

A Joint Work Session of the Mayor and City Council and the Waxahachie Community Development Corporation (WCDC) of the City of Waxahachie, Texas was held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, Crape Myrtle Room, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie, Texas on ***Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.***

Council Members Present:	Billie Wallace, Mayor, Council Member Place 4 Patrick Souter, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Member Place 2 Chris Wright, Council Member Place 3
Council Members Present:	Tres Atkins, Council Member Place 1 Travis Smith, Council Member Place 5
WCDC Board Members Present:	Jim Phillips, President Billie Wallace, Mayor Andrew Henderson Kevin Chester Justin Rios
WCDC Board Members Absent:	Melissa Ballard, Vice President Erik Test
WCDC Ex-Officio Members Present:	Amber Villarreal, City Secretary Chad Tustison, Senior Director of Finance Kevin Strength, President/CEO Chamber of Commerce

1. Call to Order

Mayor Billie Wallace and President Jim Phillips called the meeting to order.

2. Discussion and evaluation of City parks and potential capital improvements

City Manager Ricky Boyd explained the purpose of the work session is to give staff direction on how to proceed with the Lions Park Master Plan, North Grove Park Project, and YMCA partnership. The Lions Park concept evolved from simple practice fields into multiple amenities, driving the estimated cost to about \$18 million. He noted concerns about spending at that level, repeated redesigns, and the need for clear direction before further design work or bidding proceeds.

Gumaro Martinez, Executive Director of Parks and Leisure Services, presented an update on the Lions Park original site plan and revised site plan. He discussed the need to define what the City wants from Lions Park and how much it should cost. Staff explored scaling the project back to core elements such as practice fields, lighting, irrigation, parking, and restrooms. Mr. Martinez and Kimley-Horn prepared information to show what a reduced-scope version might look like.

Mr. Martinez reviewed the original master plan from the early 2000s, subsequent land acquisition, wastewater treatment plant expansion considerations, and revisions to the plan. He noted initial cost estimated around \$10 million increased over several years, even after removing amenities like a pump track and reduced lighting.

Council and staff discussed proceeding with the current Lions Park design while refocusing on a reduced base scope of approximately \$10.1 million. The recommended approach prioritizes lighted and irrigated practice fields, a new road, trail connections, and restrooms, with flexibility to add amenities later if funding and priorities allow. Staff noted the design is about 65% complete, with prior Council authorization of up to \$850,000 for design services and roughly \$300,000 spent to date. A scaled-back concept was presented to avoid further redesign costs by removing amenities such as pickleball courts, basketball courts, pavilions, play structures, and a skate park from the near-term scope. Some Council members and WCDC members expressed concern about public perception of the reduced amenities, and others emphasized that practice fields remain the community's most urgent need.

Staff discussed managing costs through reduced parking and the use of bid alternates. Planned parking was discussed at a reduced level, roughly 150 to 180 spaces, while noting that standards could support expansion if the park hosts multiple simultaneous activities. Temporary or interim solutions such as decomposed granite or gravel were identified as feasible options to increase capacity without immediate paving costs. Restroom needs were also reviewed, with the existing men's and women's facility remaining in the base scope and a second restroom discussed as a potential bid alternate, estimated at approximately \$350,000.

Staff emphasized the need for a near-term decision to move the project to a bid-ready design and avoid further delays. Concerns were raised that multi-year phasing could extend an already lengthy project timeline. Kimley-Horn indicated that, with clear direction, the design could reach approximately 95% completion by the end of the following month and be ready for bidding in the June or July timeframe. Staff discussed structuring the project with a base bid and alternates, and potentially separating bid packages to improve pricing and reduce cost risk.

Council discussed the possibility of directing additional City funds toward amenities in the YMCA-area park to offset items removed from Lions Park, contingent on clear ownership and public-access conditions. Funding concepts for the YMCA project discussed ranged from approximately \$1.25 million to \$1.5–\$2 million, with the requirement that the park be deeded to the City or otherwise provide enforceable, long-term public access. Concerns were raised that priority-use arrangements for the YMCA could conflict with bond requirements for equal public access, and it was noted that bond counsel review would likely be necessary if bond funds are used for funding. Council and WCDC members stressed the importance of avoiding unclear shared-use arrangements and ensuring written commitments on ownership, access, and maintenance responsibilities.

There was general consensus to continue the design for Lions Park, scale the base project to approximately \$10 million, and include additional amenities only as bid alternates. Participants agreed not to include a skate park at this time and to proceed with completing the design and moving the project forward to bidding.

Council discussed advancing North Grove Park for award using the current bid package, including the restroom alternate, and covering the funding gap with available bond interest income rather than requesting new appropriations. Staff reported that the design is complete and bids were opened on November 20th, with a 90-day pricing hold making timely Council action important. The lowest bid was approximately \$2.17 million, increasing to about \$2.34 million with the prefab restroom alternate. With \$2.0 million available in bond funds and roughly \$850,000 in bond interest income,

staff indicated sufficient funding is available. The project is targeted for completion by Memorial Day, and the item is expected to return to Council on February 16th.

Staff clarified that nearby open spaces in the area are primarily HOA-owned or school facilities, making North Grove the primary publicly accessible park within the planned development. The park would include City park signage to clearly distinguish it from private HOA amenities.

Council raised broader concerns about the City's parkland dedication and park development ordinance, noting that outdated standards may result in the City inheriting park responsibilities in less-than-ideal locations or configurations. Staff referenced the 2007 Master Plan standards for neighborhood parks and acknowledged that the ordinance does not reflect current development patterns or community expectations. Council members emphasized the need to update requirements so developers provide consolidated, functional, and usable park spaces, rather than fragmented or HOA-dominated areas that ultimately require city maintenance.

It was the general consensus for Mr. Martinez to contact Jon McLaughlin to confirm, in writing, whether the YMCA will deed the park land to the City versus a long-term use agreement, and to get an update on the reported additional \$1.0–\$1.5M private funding status.

City Council reached a general consensus to support the award of the North Grove Park project, noting that the item, including the restroom alternate, will return for formal Council consideration at the February 16th meeting.

3. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary