

City of Graham

City Council Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2025



The City Council of the City of Graham held a regularly scheduled meeting on October 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall Municipal Building, 201 South Main Street, Graham, NC.

Council Members Present:

Mayor Jennifer Talley
Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall
Council Member Bobby Chin
Council Member Bonnie Whitaker

Staff Present:

Megan Garner, City Manager
Aaron Holland, Assistant City Manager
Bryan Coleman, City Attorney
Bob Ward, City Attorney
Renee Ward, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Jennifer Talley

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Former Council Member Joey Parsons gave the invocation, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION: City Council recognized and thanked former Council Member Joey Parsons for his service and dedication to the City of Graham.



CONSENT AGENDA:

- A.** To approve the September 9, 2025, City Council meeting minutes and Closed Session meeting minutes.
- B.** To approve closing streets for Graham High School's Homecoming Parade on October 17, 2025, from 4:45 pm to 5:15 pm. The procession will begin at Albright Avenue, proceeding down Main Street, around Court Square, down Pine Street, and concluding at Graham Middle School.

- C. To approve a Special Events application to use the sidewalks around downtown for vendor tents and available parking spaces for food trucks on October 18, 2025, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm for the Fall Fest event.
- D. To approve a budget amendment for \$750,000 for insurance reimbursement due to damage at the Water Treatment Plant.
- E. To approve a budget amendment for \$1,600 for insurance reimbursement to replace a damaged Jon boat at the Graham-Mebane Lake.
- F. To approve tax releases for \$1,087.86.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ITEM 1: AMEND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE – MINOR SUBDIVISIONS

A public hearing had been scheduled to consider an amendment to the Development Ordinance Article 8, Section 10.337 (1) to update the existing language regarding Minor Subdivisions.

Assistant City Manager Aaron Holland stated that the City Council had requested that City Staff analyze and update the existing Minor Subdivision classification to allow for two additional lots and to provide a clearer synopsis of how the parent parcel is treated in these subdivisions. He noted the Planning Board recommended approval of the amendment by a vote of 6-0, removing the previously included timeframe requirement, and changing "public street" to "public right-of-way." He stated the fee schedule would also be updated to reflect the change, allowing the City to continue incentivizing tap fees for up to four lots in a minor subdivision development.

Mayor Talley shared that the Council was trying to make it more attractive to develop small parcels, which were the cheapest kind of development and caused the least disruption to existing neighborhoods. She stated it would help when building out smaller lots that do not qualify as major subdivisions.

The public hearing was opened, and the following spoke:

Mr. Chris Foust, 4990 Hwy 62 South, stated that this would save many people time and money.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to close the public hearing, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to approve an amendment to the Development Ordinance Article 8, Section 10.337 (1) regarding Minor Subdivisions, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 2: REZONING - 0.61-ACRE LOT AND 0.95-ACRE LOT – WILTON DRIVE

A public hearing had been scheduled to consider rezoning a 0.61-acre lot and a 0.95-acre lot at the end of Wilton Drive from R-12 (Medium Density Residential) to R-7 (High-Density Residential) for the purpose

of subdividing the lots and potentially building a duplex on each lot. (Planning Board recommended denial, 4-0.)

Assistant City Manager Aaron Holland stated this was a request to rezone a 0.61-acre lot and a 0.95-acre lot at the end of Wilton Drive from R-12 (Medium Density Residential) to R-7 (High Density Residential) for the purpose of developing the vacant lot for the purpose of subdividing the lots and potentially building a duplex on each lot. He shared the Planning Board recommended denial of the rezoning at a vote of 4-0.

Ms. Kristen Foust, 4990 Hwy 62 S, Burlington, stated they were currently under contract and were hoping to obtain approval for this rezoning to develop two parcels that had been sitting for years. She noted that Wilton Street was a dead end, with no turnaround. She stated they would come in and extend the utilities and the street as required by the City. She stated they were requesting R-7 zoning and that the City's land-use plan allows duplexes or townhomes in new neighborhoods. She said the drainage issue would be addressed per City code.

Mr. Chris Foust, 4990 Hwy 62 S, Burlington, stated they had done a lot of development in Graham, and they were committed to making this a nice development. He said that if the duplexes were approved, he would build them himself. However, if not, he would sell individual lots of four to five and then sell them, allowing someone else to build those single-family homes.

