

Council Work Session
December 10, 2012
8:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor M. Jane Seeman
Council Member Laurie Genevro Cole
Council Member Laurie A. DiRocco
Council Member Edythe Frankel Kelleher
Council Member Michael J. Polychrones
Council Member Carey J. Sienicki
Council Member Howard J. Springsteen

Also present: Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager
Kirstyn Barr, Public Information Officer
Steve Briglia, Town Attorney
Robert Carlisle, Chief of Police
Mike Miller, Deputy Chief of Police
Dennis Johnson, Director of Public Works
Cathy Salgado, Director of Parks and Recreation
Marion Serfass, Acting Director of Finance
Carol S. Waters, Deputy Town Clerk

(1) Request from American Cancer Society – Study Host and Relay for Life

Cathy Salgado introduced Michelle Daichman from the American Cancer Society (ACS) to talk about two fund raising events being planned for 2013. The “Relay for Life” has been hosted at local high schools before, but this year they would like to have the overnight event at the Town Green, on the first weekend in June. (Teams camp out and take turns walking around a track or path overnight.) Michelle said they could make the walking route within and around the Town Green area. She anticipates 350 to 400 people, with one quarter to one half of them staying overnight. The Vienna Police Department has already been consulted.

The Cancer Prevention Study (“CPS 3”) is projected for September or October, Ms. Daichman said. It is a community based study looking at lifestyles, genetics, environmental factors and behaviors and how they may affect cancer. The ACS is asking the Town to host the event by waiving the Community Center usage fees, probably for the multipurpose room, for two or three collection times. They said it would be similar to the Red Cross blood drives conducted there. The ACS would contract and pay for the phlebotomists.

Mrs. Salgado said that once she has more details and can determine the amount of Community Center fees involved for the CPS, and develops a standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Relay for Life event, she will bring this back to Council.

Recommendation: The Director of Parks and Recreation will develop an MOU for the Relay for Life event and calculate the Community Center fees for the Cancer Prevention Study, then bring these requests back to a Council meeting for consideration.

(2) Vienna Voting Precincts

Fairfax County Office of Elections representatives Cameron Quinn, Judy Flaig, and Luke Baranyak came to follow up on a previous work session in which they introduced an idea to cut the number of voting precincts in Town from four down to three. Referring to the recent Presidential election, Ms. Quinn said they hadn't seen any major problems with voting in Vienna. Council recounted the widespread complaints about waiting too long for check-in and voting, and too few voting machines. Ms. Quinn explained why the County is not legally allowed to buy more voting machines right now. She added that they know more laptops are needed for voter check-in, and they'll give poll workers more instruction in line management.

Ms. Quinn reported that in Vienna's four precincts, voter turnout ranged from 81.3% to 85.2% in the November election. The number of people voting at those precincts ranged from just over 1,000 to just over 2,700, she said. Later Ms. Quinn stated that about 2,500 to 3,000 people vote in an average size precinct in Fairfax County.

The Office of Elections suggested the following three new voting precincts: Vienna 1 would still be Cunningham Park Elementary School; Vienna 2 would be First Baptist Church at 450 Orchard Street, N.W.; and Vienna 3 would be the Community Center.

Some Council Members remarked that they would rather just keep the four voting precincts. When asked whether or not the Town had any choice about downsizing, Ms. Quinn answered that the County would not force it if there was strong opposition, but reminded everyone that budget constraints were the driving force behind this proposal. She also said that they are willing to work with the Town to improve voter waiting times in the future. Judy Flaig suggested that the voting precincts don't have to stay as drawn up on their proposal; the maps of the precincts could be reconfigured. Ms. Quinn noted that the Office of Elections would prefer to have any precinct changes in place before the June primaries, but said it would still be possible to change them after the June elections. Council told the representatives that it would be very helpful to see more options for different three and four precinct configurations and possible polling places.

Recommendation: Fairfax County Office of Elections representatives will come back to the February 11, 2013 work session with more alternatives and recommendations.

(3) Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) – Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail Safety

Executive Director of the NVRPA Paul A. Gilbert introduced himself and the NVRPA Director of Park Operations, Chris Pauley. Mr. Gilbert thanked Council for Laurie Cole and described her as a fantastic liaison for NVRPA.

In November the Transportation Safety Commission had a public meeting regarding safety issues on the W&OD Trail in Vienna. Safety concerns raised and suggestions made were addressed by Mr. Gilbert at this work session, since the trail is owned and operated by NVRPA. He said much time and effort has been put into trail safety, like improvements to the intersections. In the past few years they've added rumble strips and painted "Crossing Ahead" and "Stop" on the pavement; they've added reflective posts to the stop signs and improved site lines. He observed that rules are very difficult to enforce here; although speed limits are a popular idea with some people, bicycles do not have speedometers, most cyclists do not carry identification, and ticketing them is problematic. When talking about trail safety, he said, a lot of it is behavioral engineering, or trying to form the environment in such a way to impact trail users to act in a certain way. They try to make everything as consistent as possible.

Mr. Gilbert also discussed "creating a new norm." If they can get enough people stopping at stop signs, giving audible warning signals to pedestrians when passing (offering free bicycle bells, perhaps), slowing down in congested areas and being courteous, their behavior will influence the behavior of others.

