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A Regular Work Session of the Danville City Council convened on August 5, 2021 at 8:19 p.m. in the Conference Room located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. Council Members present were: James B. Buckner, Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, and Madison J.R. Whittle (7). L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr. and J. Lee Vogler, Jr., were absent (2). *Mayor Jones left the meeting at 9:30 p.m.*

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 Alonzo L. Jones presided.

MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Saunders and **second** by Council Member Mayo, Minutes of the Regular Work Session held on July 6, 2021 were approved as presented. Draft copies were distributed to Council Members prior to the Meeting.

WORK SESSION ITEMS

PRESENTATION ON SPLASH PADS IN THE CITY OF DANVILLE

Director of Parks and Recreation Bill Sgrinia introduced Dr. Stephanie Lovely, the City's Facilities and Services Planner. Ms. Lovely has been out meeting people and talking about neighborhood parks.

Mr. Sgrinia explained splash pads were a great addition to any community, they were highly sought after and a great facility to provide activity throughout the summer. They were basically a water playground; water shoots up from the ground, out from the sides of different elements or drops down from buckets; there were no slides or climbing up. There were a lot of different elements and designs, separated by age categories. They work like a swimming pool, in that the water goes into a filtration system, gets treated and comes back into the system to be sprayed again. The City was designing neighborhood scale splashpads, which were about 3800 square feet, which includes the spray ground itself with up to fifteen elements on it, and the decking around it. They will need to have a restroom, and maybe pair it with a playground or other amenities alongside the splashpad; shade was also very important.

Mr. Sgrinia noted Ms. Lovely has been working on their Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan; they were looking at all the neighborhood parks and properties, talking with residents, hearing what they think of the properties, and what do they really want to see these properties be or become. (Ms. Lovely distributed to Council a handout entitled, *What the citizens are saying*, a copy of which has been retained in Laserfiche under Report/Studies to Council.) The report was basically conversations Ms. Lovely had with people, and surveys and feedback received by Parks & Rec. Some of the goals they followed through this process, take into consideration social justice and equity, the environment and the economic impact of what they were doing. The process was rooted in public engagement, reliable data and building trust with the people they were talking to.

Mr. Sgrinia reviewed a map of the City's parks which include large, regional parks such as Dan Daniel, Angler's Park, Evans Park and Ballou Park. Community Parks were parks that served multiple neighborhoods; Danville does not have a lot of community parks, but by putting in splashpads, they can create some. There were also neighborhood parks such as Swain Acres and White Rock, the smaller properties.

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Looking at splashpads, they took a lot into consideration: where do they build them, what was the terrain/landscape, how many people can access them, how hard was it to build something, after they build it, there will be a good amount of maintenance, and they also looked at the impact of the investment. They also looked at the need, what other parks were in the area, how far was it for residents to get to other spaces, and they also took into consideration the people they work with such as Opportunity Neighborhoods, Community Development, and the Health Collaborative. Mr. Sgrinia stated there were some concerns about the facilities and one was, they were very popular and could become overwhelmed quickly depending on how the City operates them. The ones they were looking at had a capacity of about thirty-five people based on the square footage requirement and the amount of water that was being recirculated; that was appropriate for a neighborhood scale facility. For maintenance, staff will have to be certified as an Aquatic Facility Operator to manage the chemical loads. Other considerations were should they be staffed, should they have supervisors at all times, what will the operating hours be and should there be a fee for people to use them. Most of the time with a neighborhood scale, there wasn't a fee; generally, there was a fee in the larger facilities. Staff wants to make sure it was a good fit for the community they were putting it into.