Ms. Candice Brown, 2056 Chandler Village Drive, Graham, stated her townhouse would be 250 feet from the proposed development, and right now, it was a wooded area and very quiet. She asked the Council to keep the rezoning at R-12.

Ms. Janet Tirpack, 2090 Chandler Village Drive, Graham, stated she had difficulty following the map. She said she was not in favor of duplexes for rent but would prefer R-12 zoning.

Ms. Cathy Waldrup Ward, 214 Aloha Drive, spoke in opposition to the rezoning due to traffic, noise, and parking. She added she did not want a rental property in her backyard.

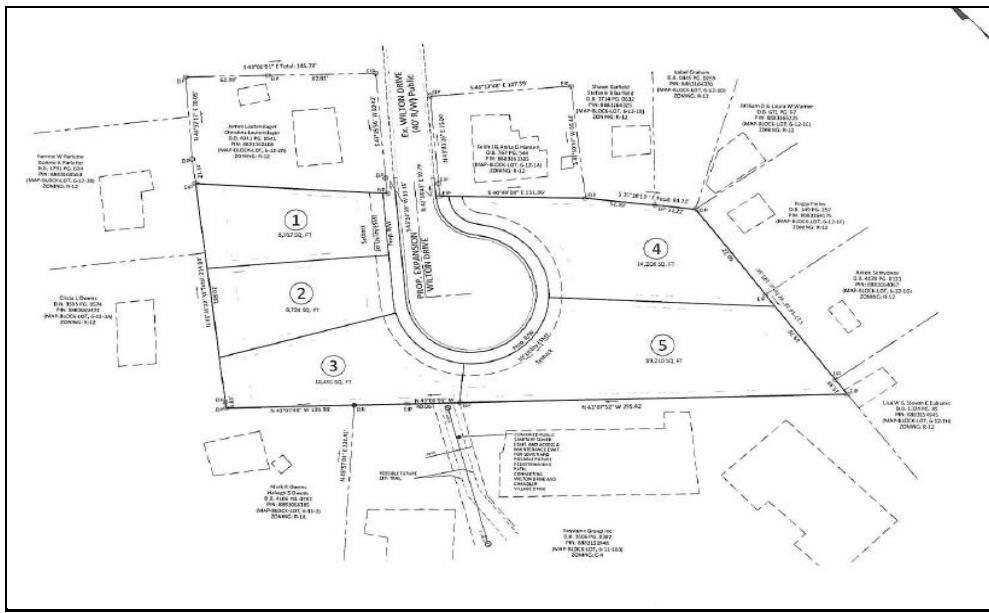
Ms. Anita Hunter, 216 Wilton Drive, Graham, spoke in opposition to duplexes as rental property and to Wilton Street being a narrow road where people have to park. She asked Council to deny the rezoning and keep it as R12.

Ms. Vasia Edwards, 2066 Chandler Village Drive, Graham, spoke in opposition to the rezoning and preferred it stay a quiet neighborhood. She preferred homes to duplexes.

Ms. Garry Fritts, 2032 Chandler Village Drive, Graham, spoke in opposition to the rezoning and wanted his neighborhood to remain quiet. He preferred single-family homes to duplexes.

Ms. Lynne Smith, 2098 Chandler Village Drive, Graham, spoke in opposition to the rezoning due to narrow roads, traffic, and noise. She preferred single-family homes to duplexes.

Ms. Kristin Foust provided Council a map (pictured below) of the proposed single-family lots. She stated they wanted to do something nice on this property and make it better by adding a turnaround for buses and trash trucks. She shared that the property was offered to the neighbors years ago, and no one wanted it.



Mr. Jim Lautenslager, 215 Wilton Drive, Graham, spoke in opposition to the rezoning due to drainage issues, and said that if the property is developed, the water will flow to his property. He prefers single-family homes to duplexes.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to close the public hearing, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Whitaker stated she was not a fan of approving something that does not fit in with the existing neighborhood. She was not in favor of having R-7 homes when there are R-12 homes all around.

Council Member Chin stated the idea of single-family ownership was important and hoped that many more would have the opportunity to own their own home.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated that what Mr. Foust originally proposed made more sense than R-12. He said that even with R-12, you would still have around 20 cars. He stated he was also an advocate of downsizing and thought this area was worth considering R-7 zoning.