As part of its strategic plan, NVRPA plans to develop smart phone apps for the trail. This would provide more opportunities for safety messages, etc. More people are using the trail as a commuter route, and so are using it more after dark. Mr. Gilbert mentioned that the Town of Herndon applied for grant money for lights on their part of the trail, and if Vienna is interested in lights they would be open to discussing that. Brush was cleared away where the W&OD Trail crosses Park Street, to improve visibility, and Mr. Gilbert stated that this is now on their regular maintenance schedule. He also agreed that it's a great idea to narrow the Vienna Community Center area down to one or two crossing points by using fencing or plantings, and have those crossing points marked on the map. He said they would be happy to work with the Town to devise a plan for that, and confirmed that split-rail fencing is one possible option.

Mayor Seeman suggested making a separate lane for walkers, where possible. Another idea was the use of caution zones, perhaps indicated by a different color pavement and/or signage. Mr. Gilbert agreed that all these options can be looked at as we go forward. He reiterated the NVRPA's willingness to work with the Town of Vienna to make the trail as safe as possible.

Recommendation: Start by limiting the trail crossing points around the Vienna Community Center. Keep working with the NVRPA.

(4) Establish a Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)

Transportation Safety Commission Chairperson Sharon Baum spoke at the Work Session and answered questions about the proposed new subcommittee to the Transportation Safety Commission (TSC). Ms. Baum said the TSC could use help with "homework" on various safety

issues. Dennis Johnson pointed out that there is currently no mechanism by which to request a sidewalk that's not already on an existing sidewalk list, and a Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) might provide an avenue for that. As discussed, the PAC wouldn't conduct public hearings, but could make recommendations to the TSC.

Mr. Payton recommended that the Town staff person assigned to the TSC could also cover its subcommittees, the Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The PAC would meet once a month, possibly in the Senior Lounge of the Community Center. The meetings would be open, without a maximum number of members. They would like to have representatives from the TSC, from local PTAs, someone from the Safe Routes to School program, and hopefully, a Police Officer.

Council advised that the new subcommittee would need a clear indication of their mission and scope of duties. The developing PAC was asked to write a mission statement, write an article for the Town Newsletter to notify citizens who may want to join, and send e-mails to the local school's Parent Teacher Associations. They also need to choose a place and time for meetings.

Recommendation: PAC will write a mission statement, write an article for the Newsletter, send an e-mail to local PTAs, and determine a time and place for meetings.

(5) Curb Painting

Dennis Johnson, Chief Carlisle, Mr. Payton and the Council discussed the question of painting house numbers on curbs. Many Town residents have them and they can be helpful. However, painting house numbers on curbs is technically against regulations because a permit is required to do any work in the public right-of-way. The Town has not been enforcing the regulations against it. Residents sometimes complain to the Police when vendors go door to door soliciting the work. If they don't have a peddler's license, police can ticket them or move them on. Vendors must have a peddler's license. In years past, there have been solicitors who collected money for curb painting fraudulently, and never did the work. Most recently an issue arose when house numbers on a curb were sprayed with spray paint.

Mr. Johnson noted that problems have arisen when curbs have been repaired or replaced and residents expect the Town to repaint them. The Town will not be responsible for replacing the painted numbers. One problem with relaxing the rules, as Mr. Johnson put it, could be contractors digging things up in the right-of-way. From a public works perspective, he said we want to control the public right of way. It was remarked further that curb numbers are ineffective when leaves, parked cars, snow, or trash cans cover them up.

Recommendation: No action is required at this time.

(6) Police Department Facility Needs Assessment

Deputy Chief Miller reiterated the reasons why the Police Department needs more space and why a space needs assessment and site assessment is appropriate. They estimate that the assessment would take about 6 months.

Recommendation: Consideration of a space needs assessment will be on the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of December 17, 2012.

(7) Update on Community Center Expansion and Renovation Feasibility and Needs Assessment

Cathy Salgado reviewed and discussed a feasibility study for a Vienna Community Center expansion and what elements would be examined. She gave background information on the two companies which will work together to provide a comprehensive analysis of many different combinations of possible options. An important component which has been added to the study is an economic analysis of the operating and potential revenue of the community center.

Recommendation: An RFP for this will be on the Regular Council Agenda of January 7, 2013.

(8) Follin Lane Reconstruction Project Funding

Steve Briglia reviewed the background information on this project and answered questions. He noted that the construction agreement with Navy Federal Credit Union is more in the nature of a memorandum of understanding than a contract. It includes a re-payment schedule, and they are not asking for interest. Marion Serfass reported that the agreement has been discussed with the Town's financial advisor and bond counsel, and the bond counsel advised that Council approve a Reimbursement Resolution at the same time.

Dennis Johnson said that the project design is underway and will be finished in the spring, and the construction money will probably be needed in the spring.

Recommendation: The construction agreement with Navy Federal Credit Union and a Reimbursement Resolution to repay the advance out of the next bond proceeds will be on the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of December 17, 2012.

The Town Council Work Session Meeting of December 10, 2012 adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Mayor M. Jane Seeman

Signed / Dated: _____

Attest:

Deputy Town Clerk