using the County Parking Lot. Mr. Warren responded, the only thing you could potentially do is try and get a space where maybe they could unload, where they could pull off the side of Klein and maybe discharge and let them come back into the site that way. But there is no way that you could actually bring a bus into the site and get it back out.

Mayor Young stated that there was no further business before Council. He then entertained a motion to adjourn. Council Member Bonds So Moved and Council Member Broderick seconded the motion that passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City's website and the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED: August 1, 2017