Mayor Talley stated she knew the developer, and he builds nice developments. She stated she was always in favor of protecting neighborhoods and was one of the main reasons she ran for Council. She noted her appreciation for the developer's flexibility in staying with R-12, which was clearly what the neighborhood was requesting. She stated that Wilton Drive was a narrow road and not built to withstand the traffic that duplexes could potentially have. She stated she would always stand up for the citizens and what they want. She said, "We are all here as advocates for the citizens, and unfortunately, when people built developments years ago, they couldn't have foreseen that Graham was going to grow like it has, and so we have to really be very careful about what we approve and what we allow to come in, and be very conscientious of how much of a drain that is going to be on our utilities and city services."

Motion by Mayor Talley to deny the rezoning request of 0.61-acre lot and a 0.95-acre lot at the end of Wilton Drive from R-12 (Medium Density Residential) to R-7 (High-Density Residential) for the purpose of subdividing the lots and potentially building a duplex on each lot, and the rezoning is not consistent with the Graham 2035 Comprehensive Plan and the Graham Development Ordinance. It would not be consistent with the current land zoning and land use plan for the goal of building a structure on the lot. Rezoning the

property would not be consistent with the Suburban Residential type and furthers policy 2.2.1, 4.3.1, 5.1.1, and 5.2.1, as put forth by the Graham 2035 Comprehensive Plan, the develop if rezoned would cause excessive traffic and parking issues on Wilton Drive and would not be consistent and harmonious with the existing neighborhood which has single-family character and it is not consistent with the Suburban Residential principal use of predominately detached single-family homes, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed 3-1. Mayor Pro Tem Hall voted no.

Mayor Talley asked for a 10-minute recess.

Motion by Mayor Talley to take a ten-minute recess, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mayor Talley to return to open session, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 3: AMENDMENT – 2025-2026 FEE SCHEDULE – TAP FEES – MINOR SUBDIVISIONS

City Council considered amending the 2025-2026 Fee Schedule, Page 23, Notes, to reflect that the burden of any additional taps for a minor subdivision with more than four lots will be the responsibility of the owner/developer.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated this was the second part of the amendment change, which would allow an increase in the number of lots from four to six; any additional lots above four would be the developer's responsibility to pay all associated tap fees. He noted that the fee schedule would need to be amended to reflect the change.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to approve the amendment to the fee schedule regarding taps exceeding four lots to be the responsibility of the owner or developer, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 4: GRAHAM REGIONAL MASTER PLAN

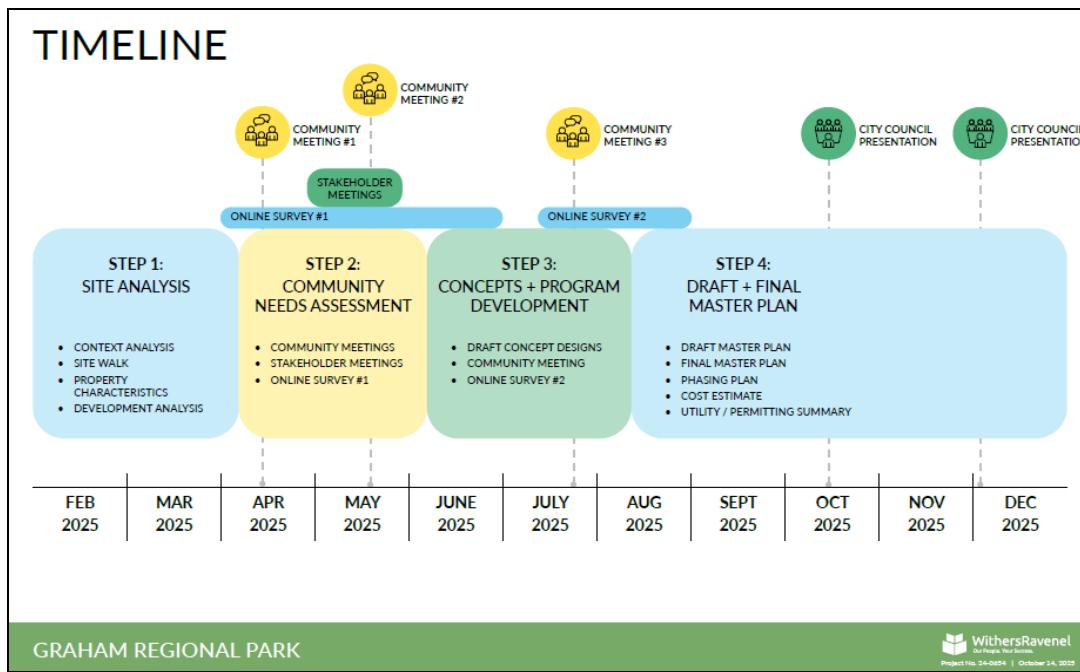
City Council received a draft of the Graham Regional Master Plan for review.

