



## Legislation Text

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

**FROM:** A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager

**TITLE:** Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Warm Mineral Springs Park Phase I Improvements and Phase II Future Development

### **Recommended Action**

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Warm Mineral Springs Park Phase I Improvements and Phase II Future Development.

### **Background Information**

On February 1, 2024, the City's Warm Mineral Springs Public Private Partnership Negotiation Team recommended the City cease the negotiations for a potential public-private partnership with WMS Development Group LLC for the future of Warm Mineral Springs Park. This recommendation was accepted by City Manager Fletcher and notification of that decision was sent to Warm Mineral Springs Development Group, LLC. In conjunction with this decision, it was determined that operations of Warm Mineral Springs Park will remain with the Parks & Recreation Department. As such, Parks & Recreation staff have commenced with plans to hire regular year-round staff as approved in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget and are pursuing the following initiatives to support revitalization of the 20+ acres:

### **Immediate Action Items**

- Posted available positions to the City's website and advertised on professional networks; interviews are being scheduled.
- Submitted to Finance Department a request for a budget amendment to revert a part-time Recreation Attendant position to full-time status.
- Requested the Information Technology Division pursue a more reliable internet solution for Warm Mineral Springs Park; securing additional technology needs.
- Requested that the Facilities Maintenance Division of the Department of Public Works refresh the temporary admission and restroom trailers to include exterior skirting, flooring improvements, and installation of required fire safety systems; requested repairs to bridge and clock structure.
- Outfitting staff offices.
- Refreshing landscaping and fountain, adding planters for beautification and replacing mulch.
- Ordered additional picnic seating, umbrellas for shade, and trash receptacles.
- Ordered exterior screening for portions of temporary fencing.

- Conducted additional outreach to food truck vendors to better meet the needs of park patrons.
- Updating and refreshing statewide digital advertising campaign.
- Distributing patron survey to solicit feedback on programming.
- Working with Recreation Program Instructors to develop on-site program offerings.

In conjunction with these immediate efforts, and in order to move forward with improvements to Warm Mineral Springs Park, staff are seeking direction on the next steps for Phase I building and infrastructure improvements and Phase II future plans for the 60+ acres of currently undeveloped land.

#### Phase I Improvements

As part of the Warm Mineral Springs Park Master Plan, the City contracted with Kimley-Horn & Associates under Agreement No. 2017-40 to provide professional design and engineering services for the development of plans to restore the existing national historic registered buildings and implement improvements and upgrades to the utility infrastructure and parking. Despite all efforts, the City has not been able to secure a financially viable approach to complete the restoration of the existing buildings under historic preservation guidelines. Based on the single bid received on June 6, 2022, in response to Request for Bid (RFB) No. 2022-22 Warm Mineral Springs Park Renovations, there is a current funding deficit of more than \$9 million dollars to complete the full renovation.

Knowing that the three (3) buildings received major to severe damage from the impacts of Hurricane Ian and suffered additional deterioration over the course of the last 17 months, it would seem prudent at this time for Commission to re-evaluate the previous direction provided on April 5, 2018, “to preserve, protect, restore and maintain historical value of the three buildings at Warm Mineral Springs, building one the front admission area, building two the bathroom area and building three the cyclorama.”

Post-hurricane damage assessment reports completed by Rostan Solutions and the insurance estimates from Halliwell Engineering Associates for each of the buildings are attached for reference. In addition, a report on a recent study conducted by consultants from Sweet Sparkman Architecture & Interiors is attached providing an evaluation of current building conditions, impacts of new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Map requirements, and updated cost estimates for rehabilitation and construction. Staff have made arrangements for consultants from Sweet Sparkman Architecture & Interiors to be present at the meeting to provide an overview of the report and respond to any questions.

