

05-11-2022 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #2: Proposed American Rescue Plan Funding Plan Discussion

Council Question:

The ARPA budget shows 1.15 million for cedar falls turf, but we potentially have soccer clubs willing to pitch in; where is that and can we get a better number there if clubs are willing to share the costs?

Staff Response:

Parks & Recreation staff convened a meeting with athletic associations who use Town fields on March 16, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the condition of the fields at Cedar Falls Park and to determine if any clubs would have the ability and desire to support the needed field replacement project. The clubs present agreed to collectively advocate for the field replacement. Following the meeting, one club reached out in order to discuss their interest in contributing funding towards the project in exchange for priority bookings and an equivalent field usage credit. Consistent with the manner in which the turf conversion project at Homestead Park was handled in 2019, staff shared that the Town would be willing to accept funds and provide a field usage credit; however, field allocations would continue to be handled in accordance with the criteria indicated in the established field use and allocation policy. The Town remains open to discussing with any clubs who may have an interest in fronting a portion of the funding to complete the project.

From the Homestead artificial turf project, one of the two soccer clubs that financially contributed is still utilizing their field use credit. The other organization has exhausted their credit through its bookings.

It is important to note that using a pre-payment funding system may have a negative impact on the annual General Fund budget. If the \$1.15 million is paid in advance and is used for the replacement of the Cedar Falls turf, those revenues that would have been paid for field rentals annually will not be collected and we would anticipate the budget would feel that impact over 2-3 years.

Council Question:

The Rosemary Commons feasibility study: Council voiced large interest in visioning for downtown and we need to figure out what taking over Franklin means, along with long term costs (5 year budgeting?); Why is this being done as a one off instead of a larger scale planning initiative for downtown?

Staff Response:

For the April 1, 2022 Council Committee on Economic Sustainability meeting, staff asked Council

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to name their top 3 areas of interest for ARPA dollars. One Council Member listed the Rosemary Commons project under the Downtown Revitalization theme. This was just one suggestion made and we included as an option to fund. In response to this feedback, we have changed that line in the presentation for 5/11 to say “Downtown Strategic Planning Initiatives” to be more encompassing of all the planning that has been discussed downtown.

Staff’s main interest for Council at Wednesday night’s work session is to get a sense of whether the funding allocations for each theme matches Council’s interests. If so, we can return to Council for a more in-depth discussion of specific projects to fund in June or when Council returns in the fall.

Council Question:

Are we having conversations with Carrboro about collaborating on ARPA funding initiatives?

Staff Response:

Yes. Sarah Poulton and Amy Oland are in regular contact with the Town of Carrboro’s ARPA project manager.

Council Question:

Morgan Creek Trail East – my understanding is that the \$4 million is for the total amount of the project. Could we break the project into phases so we could accomplish some of the connectivity gains now?

Staff Response:

The \$4 million is for the East Section of Morgan Creek Greenway. The funding request was created using an Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (OPCC) that the Town received from Stewart Engineering in 2020 with a significant contingency. The OPCC was prepared before the construction industry started seeing exceptionally steep and fast-rising costs for various materials, compounded by major supply-chain disruptions, a shortage of available workers, and inflation. To reflect the current market, staff is working with Stewart, the firm contracted for the project planning, to receive updated cost estimates for this section as well as the West and Bartram Bridge sections. That information is expected in June.

If the full ~\$4 million is not funded, then the design and permitting phase could be completed with a lesser amount.

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Council Question:

Can we get some idea of which projects will require substantial maintenance/operations funding on an ongoing basis, so we can get a better picture of project impacts on future budgets?

Staff Response:

Any new large capital project (affordable housing, trails, sidewalks, etc.) will require ongoing maintenance, but the exact amount of funding that would be required is unknown at this time. To get a sense of existing Town maintenance needs, please see the Town's [5 year budget strategy](#)¹ which spells out these needs in the Capital section on pages 28-57.

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10298668&GUID=AD7062F0-5310-4855-A801-3514717F4154>

05-11-2022 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions #2

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Council Question:

What is the overall rationale for the proposed broad allocations that are suggested?

Staff Response:

Staff drafted the proposed broad allocations based on feedback from Council and the community survey and what types of projects and areas of interest appeared most important. We would like to discuss the proposed allocations with Council this evening and based on those discussions, we can adjust the proposed allocations.

Council Question:

Can you provide a level of detail for the Affordable Housing & Homelessness Initiatives, Digital Access, and Downtown Revitalization comparable to that shown for Parks & Rec and Greenways?

Staff Response:

Staff does not have cost level detail on all categories. Our main interest for Council tonight is to get a sense of whether the funding allocations for each theme matches Council's interests. If so, we can return to Council for a more in-depth discussion of specific projects to fund and their costs in June or when Council returns in the fall.

There are some projects that we do have estimates on and others that we don't so we did not include dollar values for those categories. For example, under Digital Access, we have a quote for the Library public meeting room AV system in the amount of approximately \$300,000. Under Downtown Revitalization, we have included project areas that were shared as ideas from Council but we do not have specific costs to associate with them. For affordable housing, we received requests of \$3 million for Town initiated projects, but we do not have specific project allocations at this time, \$1,822,164 for emergency housing assistance, but we don't have estimates for the mobile home park or utility assistance (although this could be lumped in with the emergency housing allocation).