

The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Advisory Board for the Town of Nashville held a Called Meeting on Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 6:30 pm in Town Council Chambers. Members Present: Vice Chair-Mary Richardson, George Jefferies, & Lynn Hobbs. Council Member Liaison Present: Council Member Kate Burns. Absent: Chairman-Kirby Winstead. Staff Present: Leonard Barefoot-Interim Town Manager, Marguerite Bishop-Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Resources Director, & Tesa Silver-Deputy Town Clerk & Personnel Technician.

1. Vice Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
2. Presentation by Mr. Leonard Barefoot, Interim Town Manager

Mr. Barefoot stated that the purpose of the meeting tonight is in relation to the Town Council Meeting scheduled for tomorrow night. The purpose of tomorrow night's meeting is to allow the public to hear and better understand the Town of Nashville's decision to look into the potential acquisition of the Birchwood Country Club Property; the meeting tomorrow night is also to allow the public to have the opportunity to input on the possible decision of Town Council. Mr. Barefoot felt that because of the responsibilities of the Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Advisory Board and their involvement in the development of a master plan for the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department that he should meet with the board and inform them as well.

Mr. Barefoot explained that the Town Council did not create the current situation; the Birchwood Board of Directors have been struggling for some time to try to continue to operate, and have gotten in a position where they are ready to dispose of the property. When Mr. Barefoot arrived in early December, some discussion had already taken place with the Birchwood Board of Directors about submitting a proposal to them. The Board of Directors informed the Town that a deadline for submitting proposals had been set for January 14, 2019. A potential developer discussed purchasing the property, but breaking the property up, and only developing certain lots; once Town Council was privy to this information they discussed potentially submitting a proposal to the Birchwood Board of Directors for the Birchwood Country Club. The Town Council met in a closed session and decided to submit a proposal to the Birchwood Board of Directors.

In the event that the Birchwood Board of Directors accepts the Town's proposal, then we would have a public hearing and a voting session. Mr. Barefoot stated that the interest in this property should be seen for what it is; an incredible amount of open space (120 acres) to be utilized, a clubhouse that is adaptable to be used for our own purpose, it could be used as a recreation center, multipurpose center, and a meeting space for the town. It has great accessibility with three entrances. Mr. Barefoot feels it is an affordable project; if measured over the basis of its useful life and the availability of funding, if purchased it would be invaluable to the town. The Town is in a healthy position financially and has a very healthy fund balance, with zero debt in the general fund, and limited debt in the utility fund. The Town should be able to afford and maintain the facility based on the ten years of data that he has reviewed.

Over the last ten years the town has seen quite a bit of growth, the tax base has grown 44% during this time frame, which is not an awful lot in 10 years. The other taxes have grown to 61%, which most of that has happened within the last few years, a lot of it based upon the commercial growth that has

occurred here. Mr. Barefoot also mentioned the area surrounding the town and how it is being heavily developed; those areas will be serviced by the town and will cause revenue to increase based upon them using services the town provides, and also an increase in tax base from them shopping at the business that are in town. Mr. Barefoot stated that if the Town's offer is accepted then the plan is for the town to write an application for a PARTF Grant, Mrs. Bishop has researched the PARTF Grant and other potential grant sources. Mr. Barefoot believes that we should qualify for \$500,000 that could be used to renovate the pool area and the clubhouse structure. The cost of buying the property itself would be the match amount that is needed, so it would be almost like receiving free money. If awarded the grant, we would receive funding in the fall. The department would begin the master plan process, move the recreation department to the facility to be onsite, and start to plan the use of the facility. The Birchwood Board of Directors will meet on Monday, January 28, 2019.

3. Question and Answer Session between the Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Resources Advisory Board and Mr. Barefoot

Mr. Jefferies asked if taxes would be raised in order to purchase the facility, or how the Town Council plans to purchase the facility. Mr. Barefoot explained that Town Council has two options; the Town could pay cash for the facility and still have a strong fund balance, or the Town could borrow funds most likely at a rate as low as 3% with permission from the LGC, it is honestly just a manner of how they want to manage the town's cash flow. Mr. Barefoot does not feel that there will be a tax increase; he just feels the public and neighbors should be involved. Mrs. Burns stated that the bottom line is essentially that the property could be purchased and maintained without raising taxes, and the town would increase staffing and services as they are able to maintain and afford it. Mr. Barefoot stated that the Town would rely on grant funding for a number of things for the facility.

