

March 11, 2017

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the Town of Bedford, Virginia, from the March 6, 2017, adjourned meeting was held at the Bedford Welcome Center at 8:20 a.m., March 11, 2017.

Members present: Mayor Robert T. Wandrei; Vice Mayor Tim Black; Councilman Stacey L. Hailey; Councilman Bruce M. Johannessen; Councilman Steve C. Rush; Councilman Bryan Schley; and Councilman James A. Vest

Members absent: None

Staff present: Town Manager Charles P. Kolakowski; Assistant Town Manager Bart Warner; Town Attorney W. W. Berry, IV; and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher

Kimball Payne, facilitator, reviewed his background and perspective.

Mr. Payne said that one of his goals was to help Council work together as a team and explained how the meeting would proceed.

The meeting proceeded with Council and staff discussing and making suggestions regarding the following topics:

The Town's Assets: location; small town; history; hospital; water supply; safety; arts and music; restaurants (locally owned); cost of living; power company (dam and solar farm); citizens; diversity (acknowledgement of the desire for more involvement by the African American community); new folks – new ideas

Bedford of the Future (10-20 Years Out): Population of about 10,000; center of workforce development (a model); excellent park and recreation system; trails; vibrant business community; quality school system; activities for young people; middle school campus is a community asset; revitalized neighborhoods; vocational programs; a full and active industrial park; well-maintained infrastructure; downtown – high business and residential occupancies; awareness of the community by others (“on the map”); a destination for travelers/tourists; passenger rail stop

Goals for Today's Retreat: establish a process to achieve our vision; have the budget reflect that vision; reach a decision on the Middle School

Council took a break from 9:45 a.m. until 9:55 a.m.

The Old Middle School-Possibilities: public administration offices; county and schools; mixed use (residential and business); tax revenue producing; housing, retirement, condominiums; education - community college, vo/tech, higher education; *community auditorium (e.g. the Franklin County Harvest Center), a home for the orchestra, the Little Town players, a movie theater; *gymnasium-youth center; *public space (park) in front of the buildings; *athletic field - sports, park, event space; demolition (all or part); a 9-

March 11, 2017

acre park; office building; private development; Town should maintain control; enterprise zone; historic district; connection to “the Loop” trail

**Identifies components of the campus that should remain under public control or allow for public use under any development scenario*

The Middle School Campus Should Not Be: low income housing, all demolished

Concerns to be Addressed When Exploring Redevelopment Options: the neighborhood – noise, traffic, light; costs; risk, exposure; debt; operating costs; control; a comprehensive plan for campus development (not piecemeal, but it could be phased); timeliness; parking; traffic pattern; fire department access; restrictions on development determined by the Town

Middle School Stakeholders: neighbors; historical society; SIAAC – “Save it at any cost” advocates; taxpayers; downtown businesses; the county – Board of Supervisors, schools; development community, children

The Process Moving Forward: Conduct a feasibility study; issue a request for proposals (RFP) from the development community – include the entire campus with the option of addressing only some components “Old Yellow,” the Middle School, the cafeteria, the gymnasium, the athletic field, and the area in the front); community engagement

It was the consensus of Council to proceed with the issuance of a RFP and to start a process of community engagement. The decision on a feasibility study will be made at a later date depending on the results of the RFP process.

Staff was directed to draft a RFP and bring it to Council at a future meeting for authorization to release the RFP. Council agreed to a preliminary timeline of 30 days for RFP development and release, and 90-120 days for receipt of proposals. Community engagement will commence with a review of the RFP and input will be sought throughout the process.

Timeline: The campus will be available for redevelopment to commence by the Fall of 2018. A decision on a comprehensive plan for middle school campus redevelopment will be made in the first quarter of calendar year 2018 (by March 1, 2018, at the latest).

Economic Development

Assets: Enterprise Zone; meals tax increase dedicated to E.D. (\$100K/yr., restricted); economic development fund; incentives for capital investment (through the EDA); Tax abatement – real property; electric utility; no BPOL tax; water supply; redevelopment authority; broadband

March 11, 2017

Needs: staff for: grants, marketing, Main Street program, Middle School management; liaison to Council and others; website upgrade.

Council discussed the idea of contracting out for some of the activities listed above as potential responsibilities for new staff.

Opportunities: attracting retirees to the community; developing the upper stories of downtown buildings; store fronts occupancy; updating the sign ordinance to be more responsive to business needs

Council took a break for lunch from 11:30 a.m. until 11:50 a.m.

Town/County Opportunities for Collaboration: economic development; periodic Council/Board of Supervisors meetings; building inspections; EMS/Fire; parks and recreation; education; office space; sewer capacity; the Town wants a “voice” in the County

Capital Planning: Middle School; parks; downtown - sidewalks, streetlights; streets and bridges; buildings – municipal building, public works; public spaces – entryways; sidewalks town wide; fire truck; walls; storm water infrastructure; vehicles and equipment; landfill; parking deck; downtown center project

Identifying Possible Dedicated Funds that Could be used for Council Initiatives: meals tax increase (about \$100K in revenue annually); tourism funding (\$35,000/yr.); Middle School rent (\$450,000/yr.) – terminates with vacation of Middle School but as much as \$800,000 should be available for redevelopment; CDBG funds; reserves

Mr. Payne spoke about the relationship between Council and staff and his experience in this matter.

Mayor Wandrei adjourned the meeting at 1:27 p.m.