City Manager Megan Garner stated that this item did not require any action and that Council had received the most recent draft of the Graham Master Plan via email, and it had also been posted to social media and the website. She stated Withers Ravenel was selected as the consultant and had been working over the last year, getting feedback from community meetings. She said Kristen Herndon and Michael Alderman were here to review the draft plan. She requested that the City Council provide input on the Master Plan by December. She noted the goal was to bring the plan back to the City Council in December for possible adoption.

Ms. Kristen Herndon stated this project was especially meaningful to her. She said she had the privilege of working for the City of Graham earlier in her career and was directly involved in securing grants and acquiring land. She shared that she still remembers her and Brian Faucette going out and tagging trees for hours on end to figure out which trees we wanted to save specifically for this park. She stated that now being a part of shaping its future through the Master Plan was incredibly special. She shared that she and

Michael Alderman would share the planning process, the timeline, site analysis, the extensive community engagement, and then the concept plans that led to the draft Master Plan.

Mr. Michael Alderman, registered landscape architect, was excited to present the plan and thanked everyone for their input during community meetings.



Mr. Alderman stated they conducted a site walk with park staff on the property and reviewed maps, existing photographs, and old Master Plans. For the development analysis, they hosted two community meetings—one at the park and one during the Arts Around the Square event in downtown Graham—and an online survey. They used online surveys on program development and incorporated the results into the concept options. He said they provided three concept options for the community meeting number three, which was held at Graham Recreation Center. They then opened another online survey and used all that feedback to draft the Master Plan.

SITE ANALYSIS

SITE CONTEXT

- 1 Adjacent land use is residential and former agricultural land
- 2 The park is accessed from N. Jim Minor Road
- 3 SE Alamance High School and Alexander Wilson Elementary School are in close proximity to the park



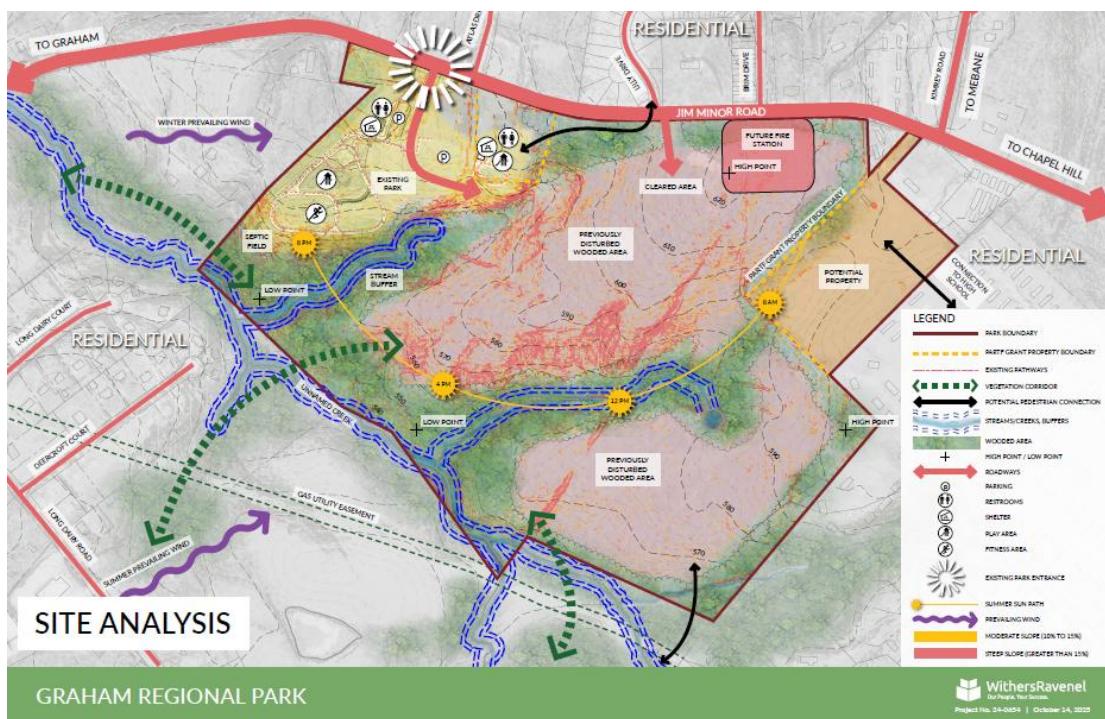
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