Ms. Hobbs questioned what potential uses of the property had been discussed. Mr. Barefoot stated that he has seen request for walking trails, a dog park, and a splash pad, but there are lots of different things that can be done with the space. Mrs. Bishop referred back to the needs assessment as presented to council, and the big recreational changes that the public requested were walking and biking trails, park shelters and picnic areas, an indoor running/walking track, indoor lap lanes for exercise purposes, a playground, water parks, and benches. For programming, services requested were youth sports programs, youth fitness programs, community events, and programs for people with disabilities. Mrs. Bishop stated a lot of the outdoor request could occur now in a passive way to preserve the green space, and we could start with what is already there; it will require only a little bit of effort from the department. The indoor facility could offer classes that we don't offer now because we don't have the indoor space, the pool would offer swimming, water aerobics, and the facility could offer a daycare option.

Mr. Jefferies asked if the town is unable to acquire the property, would the town still be able to control what happens with the property because of the neighborhood surrounding it. Mr. Barefoot stated the town would not; there has been a variety of interest in the property and its potential use; he is hoping that the Birchwood Board of Directors would see the purchase by the town as an act of community spirit, and a way to keep Birchwood going on and on. Mrs. Burns commented that she thinks that if a developer comes they will most likely build homes. Mr. Barefoot stated that building the homes on the outside lots would be fairly easy, but building lots on the interior may be fairly expensive. Ms. Hobbs asked if a developer were to acquire the land would there be an option for the town to buy the

facility itself. Mr. Barefoot stated that it could be a possibility. Mrs. Burns stated that in that situation the town would most likely end up paying more for the facility than the entire property. There would be no preservation of the green space and the requested needs for services from the citizens would still be unfulfilled.

Mrs. Burns asked what the immediate staffing needs are, and how would it affect the budget for the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department. Mrs. Bishop stated that maintaining the lawns would be a necessity; the town would not be cutting at the rate it would be if we were using it as a golf course, but it still has to be maintained. Mrs. Bishop stated that purchasing a tractor would save on the amount of time it would take to cut the grass because it would allow cutting larger portions, and that would decrease some of the staffing needs. It currently takes five days to maintain the areas at Stoney Creek Environmental Park and J.W. Glover Park. Public Works may be able to assist with this; she suggests having seasonal employees for cutting, or contracting out for cutting. Ms. Hobbs stated that she suspects that there are other things that need to be tended to as well like the fence. Mrs. Bishop stated that she is correct, that the property needs to be surveyed so that all the areas that needed to be fixed and updated are identified, and that some of the smaller things could possibly be fixed before growing season hits. Mrs. Bishop asked them to keep in mind that the goal, if acquired, is to move in, get set up, identify what needs to be done, as well as creating and implementing plans and programming to determine staffing needs.

Mr. Barefoot stated that everyone needs to remember that we may be increasing staff but, the town will also be increasing the services it provides, and hopefully offering services that will generate some revenues. Mrs. Bishop stated that she sees the ballroom as one potential source of revenue; there is nothing that size to rent for events or weddings in town. The rates are currently based on the amount of people attending an event; 75 attendees-\$375, 75-100 attendees-\$500, and 100-200 attendees-\$750. The town would need its pricing to reflect what is seen as a normal rate in surrounding and like municipalities. Mrs. Bishop stated that they essentially would not be making money from the pool; it needs to be seen as a service the town would be offering. Mrs. Burns asked if we would be charging a fee for entrance into the pool; Mrs. Bishop stated that she would suggest charging a nominal fee. Ms. Hobbs wanted confirmation that there would be additional staffing needs specifically for the pool. Mrs. Bishop explained that we would have to have a certified pool operator, a pool manager, and lifeguards; she would recommend a total of 3 guards on duty at all times for safety purposes. However, it is a seasonal service so the positions would be part time and would not cost the town in terms of benefits and retirement.

Mrs. Burns asked in regards to the repairs that are needed, would they be done immediately or would we use grant funding for them. Mrs. Bishop stated we would wait on grant funding. Mrs. Burns asked if the repairs would be completely covered by the grant funding. Mrs. Bishop stated it would depend on the amount granted by PARTF or any other grantor we apply with, however, if we receive the full amount of \$500,000 then yes she would assume that it would cover the cost of the repairs. Ms. Hobbs asked if the pool would be handicap accessible. Mrs. Bishop stated that the pool needs to be updated and that we would at least need a lift for people with disabilities. We have ADA provisions and an ADA Transition Plan in place so we are ok to start with. Ms. Hobbs asked if there was funding available specifically for making a facility accessible. Mrs. Bishop stated that there are things out there and it could be a possibility. If we are able to, when we upgrade the pool she would like for it to be zero-entry and make it user friendly for all users.

Mr. Jefferies asked what the capacity is for the pool; Mrs. Bishop stated that it can hold 150 swimmers. Mrs. Bishop called on Mr. Louis Smith, a technical expert who is a certified pool operator and has worked with Nash County Recreation for 6 ½ years; Mr. Smith stated that he spoke with Mrs. Bishop and he is going to research the GIS System for the town to find out the exact occupancy for the pool and pool deck at Birchwood. Based on his knowledge and experience, he believes that it will be similar to the occupancy of the Nash Recreation Pool; 150 occupancy for the pool and 225 on the pool deck. Mr. Barefoot stated that he has hopes that the county may be able to assist with some funding, that they should have an interest in this, and hopefully will help.

Ms. Hobbs asked for confirmation on her understanding of what has been explained tonight; she stated Town Council will meet tomorrow night to consider making a proposal to buy. Mr. Barefoot stated the proposal has already been made; it is sealed and awaiting to be opened by the Birchwood Board of Directors. Mrs. Burns stated that the proposal is subject to a public hearing and a vote; that tomorrow night is just to get public input, but the proposal will remain the same. Mr. Barefoot stated that the town has put in an offer, and the town is trying to be transparent in what is occurring. The town also understands that this is something that the Birchwood Board of Directors want to happen fairly quickly, and the town is trying to take proper steps to ensure that if awarded we can move the process along. Ms. Hobbs asked if there were other bids as well as the bid from the town. Mr. Barefoot stated that this is correct and the Board of Directors want to be able have good faith that the potential buyer is a serious buyer.

Ms. Hobbs stated that then there is a good chance that we could know something next week. Mr. Barefoot stated that she was correct that we could know something next week; he wants everyone to know that he and the town are truly trying to be transparent about the process, and to see this for the potential opportunity this is for the town and its citizens. Mr. Jefferies stated that the bottom line is that it is better for the town to have the facility for the future, and that down the line that there will be some cost to maintain it. Mr. Barefoot stated that the town needs to see the opportunity that is before them. Mrs. Burns stated that we should also look at this from an economic standpoint. We will have increases in the purchases in town, it will increase property value, taxes will increase as far as receivables not the actual taxes going up; we need to look at how we attract people, families, and young individuals to move to our town, recreational facilities and green spaces are known ways to do that. These things will defray some of the cost and the burden on the community; they should outweigh the cost as well. Mr. Barefoot stated being able to control the time table and specifics of the development will also help control the cost. The board had no additional questions.

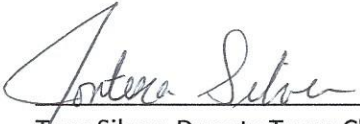
Vice Chair Richardson called for a motion to provide Town Council with a letter of support for the purchase of Birchwood Country Club property located at 901 Birchwood Drive. Mr. Jeffries made the motion to provide Town Council with a letter of support for the purchase of Birchwood Country Club property located at 901 Birchwood Drive, seconded by Ms. Hobbs. Vice Chair Richardson called for vote, the motion carried unanimously (3-0).

4. Adjournment

Vice Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.


Kirby Winstead, Chairman

Attest:


Tesa Silver, Deputy Town Clerk