A few preliminary points to reference:

- The three (3) buildings flooded during Hurricane Ian with up to two (2) feet of standing water. Rehabilitation or new construction will need to consider the potential for future flooding events.
- Based on the previous construction bid received and rising costs for construction, it is reasonable to expect that the cost of a full renovation of the existing buildings, meeting the Historic Preservation guidelines (which would be required in order to satisfy the FEMA exemption), will be more expensive on a square foot basis than the cost of new construction.
- Materials and elements of the existing buildings can potentially be saved and repurposed for future use to honor the site’s history.

Taking the aforementioned points into consideration, staff provides the following options for the Commission’s review and consideration:

- Option No.1: Demolish the existing buildings; salvage historic elements for future display; and construct a new code compliant building to include an office; restrooms and showers at a higher elevation in accordance with FEMA flood zone requirements that meets the needs of Warm Mineral Springs Park.

- **Option No. 2:** Restore/rehabilitate the Cyclorama building only, taking precautionary measures for flood prevention, and construct a new code compliant building at a higher elevation in accordance with FEMA flood zone requirements that meets the needs of Warm Mineral Springs Park.

Staff recommends that the Commission proceed with Option No. 1. This option is the most affordable and will facilitate the construction of a building to accommodate the needs of staff and the patrons of Warm Mineral Springs Park. Should Commission determine that an alternate approach be taken to reimagine the site and the permanent structure(s) needed to support operations, staff recommends that the City engage the services of Kimley-Horn & Associates based on their familiarity with the park and understanding of the significant natural resources located on the site. This action can be accomplished through a Contract Amendment to their existing Agreement for Professional Design and Engineering Services. As of February 9, 2024, a total of \$8,667,486 is currently available in Project No. WM19BR Warm Mineral Springs Building Rehabilitation.

### Phase II Future Development

As reflected in the Warm Mineral Springs Park Master Plan and through various Commission discussions related to the Warm Mineral Springs Development Group proposal, there is a desire to develop a portion of the 60+ acres of undeveloped land adjacent to the park in a manner that does not place a burden on the taxpayers of the City of North Port and does not negatively impact the Springs and its surrounding ecosystem. Given that Project No. WM22MP Warm Mineral Springs Park Master Plan Implementation (60 acres) is currently unfunded, it is recommended that the City revisit opportunities to partner with interested entities to meet the economic development goals for this area. For reference, staff provided a presentation (attached) during the July 10, 2023, City Commission Workshop that identified potential pathways for the future development of Warm Mineral Springs Park and noted several key items that should be taken into consideration before making a determination on next steps.

With the extensive research and analysis that has been completed as part of the P3 negotiations and upon receipt of the geotechnical survey from Ardaman & Associates (expected in May 2024), the City will be in a better position to realize the vision of a world class destination. As a first step towards that vision, staff recommends prioritizing the connection to the North Port Connector - Legacy Trail Extension and new trailhead at Warm Mineral Springs Park.

### Strategic Plan

Quality of Life  
Economic Development & Growth Management  
Good Governance

### Financial Impact

Funding of \$8,667,486 is available in Project No. WM19BR utilizing a blend of funds including Warm Mineral Springs Park fund balance, Parks Impact Fees, and A Surtax III allocation.

### Procurement

Upon Commission direction, a Contract Amendment to Agreement 2017-40 with Kimley Horn & Associates, Inc. will be submitted for necessary design, engineering, and construction management services to support Phase I Improvements.

### Attachments:

1. Memo from Negotiation Team Lead to CM 2024-02-01
2. CM Letter to WMS Development Group 2024-02-02
3. WMSP P3 Update Memo 2024-02-02
4. RFB NO. 2022-22 Bid Opening Tabulation
5. Damage Assessment Report 1 - Rostan Solutions
6. Damage Assessment Report 2 - Rostan Solutions
7. Damage Assessment Report 3 - Rostan Solutions
8. Insurance Estimate - Halliwell Engineering Associates

9. WMSP Building Complex Report
10. 2018-04-05 City Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
11. FY2025 CIP, Project WM22MP
12. 2023-07-10 City Commission Workshop Minutes
13. Presentation
14. Kimley-Horn & Associates Agreement No. 2017-40 Amended
15. WMSP 5-YR Summary

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