

**NORTH OGDEN CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**
October 3, 2023

The North Ogden City Council convened in a Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. on October 3, 2023, at the North Ogden City Office at 505 East 2600 North. The meeting was also on Zoom.

Recording can be found on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCriqbePBxTucXEzRr6fclhQ/videos>. Notice of time, place, and agenda of the meeting was posted on the bulletin board at the municipal office and posted to the Utah State Website on September 28, 2023. Notice of the annual meeting schedule was published in the Standard-Examiner on December 16, 2022.

PRESENT:	S. Neal Berube	Mayor
	Ryan Barker	Council Member
	Blake Cevering	Council Member
	Jay D Dalpiaz	Council Member
	Charlotte Ekstrom	Council Member (Arrived at 6:40 PM)
	Phillip Swanson	Council Member

STAFF PRESENT:	Jon Call	City Manager/Attorney
	Rian Santoro	City Recorder
	Jami Jones	Finance Director
	Scott Hess	Planning Director
	Dave Espinoza	Public Works Director/Assistant City Manager
	Bryce Nelson	Administrative Services Manager/Treasurer (Zoom)

VISITORS:	Kevin Burns	Christina Watson
	Stefanie Casey	Jason Hadley
	Chris Pulver	Susan Kilborn
	Merrill Sunderlund	Larry Hill

Mayor Berube called the meeting to order. Council Member Swanson offered the thought and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Berube noted he recently received photographs of vandalism at a North Ogden City park; he also received a report from the Police Chief about an assault that occurred recently in the City where an adult assaulted a young man who may have been doing something he should not have been doing. Additionally, he received a report from a resident whose pride flag was stolen from their property. He hopes these instances are not a new trend for North Ogden City; he has always been proud to live in North Ogden and proud of the safety of the community and he asked residents to keep their eyes open for things that are happening in the City that should be reported to the Police Department.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. CALL FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Mayor Berube asked if any member of the Council had a conflict of interest to declare. No declarations were made.

2. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION TO CONSIDER THE AUGUST 15, 2023, CITY COUNCIL TRUTH IN TAXATION MEETING MINUTES

Council Member Dalpias identified an error in the minutes; the name Clake Cevering was listed in the visitor section of the minutes and that should be removed.

Council Member Cevering motioned to approve the August 15, 2023, City Council Truth in Taxation Meeting minutes as amended. Council Member Swanson seconded the motion.

Voting on the motion:

Council Member Barker	aye
Council Member Cevering	aye
Council Member Dalpias	aye
Council Member Ekstrom	excused (arrived at 6:40 PM)
Council Member Swanson	aye

The motion passed unanimously.

ACTIVE AGENDA

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

4. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (RDA) PROJECTS

City Manager/Attorney Call referenced the discussion of this matter during the September 12, 2023, City Council Meeting; the City needs to determine the best way to utilize the existing RDA funds in order to program the money to benefit the RDA area and complete the requirements for the RDA program. Several items/projects have been discussed and the Administration needs formal direction from the Council at this time in order to prepare for final action on allocation of the RDA funds before the end of the calendar year. Projects that have been discussed in the past include:

- Refitting the Northshore Aquatic Center with a replacement playground, bowery, parking lot repairs, and other capital needs.
- Redevelopment of Bicentennial Park to include upgrades to the plaques honoring veterans, benches, light poles, and landscaping improvements.
- Assist in the redevelopment of North Ogden Plaza including the possible daylighting of Coldwater Creek or other infrastructure to create a sense of place in North Ogden City.

Mayor Berube asked Mr. Call to define the areas in the City that qualify for RDA funding. Mr. Call stated that the requirements have been loosened a bit and, in general, the projects to be completed must benefit the RDA area, which ‘crisscrosses’ Washington Boulevard. The focus should be the commercial district along Washington Boulevard. Mayor Berube asked if there is a specific redevelopment area boundary. Mr. Call presented a map of the redevelopment project area but noted that the funds do not need to be spent in that area only and can be used on any project that benefits the redevelopment area. Mayor Berube asked for a definition of the term ‘benefit’ in relation to this matter. He also asked for an estimate of the total amount of RDA funding available and how much money the Community Development Area (CDA) owes the RDA. Mr. Call noted the removal of blight would meet the definition of benefiting the RDA; the idea is that any project should help to reinvigorate a property to generate tax increment in the RDA. He is not sure of the total amount of RDA funds available, but the best estimate at this time is over \$2.5 million; the CDA owes the RDA \$300,000. Mayor Berube asked how much will remain in the CDA budget once the \$300,000 debt is repaid. Mr. Call stated the total budget for the list of projects to be completed in the CDA is \$5.2 million, but this is based on estimates from 2018.

Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director Espinoza expounded on the project related to the Aquatic Center. He presented a list of work that could be completed at the facility to improve it beyond its original condition; he noted most of the finishes and equipment at the facility are original and need to be replaced or improved. Maintenance of the pool has been wonderful, but some of the equipment is 20 years old, and replacing it will allow for increased efficiencies at the pool.

Council Member Dalpiaz noted that many of the items included on the list presented by Mr. Espinoza will not be visible to the public; he asked that the Council be given a tour of the facility to understand the proposed improvements and how they will improve the facility. Mr. Espinoza indicated staff is willing to provide such a tour.

Mayor Berube wondered if any of the projects at the facility would qualify for Recreation, Museum, Arts, Parks (RAMP) grant funding. Kevin Burns, who serves as the Parks and Recreation Chair on the RAMP Tax Advisory Board and was in attendance answered yes, noting that he would need to look at it more closely to provide a definitive answer. He indicated there will be a RAMP training event in the coming weeks and he will ask about the Aquatic Center projects at that event.

The Mayor and Council then engaged in high-level discussion with Mr. Espinoza about the scope of many of the projects included on the list and whether there is any flexibility in the cost of any of the projects.

Mr. Espinoza then discussed the work to be performed at Bicentennial Park and presented a rendering that identified the areas that would be converted to xeriscape. He noted that some work can be completed in-house, but the total cost estimate is \$220,000, which includes design and installation.

The Council engaged in discussion with Mr. Espinoza about the design of the xeriscaping and any other improvements that could be completed at Bicentennial Park to improve its usefulness and make the area more aesthetically pleasing. The City's maintenance crew's ability to maintain the area effectively was discussed as to prevent any xeriscape areas from being overcome with weeds or becoming unsightly.

Mr. Call then discussed the North Ogden Plaza Project; he presented a signboard of the Plaza and invited the Council to participate in an interactive exercise to mark up the layout of the Plaza to indicate items of priority for them. Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Hess also added that Zion's Public Finance and the City's consultant, MHTN, has developed an existing conditions report for the Plaza to communicate the age, condition, and ownership of the buildings at the Plaza. The report is in draft form at present, but he provided the Council with a copy to aid in their discussion of this matter. He then presented cost estimates developed by the City Engineer for opening Coldwater Creek through the project area; completing landscape improvements, frontage improvements, sidewalk improvements; and maximizing the use of the space. This led to brainstorming among the Mayor and Council regarding the best use of the property; creating a site that can easily host special events while allowing the existing businesses to be successful.

Council Member Swanson questioned the appropriateness of using RDA funding for the North Ogden Plaza; he indicated that the people or entities that own the buildings in the Plaza have not asked for assistance, and they do not care about the condition of the properties because they are able to rent them to businesses. He stated he does not support using tax dollars to help build or benefit businesses when the landowners have done nothing themselves. Mr. Call stated that the City has tried to get the landowners to take the initiative to improve the area and if something is not done, there is a risk of losing all funding sources for improving the area. He compared the North Ogden Plaza project to what the City did at Lee's Marketplace; the City redeveloped the site, which spurred reinvestment at the site by other property owners, but he acknowledged Council Member Swanson's concern about the risk associated with dedicating funding to North Ogden Plaza. The only guarantee for the City would be to use the funding to buy the properties and then partner with someone on the redevelopment. Mayor Berube agreed that the City should only be trying to help property owners who want to help themselves, but he is concerned about the risk of the area becoming blighted if current conditions continue. The Council engaged in philosophical discussion and debate regarding whether the City should proceed with the consideration of the use of RDA funds for the site, with the Mayor suggesting that the City attempt to coordinate a meeting with the landowners at the Plaza to discuss their ideas and plans

