

December 7, 2021

A Regular Work Session of the Danville City Council convened on December 7, 2021 at 8:41 p.m. in Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. Council Members present were: James B. Buckner, L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (8). Sherman M. Saunders (1) was absent.

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield Jr., and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

Mayor Jones presided

WORK SESSION ITEMS

PRESENTATION ON SPLASH PADS IN THE CITY OF DANVILLE

City Manager Ken Larking noted Director of Parks & Recreation Bill Sgrinia would be presenting options for a splash pad on the Southside of Danville. A decision had already been made to locate one splashpad on the Northside of Danville at Third Avenue. A work session was held a few months ago and Council Members discussed where to place the splash pad in the southern side of the City. There will be the two locations that Council Members had asked to be presented, and staff also included for consideration the Pumpkin Creek location. Mayor Jones noted Parks & Recreation had presented this to Council; the last time the discussion was between Ballou Park and Pumpkin Creek, and he and Council Member Hood brought up Doyle J. Thomas Park.

Council Member Vogler noted he was in favor of Ballou Park; it was the most logical place for the one on the Southside. Burlington's Splash Park was in their primary city park, not one of the neighborhood parks, and Eden's was in their prime city park, not a small neighborhood park. Other places put them where they were easily accessible, that had parking, and that were a central hub to a number of different areas; that describes Ballou Park. Mr. Vogler stated he thought it would be significant to see an investment like this go into Ballou Park which was a central hub to a number of neighborhoods of great diversity, and there was plenty of parking and infrastructure in place. He does like Doyle Thomas, but he doesn't know about parking there. He thinks if the public were polled, it would be overwhelmingly in favor of Ballou Park; that was the feedback he had been receiving.

Mayor Jones noted he would choose Green Street Park. On the Northside, they know someone will be there, and with the Peace Center at Green Street, he would vote for Doyle Thomas Park. Mr. Hood noted he was in favor of Doyle Thomas Park as opposed to Ballou Park, because he thought the community could continue to change in that area. He looked at how many citizens the park could accommodate and the impact it could have of switching the whole community with it. People may not be able to afford or be able to get to one of the other parks.

Mr. Sgrinia explained the sites they were designing were for neighborhood sized parks, accommodating about thirty-five people; Eden was a larger facility. Mr. Vogler stated he does not think the public understands that; they think they were getting something like what Eden and Burlington have. If this was going to just be a small neighborhood thing, that was not what people thought they were getting; when they see that, they were going to be disappointed.

Vice Mayor Miller questioned how many people the Riverfront park could accommodate, and Mr. Sgrinia stated it will have the whole features and will be larger than the neighborhood parks. Dr. Miller noted that would be the third park. The original plan was to put these in small communities

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to help improve them; looking at that, Doyle Thomas meets what Council originally had in mind. A small splash park would help that community; it was not designed to draw people from out of town. Mr. Sgrinia noted it was his understanding that this was to look into the neighborhoods as neighborhood amenities, to make an investment in the neighborhoods; that was where they got to this scale. Mr. Vogler was right, there were different scales and if Council wanted to build something that attracted people, they would look for that bigger space.

Mayor Jones noted this conversation started around having splashpads, and these were not going to be the only ones. This was an opportunity for Council to look at something bigger, possibly, for Ballou Park. Council Member Campbell asked the City Manager if they could do all three at different stages, he believes all three areas were important, and Mr. Vogler made a strong statement, but the areas they were putting the other two were very important also. Mr. Larking explained the current constraint was the budget; they had budgeted in the current fiscal year about \$2M to do two splashpads, and that was what \$2M would buy, one in the north and one in the south. In a future budget, they could add another facility; staff would have to look at where the funding came from to pay for something bigger, somewhere else.

