



---

## **MINUTES**

The Holly Springs Town Council met in a workshop session on Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at the Holly Springs Law Enforcement Center and via video conferencing. Mayor Sears presided, calling the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established as five Councilmembers and the Mayor were present as the meeting opened.

**Council Members Present in the room:** Mayor Sears, Mayor Pro Tem Dan Berry, Councilmen Peter Villadsen, and Aaron Wolff, and Councilwoman Christine Kelly

**Council Members Present via Video Conferencing:** Councilman Shaun McGrath.

**Staff Members Present in the room:** Randy Harrington, Town Manager; Linda McKinney, Town Clerk (recording the minutes); Daniel Weeks, Assistant Town Manager; Antwan Morrison, Finance Director; Jeff Wilson, IT Director; John Schifano, Town Attorney; LeeAnn Plumer, Director of Parks and Recreation; Matt Beard, Parks and Recreation.

### **2. Workshop Overview**

Mr. Harrington gave an overview of the items on the agenda.

### **3. Parks, Recreation & Greenways Master Plan – Draft Plan**

LeeAnn Plumer, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that the purpose of this item was for the project consultants from McAdams to present the final draft and key recommendations for the *Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan* as an update to Chapter 3 of the Vision Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan. She requested feedback and suggested modifications to the plan for anticipated adoption at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting. She said that updating the plan is part of the Strategic Priority Plan, *Engaged, Healthy and Active Community*, Initiative 2.3. She introduced Rachel Cotter, Shweta Nanekar, and Erich Melville from McAdams who were present, and Leon Younger, who was attending via Zoom. She said that Susan Smith was also available via Zoom as a representative of the steering committee.

Ms. Cotter said that this is the culmination of a year's worth of work. She reminded Council of the process, including community outreach that was mostly virtual due to COVID, but was one of the best-represented community engagements of any municipality they have worked with. The guiding principles came out of the research, engagement, and findings. The guiding principles will not change over the next ten years. They used these principles to come up with recommendations and then the draft plan. She talked about "place making" and identifying the Town's "brand" in furnishings, signage, etc.

Shweta Nanekar, said the seven guiding principles were: Balanced growth; Equity and access; Health; Connectivity; Financial sustainability; Environmental Awareness; and Excellence. The guiding principles led to recommendations, and then action items. Recommendations were prioritized by whether they were compatible with these guiding principles, met community needs, and served to advance the parks system. She explained that goals were marked as either short-term (1-3 years) mid-term (4-8 years) long-term (8+ years) or ongoing. They were given an "order of magnitude" cost classification, not using actual cost estimates, but cost ranges, and responsible groups were identified for each goal. Recommendations that did not require funding but required staff time were marked as such.

The McAdams team then went through each of the guiding principles and outlined some action items and strategies for achieving those goals. Ms. Nanekar spoke to the first three guiding principles.

- Balanced growth - acquire additional land, develop park land, construct additional indoor recreations footage and offer diverse recreation and cultural arts programs and amenities.
- Equity and access - Equitable distribution of parkland; equitable distribution of financial investment in the system; increase the percentage of people within a 10-minute walk of a park from 41% to 55%; access for all ages and ability levels; program plan for special needs populations.
- Health – provide plan and program to improve health outcomes related to physical fitness, mental health, social cohesion, and healthy eating.

Mayor Sears asked whether the request for aquatic facilities was high or low. Ms. Nanekar said that it was within the first five priorities identified.

MPT Berry asked how Holly Springs compared today against the national standards for acres of parkland. Ms. Nanekar said that Holly Springs is close to the national average for acres per 1,000 population. There are other aspects for which Holly Springs is in need, and others where the Town is in a good place. She said you need to look at this in context, not just compare to the standards. Ms. Cotter said they looked at both the peer communities and the national standards. They recommended more aggressive action on things that Holly Springs residents indicated were important to them, and less on things that residents were not as interested in.

Erich Melville spoke to the next principle.

- Connectivity – connected recreation system; design standards and policies; partnerships with developers; community awareness; funding support;

Councilman Villadsen asked how they deal with NC 540 and 55 that tend to interrupt this connectivity. Mr. Melville said there are not a lot of good options north of 540 expansion, but there is a green line where a culvert/connection was built that can be built into. They propose bringing people to Sunset Lake Road and building a side path as a safe connection. Matt Beard, Parks and Recreation, said the regional collaboration pays off at 540. Apex and Cary have projects that go under 540 that Holly Springs can connect to if we can get to it. Staff is working with developers on roadway and intersection designs to move people through or across the road safely.

Leon Youngers spoke to the next principle.

- Financial sustainability – Implement total cost of service ownership model; establish cost recovery goals for programs and facilities; diverse pricing policy; funding strategies; mutually beneficial partnerships

Ms. Cotter spoke to the last two principles.

- Environmental Awareness - maximizing sustainability practices; expand programs to raise environmental awareness; cross-sector approach to protection of natural resources.
- Excellence – implement best practices; balance uniqueness and consistency of parks and facilities: CPTED, deferred maintenance, ADA compliance, wayfinding signage; develop and support a culture of innovation, technology, and adaptability to respond to on-going local, national and global challenges; marketing and branding; establish best practices national awards and CAPRA accreditation.

Specific suggestions were given for existing parks and facilities. Ms. Cotter said that next steps would be a one-month detailed public and Council review / feedback period, with adoption sought at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Council.

Councilman Villadsen said there are about 60 short-term goals that are accounted to “staff time.” He asked if the Town was staffed to handle this, or would new staffing be required. LeeAnn Plumer said there are a lot of staff recommendations, some easier to achieve than others. The important thing is that there are things that don’t cost money that will help bring the department into the future. Some of the organization changes are not *adding* staff they are *realigning* staff. But there could be staff positions needed for some things.

Councilwoman Kelly asked if once the plan is adopted, staff will look at prioritization that is data-driven. Ms. Plummer said that this will be used as a work plan. Some things can be concurrent, some plans can be developed to guide what staff does. Councilwoman Kelly also asked for the Cass Holt Road property to be listed along with the existing parks in the presentation at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting so that the public knows what the plan is for that park.

#### **4. Political Activity on Town Property Policy Development**

Randy Harrington, Town Manager, said that Council had asked staff after the November election, to draft some policies regarding what types of political activities are and are not permissible on town property. He emphasized that there is a First Amendment component that weaves its way in to these decisions. There are some policies and practices already, but they are not all in one place. He started from a higher level with 8 elements.

1. *Campaign Signage on Town Streets in the right of way (ROW)*: There is an ordinance that covers this and no updates are suggested. Councilwoman Kelly said that there was a difference between the regulations on town streets and on DOT roads, and that needs to be clarified to candidates.

2. *Campaign signage on Town Property*: This is generally not allowed. State law allows them in the ROW if the property owner consents. The Town has not given permission. No updates suggested. Councilwoman Kelly asked for clarity in terms of who regulates this be provided to candidates.

3. *Early Voting/Election Day Town Facility Site Campaign Activity*: Suggested updates would allow campaign tents in the designated ROW only and no affixed campaign signs.

There was discussion around making sure tents in the ROW do not block sightlines or access, and having a map to show candidates what can be done where. There was discussion about whether large signs on vehicles could be allowed and it was pointed out that they are like bumper stickers, and thus hard to regulate. But the Town does have an ordinance against parking on Town property overnight or when not using the property. So that could be used to keep a candidate from parking a sign-covered car overnight.

Mr. Harrington was asked about other municipalities’ experiences, specifically with tents and candidate signs, and said that the other municipalities had also had these issues. There was some discussion on whether the Hunt Center would be used again, or if the Cultural Center would be a better location for early voting.

