

**July 25, 2013**  
**Special Meeting of the City Council**  
**Council Chambers – City Hall**  
**4:00 p.m.**

Present: Mayor Barbara G. Volk, Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Collis, and Council Members: Jerry Smith and Ron Stephens

Absent: Council Member Steve Caraker

Staff Present: City Manager John F. Connet, City Clerk Tammie Drake

The purpose of the special meeting is to discuss the Berkeley Mills Park Master Plan and Bond Referendum. Other topics may be discussed.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 4: 00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with four members in attendance.

**1. Background Questions and Answers:** Mr. Connet explained the City will be pledging their property tax authority to repay the debt on the bonds. He stated if the \$6 million debt is approved by the voters, a three-percent tax increase would be required to repay the bonds over the term of the bonds (20 years). He explained the referendum will seek permission to issue bonds up to \$6 million for the intended purpose. The City may decide to issue fewer bonds than are in the total authorization and bonds may be sold in smaller increments. He stated the City may go to private financing with installment purchase for a shorter term with different interest rates. Mr. Rudisill explained if the amount is lower than \$5 million, the City should go to private financing instead of selling bonds. He stated banks will not finance more than ten years on park improvements. There are costs associated with getting a bond rating, selling the bonds, working with bond counsel, etc. and the City will lose benefits of a longer term and more favorable interest rates in the bond market.

Mr. Connet explained the authority approved by voters at a referendum is good for seven years with a possible three-year extension.

**2. Review of bond referendum calendar and costs:** Mr. Connet reviewed the critical dates for Council action. He also reviewed the process for the bond and issuance costs including: rating agencies, \$7,000 to file an application with the Local Government Commission for selling the bonds, and bond Counsel.

**3. Review of Berkeley Mills Park Phasing Plan and cost of each element:** Mr. Connet requested direction from the Council on prioritization and phasing of the Berkeley Mills Park improvements with the greatest need and benefit to the community. He stated staff will use the priorities for the Capital Improvement Plan.

Council Member Smith discussed private lending versus selling bonds and phasing of the park improvements.

**4. City Council Prioritization:** Mr. Connet informed the Council of a greenway grant will bring the greenway to Balfour Road (which removes item 12 and most of item 13 from the list of projects). Council Member Smith submitted his priorities for the park improvements and opined if the soccer field is not a turf field, it should not be built because of maintenance issues. He stated he is also hoping for a sponsor for the soccer field. He also stated the park should have as many restrooms as possible.

The Mayor and Council members expressed their priorities for the park and the costs for the different phases. Council Member Stephens commented he appreciates Council Member Smith's work but doesn't support the bonds because of a timing issue. He stated this is not the time to spend more money because taxes may have to go up next year, the General Assembly may make changes and paying for the bonds would be an additional increase. He stated the City has just spent money on the Main Street which is a park in many ways, a fire truck and a new fire station. Council Member Smith agreed with the comments about Main Street but stated the beauty of the bond issue is that it allows the citizens to decide whether to move ahead. Council Member Stephens stated there are a lot of new parks, Henderson County has also spent a lot of money on Jackson Park, bought the Christian school, and other municipalities are spending money on parks which is money well spent. Mayor Volk commented there is a lot of interest in amenities offered. She stated with the referendum, the voters will determine if it is done in the next few years. Council Member Stephens added he would support expending leftover funds from the General Fund and reiterated his concern about timing.

After discussion of the phasing and cost estimates, and timing of the funding for the greenway, **the Council agreed by majority consensus on the following priorities for the phasing of Berkeley Mills Park:**

**Priority 1: (completed first)**

- #1 entrance drive and ball field**
- #2 main parking area**
- #4 group picnic area**
- #6 destination playground and picnic area**
- #7 memorial tree garden and**
- #9 trail loop – main site.**

**Priority 2: (completed second)**

- #3 soccer complex**
- #5 overlook garden**
- the remainder of #13 pond loop trail (estimated \$95,000)**
- #15 mountain bike area and**
- #14 parking lot & restrooms.**

**Priority 3:**

- #10 boardwalk overlook,**
- #11 Greenway connector trail - A**
- remainder of #14 dog park and trailhead.**

**Exclude from funding:**

- Amphitheatre**
- #12 Greenway Connector Trail – B which will be paid for with greenway funds.**
- and a portion of #13 which will be paid for with grant funds.**

Discussion followed on the estimated cost of the priorities (\$5 million) even though the authorization is \$6 million. If the total amount is not spent, it may be used to pay down the debt. Mr. Rudisill explained there are stipulations for the spending of the bond funds once the bonds are sold.

**5. How we can educate the citizens?** Mr. Connet reviewed how the Town of Garner, NC was successful in a recent municipal bond issue. He explained tax dollars may be used for information only. He stated the City Council as a body should not take a position on the bond, nor advocate one way or the other. He stated City staff can only provide information and cannot take a position for or against the bond.

**6. Next Steps:** The City Council agreed by majority consensus to commit to proceeding with the referendum. Mr. Connet explained Mr. Rudisill will proceed with submitting an application to the LGC, staff will begin

developing citizen education materials, i.e., brochures, websites, etc. and staff will work with Council members to develop a speaking schedule to provide information to the public. He stated staff may also speak to civic clubs, etc. He stated there is approximately three months to provide this information for the November 5 election.

Mr. Rudisill explained the bond order will be introduced at the August 1 City Council meeting; adoption will be done at the September meeting.

**7. Adjourn: Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. upon unanimous consent of the Council.**

---

Barbara G. Volk, Mayor, City of Hendersonville

---

Tammie K. Drake, MMC, City Clerk