



HENRY COUNTY
GOVERNMENT

ACTION MINUTES
JOINT SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019 2:00 P.M.

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford
Councilman Elton Alexander
Mayor Pro Tem John Blount
Councilwoman LaKeisha Gantt
Councilwoman Neat Robinson
Councilman Alphonso Thomas

Administration

Randy Knighton City Manager
Camilla Moore Assistant City Manager
Vanessa Holiday City Clerk
Randi Rainey Deputy City Clerk
Michael Williams, City Attorney

Henry County Commissioners

Chair June Wood
Dist. 1 Commissioner Johnny Wilson
Dist. 2 Commissioner Dee Clemmons
Dist. 3 Commissioner Gary Barham
Dist. 4 Commissioner Vivian Thomas
Dist. 5 Commissioner Bruce Holmes

Administration

Cheri Hobson-Matthew County Manager
Brad Johnson Assistant County Manager
Stephanie Braun County Clerk
Patrick Jaugstetter County Attorney

- I. Call to Order - Mayor Ford
- II. Invocation – Chair June Wood
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Roll Call – City of Stockbridge (All members except Councilman Thomas were in attendance for roll call).
Roll Call – Henry County Commissioners (Chair Wood noted the County Commissioners did not have a quorum – Commissioners Clemmons, Holmes & Thomas were not present)
- V. Motion to adopt the Agenda: Alexander/Robinson – Passed with the vote of the Mayor 3-2 (Blount and Gantt opposed)

New Business

1. Executive Session – Litigation and Real Estate

Councilman Thomas joined the meeting

Motion to convene Executive Session for Real Estate discussion:
Robinson/Alexander failed 2-3 (Blount, Gantt and Thomas opposed)

Mayor Ford introduced staff members in attendance.

Chair Wood introduced County staff members in attendance and noted due to the lack of a quorum, there would be no action taken by the County.

County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews gave an overview of the history of Cochran Park where the park was deeded to the county and the intended use; reviewed information from the reports received from Croy Engineering, noting the park's infrastructure was the main issue; acknowledged the maintenance of the county parks had not been a high priority item as the focus has been on public safety; submitted to Stockbridge Mayor & Council documents that included estimated costs to repair Cochran Park pipes and ongoing maintenance of the park; advised the City the study has been done by an independent agency and asked the City not to waste money with a duplicate report; noted Falcon Design (the City's Engineering Firm) did not respond to the analysis request; asked what the City would like to have happen with this matter, noting, it would not be her recommendation to the board to have the County expend funds and turn the park over to the City as this arrangement is not in place for any other city and the county needs to remain consistent; and asked for a resolution of the next steps to bring the matter to a close and referenced two options: Replace the pipes or not to replace the pipes.

Councilman Alexander requested the county continue to operate the park and referenced the county's motion to make repairs of \$500,000 at their last meeting where he agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Blount noted the importance of having the meeting take place in public so that everyone could hear the same information at the same time; suggested the City do their own assessment to determine the true costs; noted he has reached out to District 5 Commissioner Holmes; asked if there was a physical assessment of the park yet; noted there were two items as it relates to the City of Stockbridge: 1. Is it feasible 2. Is it sustainable with the City's current budget; further stating, which is why the hard numbers are needed to make decisions; thanked Chair Wood, and Commissioners Barham and Wilson for their cooperation.

City Manager Randy Knighton confirmed the City has not completed a physical assessment of the park.

County Manger Cheri Hobson-Matthews asked what Falcon Engineering's role was.

City Manager Randy Knighton responded Falcon Engineering was reviewing the report.

Councilwoman Gantt thanked the Chair and Commissioners for their attendance and noted she wants to see baseball up and running in Cochran in the spring, noting citizens have paid tax dollars to the county for parks and recreation; noted she had questions about the analysis report and recommends the City complete an independent analysis; asks that the County bring the park up to current standards; asked that the scoreboards be returned to the park, the county pay the utilities; do what is right for the kids and re-open the park; stated it was unclear why the county was building new parks and other parks are being neglected; stated to Chair Wood, Commissioners Barham and Wilson and staff that it means a lot that they are here to talk about Cochran park.

Councilwoman Robinson noted both Cochran Park, and Hidden Valley Park in District 5 and Mickie D. Cochran park on Banks Rd. in District 4 are all in poor condition and have been neglected and more needs to be done at the county level as taxpayers have already paid the county for parks and recreation and shouldn't have to pay a second time; noted Cochran is the baseball park and Mickie D. Cochran is the football park that services the youth in the City of Stockbridge; and noted the repairs that need to be made to the dugouts, fencing, bleachers, scoreboards and restrooms.

County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews noted the issue related to infrastructure; stormwater fees could only be used for stormwater repairs and the county's CIP would address other park repairs; and noted prior to the park closing, citizens were able to utilize the park; questioned why these conversations have not happened with the proper individuals before now; noted the county pays the city for city-water; and provided the City Clerk with a report of Cochran Park's operations costs and the reports were distributed to the Governing Body.

Councilman Thomas agreed with the transparency of the meeting and asked that everyone focus on Items 6, 7, 8 of the list - Infrastructure Assessments/Additional Infrastructure Items/Evaluation and Annual Maintenance Costs; agrees there needs to be an accurate assessment of costs and would agree to take over the park with conditions and partnerships; thanked everyone for coming and noted it is good to discuss the possibilities.

Councilman Alexander reiterated the county has stated what has been done and given the city its options noting while it may not be fair, the City of Stockbridge needs to make a decision; and stated the City of Stockbridge could make the park a best in class park.

City Manager Randy Knighton noted his understanding of what that would look like if the City of Stockbridge took over the park would include an IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) in place for League play.

Councilman Thomas asked for a timeline where the county needed a response from the City.

Commissioner Barham thanked everyone for being there and for the productive dialogue; expressed his desire to have Cochran park remain with the county with as a baseball park as it was intended and always has been; noted time is of the essence as baseball starts in February; stated he does not support \$500,000 of repairs and turning the park over to the city; noted the county needs to look at all of the parks; asked the city to help with the funding, noting the county has the resources; relying on the city to help us get there.

Chair Wood noted the citizens don't care if it is a city park or a county park; looking forward to a resolution as soon as the city can get back to the county with information; needs recommendation from the County Manager; noted she was appreciative of the dialogue and professionalism of the two entities; thanked City Manager Randy Knighton and County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews for their efforts thus far to attempt to resolve the matter; referenced her experience as a civil engineer; prayerful the officials can bring the park back to safe conditions; wants the City of Stockbridge to make a fair assessment; wants the county to be fiscally responsible; noted the County is looking to be consistent across the board with the parks that reside in each of the respective municipalities.

Mayor Ford thanked everyone for attending and the great dialogue; noting the City will have a response soon.

City Manager Randy Knighton thanked the professionalism of staff County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews and Asst. County Manager Brad Johnson and will continue to work to bring this issue to a resolution.

Motion to adjourn: Thomas/Robinson. Passed 5-0.