Reverend Campbell noted if this passes, when would it be started and Mr. Larking explained the process with the renderings has already started; until Council made a decision, they did not proceed to the next step which would be construction drawings. Reverend Campbell stated he would like Council to look at all three in stages, the one in Ballou Park could be done the following year; he would like Council to consider doing all three. Council Member Buckner stated they have two this year, can Council get another \$2M next year and put another one in then. Mr. Vogler questioned how much of a strain on the budget would it be to do all three at once, using \$2M for two smaller parks, and then begin the process of looking at a \$2M park at Ballou Park. He was not against Green Street and was in support of that, but he thinks they have an opportunity to do something even bigger, one that was not just for a neighborhood but something that people from all around the City would go to.

Council agreed to Doyle J. Thomas park as a location for the splashpad. Mr. Larking noted he has heard that Council would like staff to take steps to plan for a larger splash pad at Ballou if possible; Council noted they were in favor of that.

Mr. Sgrinia questioned if they would be in favor of another comparable location that would have good access; there may be something else. Mayor Jones directed Mr. Sgrinia to bring something back with different locations, including Ballou, and let Council look at it. Mr. Larking noted staff had direction, they will look at what revenue was available and see if there was something that could be done to amend the budget. Mr. Campbell noted out of the \$20M the City received from Caesars, \$5M went for the purchase of the property, the \$15M, where was that going and Mr. Larking noted they programmed that, it was looked at by resolution during the last budget process, but he will take a look at that and see if there was anything left in that amount.

Mr. Sgrinia noted he looked forward to seeing Council at the light show at Ballou Park.

APPOINTMENTS

Vice Mayor Miller noted following a meeting of the Committee on Appointments, they make the following recommendations:

Building Code Board of Appeals

Reappoint: Lawrence Meder and Samuel Thomas

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Employee Retirement System

Appoint: Helm Dobbins

Fair Housing Board

Reappoint: Matthew Bailey

Planning Commission

Reappoint: Manuel Dodson and Steve Petrick

Council agreed to put these on an upcoming business agenda.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Mr. Larking noted he wanted Council to be aware that in this year's budget, Economic Development has funding in place to do a city-wide branding study which has the possible component of looking at the city seal; they will be working on the study in the next few months.

Mr. Larking noted regarding homelessness, the City has set aside several hundred thousand dollars for the House of Hope for expansion so they can serve women and children in that facility. Counseling was important to the success of homeless people and should be looked at. Dr. Miller noted the one-night limit at the homeless shelter needed to be looked at and Reverend Campbell noted his agreement.

COMMUNICATIONS

Council Member Campbell noted he was very appreciative of what the City was doing for the young people and believes it will have a great impact on reducing crime in the City.

Council Member Vogler thanked Council for the work they put in and noted his agreement with Council Member Campbell. It was exciting with all the positive things that were coming forward for the youth.

CLOSED MEETING

At 9:10 p.m., Vice Mayor Miller **moved** that this meeting of the City Council of the City of Danville, Virginia be recessed and that Council immediately reconvene in a Closed Meeting for the following purposes: discussion or consideration of the acquisition and/or disposition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely impact the bargaining position of the City as permitted by Subsection A(3) of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, and more specifically discussion regarding the sale and/or potential purchase of a specific parcel of property for use by prospective industrial, commercial, and mixed use projects looking to locate in the City; and an Economic Development discussion and update concerning a prospective business or industry where no previous announcement has been made and/or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made as permitted by Subsection (A)(5) of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended and more specifically to consider: an update on multiple prospective commercial, mixed use, and industrial projects considering locating within the City and the region; and consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probably litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as permitted by Subsection (A)(7) of Section 2.2-3711 of the code of Virginia, 1950 as amended.

The Motion was **seconded** by Council Member Buckner and carried by the following vote:

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VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Vogler and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Saunders (1)

Upon unanimous vote at 9:32 p.m., Council reconvened in open session and Vice Mayor Miller **moved** for adoption of the following Resolution:

CERTIFICATE OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Council convened in Closed Meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.1-344.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, requires a Certification by the Council that such Closed Meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each Member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements of Virginia Law under Section 2.2-3711 were heard, discussed or considered, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered by the Committee.

The Motion was **seconded** by Council Member Vogler and carried by the following vote:

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Vogler and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Saunders (1)

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:33 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK