

**Town Council Minutes
Morehead City, North Carolina**

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

The Honorable Council of the Town of Morehead City met in a Special Meeting in the Municipal Chambers located at 202 South 8th Street, Morehead City, North Carolina. Those in attendance were:

MAYOR: Gerald A. Jones, Jr.

MAYOR PRO-TEM: Harvey N. Walker, Jr.

COUNCIL: George W. Ballou

Bill Taylor

Demus L. Thompson

Diane C. Warrender

CITY MANAGER: David S. Whitlow

DEPUTY CITY CLERK: Janet Hill

OTHERS: Mark Hibbs, Reporter, THE CARTERET NEWS

TIMES; David McCabe, Public Works Director; Vincent and Mary Martin; Bernette Morris, Police Department; Craig Lands, Parks and Recreation Director; Kim and Ray Hopper; Donald Gray

I. Special Meeting Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., Councilman Thompson gave the invocation and all joined in The Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Adopt Resolution 2013-03 Authorizing Local Government Execution of a Public Beach and Estuarine Access Grant Contract for the Downtown Waterfront “Jib Plaza” Water Access Improvements Construction Phase I.

Morehead City was advised of a proposed contract between the City and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resource [DENR] for Coastal Area Management [CAMA] grant funds for Phase I, Downtown Waterfront Jib Plaza Water Access Improvements. The City would match a \$150,000 grant with a cash match of \$53,175. The portion of this project includes improvements to create a Jib Plaza and a 6’ X 42’ platform extending over the water. The Public Works Committee of the Council reviewed the proposed grant and recommended its acceptance and concurrent adoption of the Resolution.

Councilman Ballou MOVED, seconded by Councilman Taylor, and carried unanimously, to adopt Ordinance 2013-03 Authorizing Local Government Execution of a Public Beach and Estuarine Access Grant Contract for the Downtown Waterfront “Jib Plaza” Water Access Improvements Construction Phase I. [Resolution 2013-03 is attached to these minutes and incorporated herein by reference.]

III. Request to Reject the Bids on the Big Rock Stadium Concession Stand

Mayor Jones requested that the Council members accept the recommendation of the City Manager to reject all bids for the construction of the concession/restroom facility at Big Rock Stadium which were received on Friday, January 18th, 2013. Subsequent to receipt of the bids, the lowest bidder had requested to withdraw his bid.

City Manager Whitlow stated the lowest bidder, S.F. Ballou, Inc., had submitted a written request to withdraw his bid stating he had made a mistake on the pricing of the concrete block. According to General Statute procedures, City staff held a hearing with Mr. S. F. Ballou and accepted his request. Upon further consultation with the architect and staff, additional amendments to the specifications were made involving the roofing shingles, masonry block and the electrical system. The City rejected the previous bids and will allow the project to be rebid on Tuesday, February 5th, 2013. The new bids will be presented at the Council Meeting on February 12, 2013, thereby resulting in no time lost in the award of the contract.

Councilman Walker questioned the prices of the bids submitted with as much as a \$100,000 difference and if this was due to the specifications.

Manager Whitlow stated the reason for the withdrawal of the bid was the pricing of the split block designated in the specifications which were more expensive than regular block. By state statute, Mr. Ballou will not be eligible to rebid on Tuesday, February 5th, 2013.

Council Thompson commented that with five [5] or more bidders there is always a variation of more than \$100,000.

There were no other questions or comments.

Councilman Taylor MOVED, seconded by Councilman Thompson, and carried unanimously, to grant the request to reject the bids on the Big Rock Stadium concession stand project.

IV. Set a Policy and Procedures for Special Events held at the Morehead City Sports Complex

The Morehead City Sports Complex consists of Rotary Park, and the Big Rock Stadium/O'Neal Baseball Field. The Morehead City Parks and Recreation Department manages and schedules usage of the Complex. The Big Rock Field is not a multi-purpose field, therefore, recreation athletic leagues and other social activities are sometimes more suitable to other Morehead City facilities such as the Recreation Department multi-purpose Field and the Jaycee Park waterfront area.

City Manager Whitlow stated that the purpose of the meeting was to develop policies for the use of the facility. Policies were presented to the City Council in October 2012, regulating the use of the facility other than for routine baseball games. The potential use would determine the specifics of each agreement with each special event or activity receiving an agreement for one time use. He stated that all applications would be reviewed as to the best interest of the City to protect the facility such as the turf and grounds, protection of the residential neighborhood from sound, lighting and any other nuisances and general use of the sports complex to adequately regulate and permit the best uses of the facilities.

Councilman Taylor noted that in the Morehead City Sports general policy, only certain groups have primary and secondary uses of the park. He noted that he did not see the Craven County Community College on the request list or agreement and wanted to know if the policy would allow any secondary rights or privileges for the use of the baseball stadium. He was of the opinion that Craven Community College should be on equal footing as other users and he would like to see this included in the policy.

Councilwoman Warrender had concerns regarding the Craven County Baseball Team and wanted to know if there was a rate charge.