Mr. Sgrinia noted for the Northside, they looked at three locations, and going through their criteria, they came up with Third Avenue. It would have about fifteen elements, with a shade structure and playground. It would be located next to the Police Department, with a parking area with thirty spaces. The residents loved the idea, and the neighbors really wanted places to walk and places to socialize. They had a lot of requests for walking tracks, and he did not know if they can do it in the first phase, but the area lends itself well to put in a walking area. There was also an area for a picnic shelter in the back. This location was in the Opportunity Neighborhoods area which has other funding available to do some of the other improvements. Considerations for the Southside include Ballou, Cedarbrook, Hylton and Pumpkin Creek. City Manager Ken Larking noted they had a recommendation for the Northside, but understood there was some discussion on where the one in Southside ought to be located. They want to first confirm that the Northside location was acceptable for City Council Members. Mayor Jones took a straw poll and Council agreed on the Third Avenue location. Mr. Larking stated staff wanted to get feedback from Council on the Southside location.

Dr. Miller questioned the cost of the walking track at Third Avenue, and Mr. Sgrinia noted there was not a sidewalk all the way around; staff proposed to widen and put in a track all the way around. Mayor Jones noted his agreement with Dr. Miller about taking care of the track at the same time as putting in the splashpads to give parents something to do. Mr. Whittle questioned putting a walking track and swings at all the parks in the City. Mr. Larking noted Mr. Sgrinia and Ms. Lovely went to every park, spoke to the people using the park and asked what they liked and didn't like about the park, what they wanted to see, what they weren't seeing. Staff was going to have good guidance based on that information about what to propose in future budgets about park improvements for all the neighborhood parks throughout the City. It will improve quality of life and improve value in neighborhoods and homes. Mr. Sgrinia noted one of the things in Ms. Lovely's background was greenway and trail development, and she was looking at was how to connect these neighborhood parks by trail; that was a long-range vision.

Mr. Buckner noted there has already been some discussion on where the splash park would go on the Southside; during National Night Out, a number of people told him they would like to see it at Ballou Park. It was a central location for people, it was on a bus route and he would encourage it to be located at Ballou. Mayor Jones noted staff had several options for the Southside, what did they need from Council and Mr. Larking noted guidance on what Council would prefer. He believes staff was ready to go with Third Avenue because they feel comfortable

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with the site. There were sites they would feel more comfortable with on the Southside based on what staff knows about them, but they will leave that decision up to Council.

Mr. Hood noted they have heard about Ballou, and questioned if anyone had referred to Doyle Park on Green Street, it being adjacent to downtown and Mr. Sgrinia noted most neighborhood parks have asked for it, everyone wants it in their park. Mr. Hood noted Ballou Park keeps coming up, but it will never be in a perfect place for somebody. Mr. Mayo asked if they looked into areas with kids, and secondly the 30-35 age group, how would they manage that, would they have set times when it comes to age. Mr. Sgrinia noted there was no limit, they will see adults with their children, and the park was probably designed for children up to 12 or 14 years old. It tries to hit a whole range of ages with the different features. Mr. Larking noted on one of the "concerns" slides, there was a question if the City would charge a fee and would it be supervised. It was not necessary to monitor them, and the City doesn't have monitors at playgrounds; that was a question they would look at. At the larger ones, which would be twice the size of the ones the City was proposing, they do charge a fee, someone checks people in, and only let in a certain number of people. There were a lot of things to consider and that may play into where Council wants to put it, and what size it ought to be.

In response to Mr. Buckner, Mr. Sgrinia explained the park in Eden was fenced in, people enter through a building with restrooms on either side, and staff checks people in; there was only a certain capacity. That one was almost twice the size of the one staff was recommending. There was a fee, but that were minimal, and they don't open the gates until 10:00 a.m. These can be set up so the water doesn't come on until 11:00 a.m. and shuts off at 5:00 p.m.; that can be controlled. Mr. Sgrinia noted he does not know how they would control the number of people going into the splashpad. Mr. Larking stated it would have to be monitored, with a fence and a lot more to it; that was a different kind of splashpad than what they proposed. Mr. Mayo noted he thought there needed to be some type of management. Dr. Miller noted originally, he thought Pumpkin Creek or Grove Park would be better, but Grove Park floods and Pumpkin Creek is a little more out the way, but there were some neighborhoods over there that were underserved. He could also see Ballou Park being used, could see them being overwhelmed and doesn't know how they would keep track of the flow.