4. *Rental of Parks and Rec facilities for Political Events*. Currently Holly Springs does not allow the rental of facilities for political fund-raising events, but any group can rent facilities to meet. There is no suggested update.

5. *Booth purchase at Farmers Market* – Current vendor protocols allow renting booths to those who are selling wares only. There may be a need to clarify that this precludes political booths.

6. *Booth Purchases at Town Organized Festivals* – The Town has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to manage areas of HollyFest where political groups can purchase a booth and

booth fees are paid directly to the Chamber, and the Town receives no money. Also, nothing prohibits political groups from walking around and promoting their campaign. No updates are suggested.

**7. Virtual Environments:** There is no current guidance. Since during town-organized virtual meetings or community engagement opportunities the public has not been provided video capability, staff has the following suggestions: a) Avoid Mayor or Council member from being on public virtual meeting with a viewable “vote for me” banner or sign in camera view; and b) Avoid Mayor, Council members or other candidates running for office using virtual meeting’s chat function to campaign on their behalf, either using words or sharing links.

**8. Advertising Locations** – There is no current guidance prohibiting the purchase of political signs. Suggested update would be to clarify that the purchase of campaign advertisements on facility/field billboards is not permitted.

Council discussed making sure there was uniformity around town-sponsored events, whether the Chamber was involved or not, as the public is not always aware of whether the Chamber is involved or not. They requested that Town policies and Board of Elections information both be provided to candidates and that who is responsible for which regulations be clarified. They would like the Board of Elections to clarify the 50-foot buffer rule, but also thought a “don’t bother anyone who is in line to vote” policy would be reasonable. They said that awareness was key and that any policy should reference a map of the facility and a town-maintained vs. DOT-maintained roadways, which would be provided, but that the maps should not be part of the policy as it could change if different locations were used for early voting and as roadways change. There was discussion of the First Amendment and how regulations must be narrowly tailored to serve a government interest. John Schifano, Town Attorney, said he felt comfortable with drawing the line at not renting booths, while allowing political groups to wander and pass out materials at town-sponsored events. Enforcement, and the need to make it clear and uniform, was discussed. The manager of the particular facility used for early voting would be the go-to person with questions about the policy’s implementation, and the Board of Elections representative would also be listed as a reference on any candidate materials.

## **5. Open Discussion:**

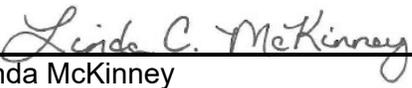
Mayor Sears opened the floor for comments. MPT Berry said he got calls and social media contact about a new local business, My Little Farmer, coming to town in front of Morgan Park, across from Sheetz, saying that they’ve run in to some zoning issues for a farm education business. He asked what the Town’s role is in this, asked for an update and some bullet points to respond to constituents. Mr. Harrington asked if the Friday briefing memo be soon enough. John Schifano, Town Attorney, said the short version is the people who own the barn have been doing horse boarding as a grandfathered use, and want to change to this other use, as a day camp. They can do that, but they have to go through the development process. Becoming a day care brings in all sorts of other requirements of parking and safety and other things that were not part of the original use that was grandfathered in. They do not have a farm exemption, and have never operated a farm there. Operating a farm and operating a day care that’s farm based are two separate things. The grandfathering exemption for boarding horses continues, but they can’t jump into a day camp without going through the process. There are road improvements that would have to be worked out, parking needed, and other requirements. MPT Berry said it sounds like staff is engaged and will provide the necessary pathways if they want to move forward. Mr. Harrington said it was his understanding that staff has been meeting with them. Staff has only been engaged with them for two weeks, but they are continuing to work with them.

**6. Closed Session:** none

**7. Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilwoman Kelly seconded by Councilman Berry, and passed with a unanimous vote. The February 9, 2021 workshop meeting of the Holly Springs Town Council was adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda McKinney  
Town Clerk