



**TOWN OF GRANITE QUARRY  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, January 12, 2023  
9:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Mayor Brittany Barnhardt, Mayor Pro Tem John Linker, Alderman Jim Costantino, Alderman Doug Shelton, Alderman Jeff Cannon

**Staff:** Town Manager Larry Smith, Town Clerk Aubrey Smith, Finance Officer Shelly Shockley, Fire Chief / Public Works Director Jason Hord, Town Planner E. Schwartz-Laubhann

**Guests:** NC Representative Harry Warren; Stewart Inc. consultants Emily Blackwell Hsiao, Jake Petrosky, and Tim Popelka.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Mayor Barnhardt shared that because Representative Warren only had an hour, the discussion items would be switched to discuss the Town Square Design presentation first and then the Parks Master Plan Improvements.

**1. Discussion**

**Town Square Design Presentation**

Stewart consultant Emily Blackwell Hsiao introduced herself and ran through the overview of the presentation that was provided as a handout. The consultant team showed options for both a long-term and a “light” version of the Town Square project and then discussed the related Salisbury Avenue streetscape project. Different elements of the streetscape project including landscaping, furnishings, lighting, and a greenway connection to the Centennial Park were reviewed.

Ms. Hsiao reviewed the initial Civic Park upgrades that were identified as necessary including trail reconstruction, parking, shelter renovations including restroom upgrades, and a Civic Park site-specific master plan to engage the public and qualify for funding. She also pointed out the need for stream stabilization and a new bridge connecting to the Legion Building. The team walked the Board through the recommended next steps as described on the handout and opened the floor for discussion.

Representative Warren shared that he was impressed with the Town’s forward-thinking regarding the growth taking place in Rowan County. He stated that though the Town wasn’t yet at the point where funding could be requested, there was funding at the state level for which different portions of the project could qualify. He stated that once the required specific numbers were identified, he could help locate funding sources.

Mayor Barnhardt shared that the Board was concerned with the safety aspect of Salisbury Avenue and was looking forward to the improvements. Mayor Pro Tem Linker shared that the Board believed the projects were truly transformative and that he was interested in developing Granite Quarry's identity. Alderman Shelton shared he was more interested in improvements to the parks and amenities for residents than the Town Square and streetscape projects. Representative Warren stated he believed the Town could qualify for funding for both. Mayor Pro Tem Linker stated that he believed the Legion Building should be an important element of the Civic Park improvements.

Stewart consultant Jake Petrosky shared that the immediate next steps for his team included refining cost estimates and shared the Board would have to make some decisions on priorities in the short term and long term. He stated he believed the real question for the Town Square project was whether to take the utilities underground. He shared the initial Civic Park improvements were ready to implement.

Alderman Shelton asked why another site-specific plan would be required since the Parks Master Plan had just been completed, included specifics, and included public feedback. He also shared his concerns regarding site obstruction at the town square. Consultant Tim Popelka stated site triangles and NCDOT standards would be incorporated. Mayor Pro Tem Linker suggested no right turns on red at that intersection.

Mr. Petrosky shared that a Civic Park master plan wasn't necessarily required for the initial projects discussed, but when it came to trail improvements specifically, a site-specific master plan could realign the trail or give more clarity on long-term programming for the park. Mayor Barnhardt asked if what was presented for the Civic Park was a foundation for initial improvements before a Civic Park master plan and whether a site-specific master plan would help with funding opportunities. Ms. Hsiao replied that it would and could help narrow and focus the feedback received on the Parks and Recreation master plan. Mayor Barnhardt asked if moving forward with the initial projects would hurt the chance for grant funding in the future. Ms. Hsiao replied it would be difficult to get funding for those improvements, but wouldn't hurt the opportunity for future funding.

*Mayor Barnhardt called for a five-minute recess. The Board recessed at 10:01 a.m.*

*Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting back into session at 10:12 a.m.*

Mayor Barnhardt stated the Town Square has been something the Town has talked about for 35 years and the Board was ready to discuss next steps. She asked what Stewart needed of the Board to get it "shovel ready". Mr. Petrosky responded that an important question was whether the Board wanted to proceed with the long-term project or the light version. Mayor Barnhardt stated she would like to proceed with the long-term project.

Alderman Shelton asked how long it would take to complete the long-term plan. Mr. Petrosky shared the utility piece was the largest unknown piece of the puzzle at this point and, because of that, was hesitant to say. He stated the feasibility study would help pinpoint that. There was discussion on the project timeline and different determining factors. He stated the whole project could take three years if 1,800 feet were completed. If a phased approach was taken, with only a few properties being affected, it would be much quicker. Ms. Hsiao pointed out that the timeline didn't include whether Representative Warren had to wait until another session to present the funding request once it had been submitted to him. Alderman Cannon asked whether broadband could be worked into the project. Ms. Hsiao shared that broadband and storm water could be worked into the feasibility study as well.

Mayor Barnhardt asked whether the Salisbury Avenue streetscape could be added into the project as well. Mr. Petrosky responded that it could and that they were not suggesting the median that had been discussed before. He stated phase one improvements could move forward and that feedback from the Board and Larry could be collected by the end of the month to present to Representative Warren. Mayor Barnhardt asked if the final cost of the feasibility study could be presented at the February Board meeting. The Stewart team responded they could have a cost estimate and timeline ready to present with milestones (responsibilities) for each point on the timeline. Mr. Popelka mentioned that after speaking with DOT there was a vinyl sheet that could be placed on the cabinet at the town square on which the mural could be placed.

Mayor Barnhardt opened the floor for discussion on the Civic Park project. Ms. Hsiao stated several elements of the Civic Park project were standalone and the Board could pick and choose based on funding with the exception of the stream stabilization and the bridge replacement that would need to be done at the same time. Mayor Barnhardt shared the low-hanging fruit was parking and stream stabilization and then to complete the Civic Park master plan before the other pieces. Alderman Shelton asked to hear more about the shelter renovations and why the cost was so high. He stated he felt the stream stabilization should be put off until the bridge could be replaced.

Manager Smith asked if it was the consensus of the Board to consider the Legion Building as part of the Civic Park. Most board members voiced that they were in favor of including it, no one voiced any opposition. Alderman Shelton stated he believed the Board should be careful about compartmentalizing parts of the plan and that further discussion should take place, but he did believe the Legion Building should be included. Ms. Hsiao stated a lot of the details could be fleshed out during the site-specific plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Linker stated that it would be a good idea to move forward with items at the park that were necessary to improve the Granite Fest. Manager Smith stated there were safety concerns at the park and Board direction for staff to work with Stewart on identifying how to work in those repairs and projects would be great. Alderman Shelton asked if Manager Smith and Chief Hord could put together a presentation for the next meeting on the prioritization of projects and the Civic Park based on safety concerns.

Mayor Barnhardt summarized that the Board would like to move forward with the long-term project for the town square, the construction and design of some items that could be funded now, and then look at the master plan. The signal, design, and utilities will be the largest factors on the Town Square project. There was a mention of starting talks with property owners regarding easements. Ms. Hsiao will provide a proposal for the Civic Park master plan at the Board's regular meeting in February. Mayor Barnhardt asked for more specific designs on the shelter renovations, the parking lots, and the timelines for the projects to be presented at the meeting as well. Mr. Petrosky shared the full proposal for the feasibility study may not be ready at that time because it is more complicated, but a more refined number could be presented at the next meeting.

## **Adjourn**

**ACTION:** Alderman Costantino made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Linker seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0. The meeting ended at 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Aubrey Smith*

Town Clerk