- 4 Existing park facilities include nature playground, inclusive playground, fitness stations, paved walkway, and shelter / restroom
- 5 Existing field to the Northeast of the park is suited for athletic fields due to gentle topography
- 6 Most of the park site is undeveloped with steeper topography and includes streams and wetlands

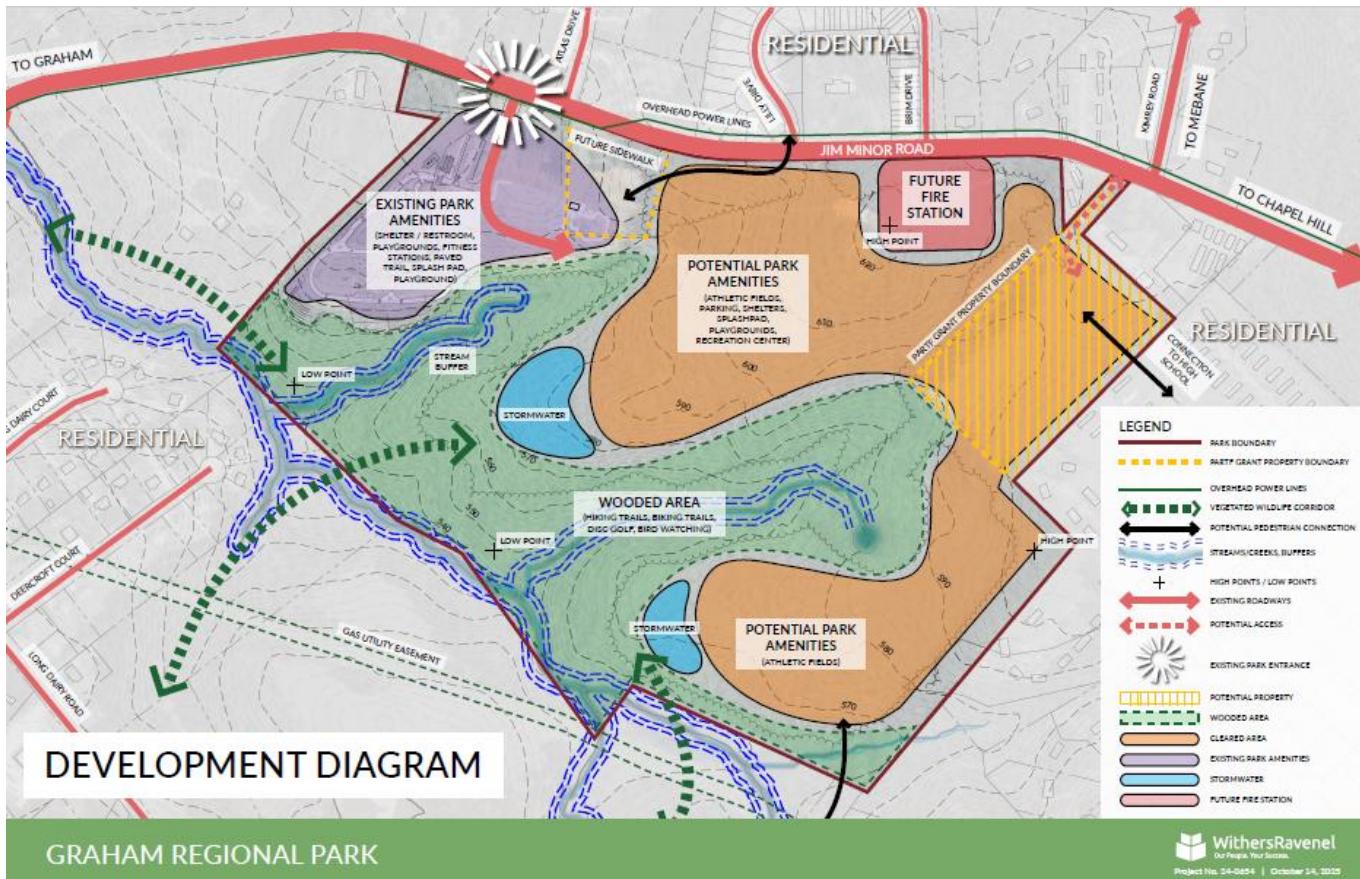


GRAHAM REGIONAL PARK

WithersRavenel
Project No. 24-0854 | October 14, 2022



Mr. Alderman shared research on the adjacent residential land uses and the school uses to the south and east, and how these could influence the park design. He said they also looked at the existing park property, which showed a great playground, and wanted to build on that community-driven effort as an excellent catalyst for the rest of the park's development. The site analysis shows the existing park, its uses, and natural features. There is an existing stream buffer adjacent to two of these small streams, which are already on site. There's a wetland area, but there's also a previously disturbed area that is attractive for future development.



The development diagram shows what the land can support. The land has a gentle slope that can be used for athletic fields, parking, and shelters, as well as other features identified as potential for the community to see in the park. We looked at low areas that might be suitable for stormwater mitigation as part of the site's development, as well as existing wooded areas that might be suitable for hiking trails and biking.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community Meetings #1 & #2:

- Program Needs input

Community Meeting #3:

- Concept Preference
- Interest in revenue generation and overall accessibility



STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Athletic Fields

Hiking and Biking

Inclusion and Accessibility

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS TAKEAWAYS

-  4-6 Multipurpose Fields desired
-  Loop Trail for mountain bikes
-  Add Inclusive Playgrounds with rubber surfacing

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS: TOP PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Splashpad	939