for the future of the Plaza before making a decision to spend money at the site. The Council and staff supported this idea. Mayor Berube concluded the main goal of the RDA should be to facilitate business development that will result in tax generation in order to relieve the burden on residents through their property tax. Mr. Call stated that staff will report back to the Mayor and Council when they are able to schedule a meeting with the landowners at the Plaza. He suggested something like a 'food truck roundup' area where food trucks could be located at the Plaza on a regular basis.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Merrill Sunderlund, North Ogden resident, stated tonight's discussion has been very useful. He agrees with the use of RDA funds for the Aquatic Center. For the area around Bicentennial Park, there are some areas that should obviously be xeriscaped to increase safety for the people who are maintaining that area, but he thinks a long-term plan would be helpful in improving all of Bicentennial Park. This is one of the areas that defines North Ogden, and it is important to preserve the history and legacy of the Park. He addressed the North Ogden Plaza discussion and indicated that whatever decisions are made, they should not prevent the future daylighting of the stream at some point in the future. He agreed with Council Member Swanson about using money when the private landowners are not interested in improving the area but indicated the Plaza is an area that the entire City cares about and improving it will only benefit the City as a whole.

Jason Hadley, Harrisville resident, stated he is representing the North View Business Alliance as the Government Relations Board Member. He indicated the Alliance will be a resource to the North Ogden, Pleasant View, and Harrisville cities and to businesses that need to communicate with their City Councils. The matters that were discussed tonight are also concerns of the Alliance and they are working on projects and programs that will help to revitalize the collective community. He provided his contact information.

Chris Pulver, North Ogden resident, stated that he noticed the City's budget includes \$60,000 for the Aquatic Center and he wondered if that is separate from the projects that were discussed tonight. Mr. Call stated it is separate. Mr. Pulver stated that it is important to carefully evaluate the projects to be completed at the Aquatic Center to determine if there is a direct correlation between cost savings and revenue generation. He added that he supports the xeriscaping projects that will address safety concerns for individuals who maintain the park strips at City properties. He then noted he likes the idea of a 'food truck roundup' and has seen that be successful in other communities that he has visited.

Christina Watson, North Ogden resident, stated she was disappointed that opposing viewpoints were not explored during the discussion of the North Ogden Plaza. She acknowledged there is a risk, but this is an area that could best generate tax revenue for the City and there should be more discussion about how to proceed instead of whether to proceed. If the City helped to create an asset at the site, everyone would benefit. If the City does nothing, conditions at the site will worsen and that will be even more problematic for the community.

She offered some of her suggestions for reusing or reconfiguring the site but noted that if the City can make the frontage more beautiful and increase options at the Plaza, people will stop at the site.

Kevin Burns, North Ogden resident, stated he has visited food truck parks in other communities, and he suggested the City reach out to people from those communities to learn about their experiences. He then stated that a few years ago, he would have never supported covering the Aquatic Center, but he thinks a discussion about that type of project should now be discussed because there is such a demand for a year-round pool space and that may outweigh the cons of covering the facility.

Susan Kilborn (Via Zoom), North Ogden resident, stated that she was unable to hear the first several minutes of the meeting because the audio was unavailable. She asked the Mayor to restate the comments he made at the beginning of the meeting, which Mayor Berube did. Ms. Kilborn stated she would like to figure out a way to establish a forum where people could come together to make something good for the City. She asked if the City is able to see how many people are watching a meeting on Zoom. Mr. Call answered yes, tonight there were three. Ms. Kilborn stated she would like to volunteer to help encourage people to watch Council meetings and participate via Zoom. She asked for a partner on the City Council to help with this endeavor. She then concluded the local League of Women Voters is hosting a “Meet the Candidates” event on October 30, 2023, for the 2023 Election. She asked for help spreading the word about the event to increase participation in the Election.

6. COUNCIL/MAYOR/STAFF COMMENTS

Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Hess reported that the City has extended an offer to an individual for the Planner 1 position, and it has been accepted. Mayor Berube thanked Mr. Hess for carrying an increased workload while the position was vacant.

Council Member Dalpiaz stated there will be an additional debate for City Council candidates; it will be on October 25, 2023, at the Senior Center and is hosted by the Weber County Republican Party. Mayor Berube suggested that Council Members submit questions to be asked of the candidates at both the election events.

Mayor Berube asked that the Council continue to think about the use of RDA funds; it will be necessary to make some decisions regarding the use of these funds in the coming weeks.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Eckstrom motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Voting on the motion:

Council Member Barker	aye
Council Member Cevering	aye
Council Member Delpias	aye
Council Member Ekstrom	aye
Council Member Swanson	aye

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

S. Neal Berube, Mayor

Rian Santoro
City Recorder

Date Approved