Recreation Director Craig Lands stated he had drafted the policy based on one which is currently being used by the City of Wilmington. The policy does not include fees for any activities. He welcomes more teams wishing to use the park. Tournaments create a positive economic impact for Morehead City. He welcomes other teams which bring in groups from New York, South Carolina and the Charlotte area.

Councilman Taylor stated there should be a formula for fees and rates which would be charged at the same rate for all users utilizing the facility for profit.

Councilman Thompson stated he would like to have the Council make a decision on whether or not the complex would be used only as a baseball field or allow events such as concerts. He felt this should be considered first by the Council and would then like to have work sessions to establish costs.

Mayor Jones stated this was to be the main reason for the special meeting.

City Manager Whitlow stated he would like the Council to establish uses and guidelines and set general policies, and not exclude certain uses of the park. The Town would like the right to control uses thereby minimizing any disturbances to the neighborhood, clean-up, parking, wear and tear on the park, control signage, family-friendly, limit the use of glass containers, etc. First and foremost the complex is a baseball facility and soccer complex. Other organizations such as churches, civic, and charitable organizations have also requested use of the fields so each and every request should be looked at individually.

The City is not interested in turning the complex into a major multi-event facility which would be used all the time and the City also has no interest in the use of the stadium for fireworks or as a concert venue. If a policy could be developed, it would be administered by Parks and Recreation and not have to come back before the Council.

Councilman Thompson stated the City needs to make a decision to allow or not allow concerts and he felt that the stadium was not the proper venue for these type activities. He recalled when the Council had a previous request for a Willie Nelson concert. He also stated if you allow an individual or organization permission to use the park for concerts, these requests would eventually increase.

Councilwoman Warrender stated there are a variety of different types of requests for concerts such as religious, jazz and West Carteret High School Band and the City should make an effort to consider options and have guidelines in place. She also stated the concerts should not be held later than 7:00 p.m. and each request is not necessarily the same which generates two (2) different issues.

Councilman Taylor stated he would allow community activities to use the field, but not have it used by for-profit making entities.

Councilman Walker stated a lot of progress has been made at the Morehead City Complex and Big Rock Stadium/O'Neal Baseball Field, and the City needs to hear from those residents who live in the surrounding area.

Mary Martin who resides on Mizelle Drive, Morehead City, adjacent to the park had concerns about loud noise, removal of the trees, lighting of the field, and late night hours of operation. She would like the City to discontinue adding more uses to the park.

Victor Martin who also resides on Mizelle Drive stated that the Council Members should make definite decisions and guidelines to include and protect the community.

Councilman Ballou made a recommendation that the Public Works Committee Members work on creating a policy and then bring the issue back to all the Council Members.

Councilman Walker and Councilman Taylor both agreed.

Councilwoman Warrender questioned the length of time the Public Works Committee had been working on the policy.

Councilman Ballou stated the Public Works Committee had been working on the contract with the Marlins for a year without setting a policy.

Mayor Jones reminded the Council Members that the purpose of this meeting was a Work Session of the Council allowing the City Manager and the Recreation Director to gather information from the Council regarding the policy.

Councilman Taylor suggested the Public Works Committee Members receive input from all the Council Members in the preparation of the policy.

Councilman Taylor suggested the Public Works Committee Members allow the Council to help with suggestions and input on whether or not it would be exclusively a sports facility. He would also like to have certain requirements and guidelines established for uses for all the other City park facilities.

Recreation Director Lands stated there had been a request for a religious tent revival at Kathryn Davis Park which raises other issues.

Councilman Taylor commented that having a religious group or organization use the stadium would be a low impact on the turf and usage should not only be just for sports. Using these facilities a few more months a year is not unreasonable.

Councilwoman Warrender asked the Council to consider all requests for all uses of all parks.

Councilman George Ballou asked if certain guidelines were used at the Jaycee Park for the Concert Series.

Recreation Director Lands stated there are certain guidelines required and a stage is in place for that specific event but he would not like to consider any types of concerts at the ball field.

Buddy Bengal, Vice President of Riverfront Sports and Entertainment of New Bern had submitted a letter to the Council members before the Special Meeting and stated his interest is to protect the integrity of the Big Rock Stadium and O'Neal Field. The facility provides safety and is fenced in which gives families a safe environment and other events could give Morehead City a great exposure with more things to do.

City Manager Whitlow requested that the Council Members decide if they would like the Public Works Committee Members to give some type of specific recommendations and directions.

Councilwoman Warrender suggested each Council Member submit notes for discussion and give them to the Public Works Committee.

City Manager Whitlow stated the City at the present time would not allow any events which would create any issues as were discussed in this meeting until the policies are adopted.

Recreation Director Lands stated that the Rotary Park and Soccer fields are being utilized approximately seven [7] months out of the year from February to August. The only non-athletic activity which takes place in the park is an Easter Egg Hunt. The use of the Soccer field is near its maximum use.

Mayor Jones and members of the Council concurred they would like to keep the moratorium on special events at Big Rock in place allowing the Public Works Committee to develop a policy for use of the facility. Council has been asked to submit their comments to the Committee Members.

IV. Adjournment

Being there was no further business or discussions the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Gerald A. Jones, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

Janet D. Hill, Deputy City Clerk