Playgrounds	800
Walking / Hiking Trails	747
Adventure Program	435
Sports Fields/Courts	322
Amphitheater	221

GRAHAM REGIONAL PARK

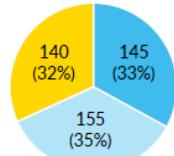
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CONCEPT PLANS

FEEDBACK

No clear consensus but Concept B: "Balanced" received the greatest support

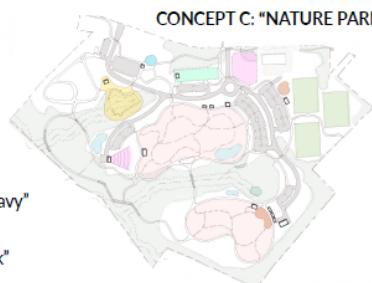
WHICH DESIGN CONCEPT DO YOU PREFER?



- Concept A: "Athletic Heavy"
- Concept B: "Balanced"
- Concept C: "Nature Park"



CONCEPT A: "ATHLETIC HEAVY"



CONCEPT C: "NATURE PARK"



CONCEPT B: "BALANCED"

GRAHAM REGIONAL PARK

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DRAFT MASTERPLAN

PROPOSED PARK FEATURES:

- Splash pad
- Adventure play
- Sensory garden
- Public Art
- 6 Pickleball courts
- 3 Tennis courts
- 3 Playgrounds
- 7 Multi-purpose fields
 - 2 Synthetic Turf
 - 5 Natural Turf
- Large Covered Pavillion
 - 4 Basketball Courts
 - Restrooms
 - Event Space
- Amphitheater
- Meadow
- Trails
- Mountain bike trails (2 mi)
- Pump track / skills area
- Restrooms
- Maintenance area



SPLASH PAD



ADVENTURE PROGRAMS



NATURE TRAILS



TENNIS / PICKLEBALL COURTS



PLAYGROUNDS



MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS



LARGE COVERED PAVILION



AMPHITHEATER



PUMP TRACK

GRAHAM REGIONAL PARK

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Throughout the community engagement process, features they wanted to see in the parks are listed above, including a covered pavilion. A large pavilion could host outdoor basketball year-round, an arts festival, a farmer's market, and other activities that aren't just sports-related. The splash pad was at the top of the priority list.

Mr. Randy Phillips, 130 Barton Street, Graham, questioned parking and whether it would be sufficient for buses during large tournaments.

Mr. Alderman said parking would be shown in a high-level draft final plan. As you move into further development, these drawings and semantic design will show more detail, such as bus loading, fire truck turnarounds, and parking.

Ms. Chelsea Dickey, 511 Oakwood Lane, Graham, stated she was running for Mayor of Graham and inquired about adaptive sports and whether it had been requested from the community.

Mr. Alderman stated they had worked with an inclusive stakeholder group, and they provided a lot of information on how they would like to see the park accessible in the future. He shared that a lot of the programming, playgrounds, and walking trails would be accessible.

Ms. Pearl Ellis, 2519 Trevana Way, Swepsonville, inquired about pickleball and tennis courts and whether they were needed.

Mr. Alderman said that pickleball had exploded across North Carolina, whether at the beach, in the Triad, or in the mountains, there was demand and a continuing desire for municipalities to be active.

ITEM 5: BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT – LEGAL ASSISTANCE

City Council considered a request to provide legal assistance to the Board of Adjustment.

Mayor Talley stated that a Board of Adjustment meeting was coming up and that, even though we have two very qualified attorneys representing us, they cannot legally represent the Board of Adjustment. She requested that an attorney represent the Board of Adjustment and attend those meetings.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated that the Board of Adjustment does not usually meet that often. The board averages one or two a year at the most.

Mayor Talley asked if we could reach out to our previous City Attorney.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated he was awaiting a callback and had reached out to a second option.

Mayor Talley made a motion to provide legal assistance to the Board.

Council Member Whitaker inquired about the cost.

Assistant City Manager Holland said it would depend on the hourly rate, and in this case, we just needed to get someone in place for the meeting in one month. He said after that meeting, we could do something more concrete for the Council to consider.

Council Member Whitaker asked where the money to pay for an attorney was coming from.

City Manager Garner stated that no funds have been allocated for this, and if this is what the City Council wanted, it would require a budget amendment to bring forward to the Council in November.

Mayor Talley asked Planning Board Chair Dean Ward if he would like to speak.

Dean Ward, Planning Board Chair, stated he had come before Council three- or four-times requesting representation for the Board of Adjustments. He shared that the Board of Adjustments has had one meeting in the last 24 months, and some members had never sat for a Board of Adjustments meeting. He said the Board could only consider the evidence presented to them that night in sworn testimony. He said some of the newer members may not understand the process. He said a representative would be an asset to the Board and potentially save the City down the road.

Mayor Talley stated she agreed with Dean and that it was prudent for those members to have counsel representation and counsel advice.

Motion by Mayor Talley to approve legal assistance for the Board of Adjustment, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chelsea Dickey, 511 Oakwood Lane, Graham, said she was a candidate for Mayor and expressed the importance of voting.

CITY STAFF COMMENTS

City Manager Megan Garner reminded Council their November meeting is on November 4 rather than November 11 due to the Veterans' Day Holiday.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mayor Pro Tem Hall thanked the Fire Department personnel and EMS for assisting with a family member. All were very professional and helpful.
- Mayor Talley shared that our local legislators were going to request \$22 million for Tropical Storm Chantal damage at the water/sewer plant. She shared that we were awarded \$32 million to be split between Alamance and Orange Counties.
- Mayor reminded everyone of upcoming events:
 - Downtown businesses Fall Fest – Saturday, October 18th – 10-4 – vendor – live music – food
 - Kinfolk Concert Series - Car Cruise-in – Saturday, October 18th - 4:00 pm, and Dr. Captain and the Fleet band starts at 7:00 pm at the Graham Amphitheater
 - Pumpkin Bash – Friday, October 24th – 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
 - Veteran's Day Parade – November 8th – 10:00am – Main Street to McAden Street

CLOSED SESSION

City Council will consider going into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) to consider the purchase of 1771 N. Jim Minor Road in Haw River, parcel ID number 152551, owned by Thomas and Linda Stewart, adjacent to Graham Regional Park, for the intended use of park and recreational facilities, and to discuss two potential litigation matters in accordance with N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(3).

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to go into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) to consider the purchase of 1771 N. Jim Minor Road in Haw River, parcel ID number 152551, owned by Thomas and Linda Stewart, adjacent to Graham Regional Park, for the intended use of park and recreational facilities, and to discuss two potential litigation matters in accordance with N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(3), seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

The closed session was held.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to go out of closed session, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to return to open session, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

No action was taken in open session.

ADJOURN

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Renee M. Ward, CMC
City Clerk