In response to Mr. Saunders, Mr. Sgrinia explained that regarding Doyle Thomas Park, there will be another water feature in the Riverfront Park and does not know if they ever got much feedback about Doyle Thomas being a location. It would certainly serve several neighborhoods in that area. Mr. Saunders questioned if they had staff at Doyle Thomas Park, and Mr. Sgrinia noted they did not; the park belongs to the City and they maintain it, but Parks & Rec does not staff the parks. Mr. Saunders noted he was not ready at this point to choose a location. Mayor Jones noted he has been thinking about Doyle Thomas Park; these were going to be unsupervised splash parks, there was a police precinct there as well as revitalization in the OWE. Mayor Jones requested staff bring back something with Ballou Park and Doyle J. Thomas for Council to review. Mr. Saunders noted his agreement; he does not have a decision, but he was leaning toward Doyle Thomas park. Mr. Whittle questioned a police presence at Green Street once the new police station opens and Mayor Jones stated what he heard was that possibly something would still be at the Green Street precinct, such as uses for community engagement. Mr. Larking noted that was his understanding, but he has would discuss this with Chief Booth.

Mr. Sgrinia noted staffing was a consideration; Parks and Rec does not currently have staff there, but it was not to say they can't or they shouldn't when they open the facilities. When staff brings back a drawing of Doyle Thomas, the park will look different. There will be a lot of grading because it was on a slope, they will have to put in a parking lot and restroom. The flattest spot was where

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the playground was now; it won't be the same park that was there today. Mr. Mayo noted his concern was supervision; it will draw a lot of people.

APPOINTMENTS

Vice Mayor Miller noted the Committee on Appointments met earlier this evening and make the following recommendations to Council:

Community Improvement Council	Reappoint:	Janet Gwynn
	Appoint:	Kacey Cunningham
Commission of Architectural Review	Appoint:	Sonja Ingram and Kathryn Waters
Danville Pittsylvania Community Services Board:	Appoint:	Carolyn Evans

Council agreed to put the recommendations on an upcoming business agenda.

PROGRAM UPDATES

City Manager Ken Larking noted the Clerk had emailed Council members for preferences on times for a meeting with Steven Moret from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Staff was trying to coordinate an Economic Development Summit through the Chamber. As part of that, RIFA was inviting both Council and the Board of Supervisors into a strategy discussion on Economic Development which would involve potential, unannounced projects. There were some important things Mr. Moret would like to discuss especially about the Mega Site.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Miller questioned the status of the traffic light at Updike and Mr. Larking explained it was budgeted, it had to be built and should be ready the end of this year or early next year. The mast arms have to be specially built per each intersection because each one has a different size.

Mr. Saunders noted regarding RIFA, the County sent a letter regarding a forbearance; this issue was discussed previously. He and the City Manager had a conference call with the Tobacco Commission, and they made their decision. Mr. Saunders noted he was not sure what to do regarding the letter; Council Members noted their support.

CLOSED MEETING

At 9:18 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 to consider: 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 to the City; and an Economic Development discussion and update concerning 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-

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3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended and more specifically to consider: an update on a prospective commercial and mixed use projects considering locating within the City and the region; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel as permitted by Subsection (A)(8) of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended and more specifically to consider: Legal advice on possible Council action to settle an outstanding claim.

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

VOTE: 7-0-2
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders and Whittle (7)
NAY: None
ABSENT: Campbell, Vogler (2)

Upon unanimous vote at 10:12 p.m., Council reconvened in open session and Council Member Saunders **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 Buckner and carried by the following vote:

VOTE: 6-0-3
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders and Whittle (6)
NAY: None
ABSENT: Campbell, Jones, Vogler (3)

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:13 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK