

Date: September 13, 2022
From: Maurice Jones, Town Manager
Laura Selmer, Economic Development Manager

The purpose of this memo is to provide Town Council and the public with a brief status update on the proposed mitigation and redevelopment of the town-owned police station site, located at 828 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.

Council last discussed this project on May 6, 2022, and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) held a public information meeting for the community on May 17, 2022. The item is tentatively scheduled to come back before council during a work session this fall.

Over the summer, we have continued to work with the NCDEQ through the brownfields program. We have, also, continued to work with Hart & Hickman, our environmental consultants, who are in the process of conducting on-going monitoring and additional testing of on the site at NCDEQ's request as a standard procedure for the Brownfields program.

As a result of that work:

- NCDEQ has provided answers to questions raised through the public information and engagement process. That document has been posted to [the Coal Ash Remediation project webpage](#) along with a recording of that meeting.
- Hart & Hickman is currently conducting a new round of testing and we anticipate results within a couple of months.

Simultaneously, we have been pulling together the financial and other information related to two options:

- 1) Municipal Services Center (MSC) only
- 2) MSC plus private development.

As we have conducted this work, it has become apparent that rising costs and interest rates pose a significant challenge to the proposed residential project. With this in mind, staff will be looking into a third option – a phased approach. Under this plan, the Town would begin moving ahead with site remediation and construction of the MSC now with steps taken to allow for future development (commercial, office, or housing) on the remainder of the site at a later time.

As you know, replacing the current police station with the new Municipal Services Center, is a top priority for our organization. We believe this phased process will allow us to address health and safety concerns on the site and provide quality working space for our staff in a timely manner. Defining a timeline for the MSC will also allow staff to begin planning in earnest for the possible redevelopment of the Plant Road site for affordable housing.

This new approach would require the Town to take on the full cost of remediation at the 828 MLK site. Funding options for the remediation include utilizing our own debt capacity, procuring Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants and researching other funding assistance programs.

No matter which direction we take, the Town will continue to be driven by science including the research that has been conducted on this project. We remain committed to ensuring that this property will be safe for all uses and users in the future. We look forward to presenting this information in greater detail, for your consideration and approval at a future Council meeting.