



DISCUSS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Several items are included with this agenda item. Staff included them as one item as they all seemed related under the economic development umbrella or overlapped from a funding perspective, and we wanted Council to be able to discuss them together.

Council may take action on any, all, or none of these items. Specific items for action are outlined here and in the summary below.

- **Conceptual Execution Package** *(for review)*
- **List of Available Properties in Town** *(for review)*
- **Retail Strategies Agreement** *(staff recommends approval)*
 - o **MOU with Cleveland County and GWU**
- **Options for Old Town Hall** *(motion or feedback)*
- **Overview of ARPA Funds** *(for feedback/discussion, but a motion could be made for specific use of funds)*

SUMMARY

The first item is a high-level overview of the process to build the retail space in front of Town Hall (tentatively being referred to as Town Commons Plaza). Staff felt Council wanted to be methodical and deliberate in their approach to this project. Therefore, we took each step separately (where several steps could coincide if we wanted to move more quickly) and built-in “check-in” points where Council would review progress and consider the next step. As there is a focus on recruitment of tenants for this space, staff recommends entering into the agreement with Retail Strategies (and subsequent MOU) to take steps to recruit businesses to existing space and to engage potential businesses for the proposed retail space. For your review, we have compiled a list of available and potentially available properties in Town ([link below](#)).

Mr. Sonntag has worked diligently to solicit bids from companies to tear down the old Town Hall at 145 S. Main Street. He spoke to several companies, only one of which sent in a formal bid (due to staff on Monday, 12/5). This is a smaller company that seems eager to take on a larger project than they have previously completed. Another firm (Sisk Contracting), which is a large, regional operation, said the “risk isn’t worth the reward” for them and ultimately decided to pass on the project. They felt the project was too involved for them at the present time, but did say that it would be “over \$120k.” They also recommend another firm such as D.H. Griffin to complete the project. D.H. Griffin did not want to bid on the project without a more formal plan.

With this feedback, staff recommends parceling off the area from the gym up to Main St. and listing it for sale. This could attract a potential developer or generate interest for a public/private partnership to develop the 0.4 acre parcel. Currently, GWU leases the gym from the Town. That agreement automatically renews every year until 2026 and staff would not include it in the sale.



The last attachment is an overview of ARPA funds. The first section is how we had previously discussed allocating the funds. This was a discussion for budgeting purposes and no formal allocation was made. The second section was the first allocation that we made moving \$408k into the utility fund for wastewater plant and waterline improvements. We moved an additional \$25k and \$44k into the utility fund and general fund, respectively, for implementation of the salary study. That leaves \$967,330 in unallocated funds.

We've shown the remaining amount needed for wastewater treatment plant upgrades (\$482,000) and would plan to continue to leave these funds set aside for those upgrades. We have listed \$248,080 for streetscape improvements and this would cover the remaining work from McGill for the design of the streetscape and could serve as matching funds for any awarded grants.

The rest of the funds are shown for additional projects:

- We will need \$11k for our matching part of the electric vehicle charging stations. Total project cost for this is \$31k and the state is providing \$20k of reimbursable funds.
 - o *This allocation is outlined in the budget amendments included in the consent agenda*
- The agreement with Retail Strategies would cost the Town \$6,250 out of the total \$25k. The County would cover half of that cost with GWU providing the other 25%.
 - o *This allocation is outlined in the budget amendments included in the consent agenda*
- We've listed \$90k to cover the expense of the land use plan update and a parks and master plan update. Originally, we had hoped to find a grant for this planning process, but have been unsuccessful.
 - o Planning Board will review the submittals for the land use plan update in December and you all will review in January. This plan update is something that we have not done since 2006 and is required to be update approximately every 10 years by general statute.
 - Certain submittals for the land use plan update have included a possible addition of a parks master plan. Staff thinks this makes sense to conduct multiple public input sessions concurrently and create two plans out of one process.
- We've shown \$130k for the Town Commons Plaza project. This is the estimated cost for producing construction documents. Alternatively, these funds could be used toward the demolition of the old Town Hall.

Another item to note is that we will be receiving an appropriation from the State of NC. This totals \$34,815 and can be used generally for "downtown enhancements." They could be used toward the streetscape project, Town Commons Plaza, or any other 'downtown' project.

MATERIALS PROVIDED

- **Conceptual Execution Package**
- **List of Available Properties in Town**
- **Retail Strategies Agreement**



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