

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Tom Harmer, Town Manager
From: Isaac Brownman, Public Works Director
Report date: December 7, 2020
Meeting date: December 14, 2020
Subject: Town Center Phase 3 Discussion

Recommended Action

None, informational only.

Background

On June 3, 2019, and again on September 23, 2019, the Town Commission approved by consensus guiding principles for the development of the Town-owned Town Center site. These principles are listed below:

- Activate the site as an outdoor venue
- Preserve a buildable area for a future community facility while maintaining as much of open venue as possible
- Utilize existing parking number and configuration, both for outdoor venue and future use (not minimize or reduce)
- Address slope variation and high water table (fill)
- Meet Southwest Florida Water Management District requirements for wetland mitigation and stormwater management
- Install basic electrical, water and sewer connections to facilitate temporary outdoor venue use
- Provide initial improvements within existing budget and Sarasota County Grant funding, to the extent feasible
- Advance public input for longer term improvements to the site

The Town Center project consists of three phases as follows.

Phase 1

Now complete, Phase 1 of the site included initial outdoor venue improvements. The Town engaged Gator Grading and Construction, LLC to complete site work including clearing of vegetation, addressing slope variation and high water table issues with the addition of fill material, meeting standards for stormwater compensation and storage, water and sewer connections, parking lot resurfacing and installation of sod and shell paths to facilitate temporary outdoor venue use.

Phase 2

Public input for the Town Center was gathered throughout early 2020, including a public workshop held on March 11, 2020. Town staff and Hoyt Architects presented results of the feedback and a final concept plan to the Town Commission on May 4, 2020. The concept plan was approved by the commission and included two building pad locations for future development of community facilities. As part of the approval, further improvement to the outdoor venue element were deemed the next priority. In September 2020, the Town engaged DMK Associates, Inc. (“DMK”) to provide design, bidding and construction services for Phase 2 of the project. Phase 2 improvements will include installing walkways, trees/landscaping, lighting, a foundation for a stage, and restrooms on the property further enhancing the ability to serve outdoor events. As part of the FY21 budget process, the Commission approved funding to complete the Phase 2 work. Design and permit plans are in progress. DMK will be submitting a Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Permit later this month for the project. The Town is also working closely with the Longboat Key Historical Society to allow relocation and placement of the Historic Whitney Beach Cottage from the Longbeach Village to the site. Design and permitting of the Phase 2 Plans are anticipated to be complete in February 2021. Work is anticipated to be completed in Fall 2021.

Phase 3

The Concept Plan approved on May 4, 2020, reserved areas for future buildings. Phase 3 of the Town Center anticipates the opportunity for the design, construction and establishment of buildings on the Town Center site. To date, a future Arts and Cultural Center at the Town Center has been based on a donor funded facility that would be privately operated.

Several questions regarding the Town Center were included on the 2020 Citizen Survey Report administered by the Florida Institute of Government at the University of South Florida. General responses are noted below:

- A small majority of respondents (51%) indicated that they would support a privately (donor) funded and operated Arts, Cultural and Education Center, while 24% indicated that they were unsure, and 25% opposed the idea.
- Over 50% indicated that “Lifelong Learning” and “Performing Arts” amenities were important and desired in an Arts, Cultural, and Education Center.
- Less than 25% were interested in “Arts Education”, “Manual Arts”, and “Creative Writing” programs.
- A little more than a third indicated Bayfront Park Recreation Center should be relocated to the Town Center, another third said “no” and a little less than one third said they were unsure.

Town Commission recently requested an opportunity to discuss Phase 3 of the project at the December 14, 2020 Regular Workshop Meeting.

Staff Recommendation

None, informational only.

Attachments

- A. PowerPoint Presentation (Available from Town Clerk's Office)
- B. Relevant Excerpts from Town of Longboat Key 2020 Citizen's Survey Report (Available from Town Clerk's Office)

End of Agenda Item