

REGULAR SESSION

JANUARY 26, 2016

The Parks Advisory Board of the City of Athens met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 4:00 p.m. in the Derek D. Daniels Conference Room of the Athens Partnership Center, 201 W. Corsicana St., Athens Texas with the following members present, to-wit:

Chris Tinsley
Hugh Armstrong
Bob Morton
Jay Eckert
Andrea Copeland
Clyde Bowman Sr.
Justin Boswell

Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary
Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager

others present: Blake Wilson

CONSIDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2015 SPECIAL SESSION

A motion was made by Member Armstrong, seconded by Member Copeland, to approve the Minutes of the September 17, 2015 Special Session. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSS/CONSIDER CHANGING MONTHLY MEETING DATE

Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager, introduced himself to the Board. Mr. Kombos had the board introduce themselves to get familiar with him. He stated the way the other committees he is tasked with liaising are currently scheduled, the meetings occur together in the same week. He proposed moving the Parks meeting to the fourth Wednesday of the month at 4:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Member Morton, seconded by Member Eckert, to change the monthly meeting date to the fourth Wednesday of every month. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSS CITY PARKS NON-SMOKING ORDINANCE

Chairman Tinsley stated that he has had numerous parents ask him about putting up ordinances at the parks, specifically Cain and Coleman Parks. He stated that currently there is no smoking on the field, but nothing is regulated in the parking lot, which at Cain Park people stand under the bleachers and smoke because they are only five (5) feet from the parking lot. He stated kids

have to walk through smoke to get to the fields, and there are cigarette butts everywhere. It is not as bad at Coleman, but everyone stands by the sign and smokes.

Chairman Tinsley proposed to the Board to just ban smoking in all parks across the city.

Mr. Kombos stated that if the Board chooses, suggesting to Council to put a comprehensive ordinance banning smoking in all parks. He further stated that if exceptions were needed the Board could come up with some exceptions if need be.

Mr. Bowman asked if that would include Peach Park, with Mr. Kombos stating the ordinance would be comprehensive and all parks would be included. Mr. Kombos showed the board where Peach Park was located.

A motion was made by Member Morton, seconded by Member Copeland, that all parks within the City Limits of Athens be non-smoking. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSS FUTURE PLANS FOR THE OLD HENDERSON COUNTY HOSPITAL

Mr. Kombos stated the anticipated date for the demolition of the Old Henderson County Hospital is mid-March. The cupola on top of the existing structure has been saved, as well as the stars on the front of the structure. The lot the building sits on is about 3 acres. Within 1,000 feet of the site there are neighborhoods, Highland Park Nursing Center, South Athens Elementary, and the boundary of Cain Park falls within that 1,000 feet.

Mr. Kombos stated that as a Board it would great to be proactive and propose a use for this lot because it has to be used for public use. He stated that he would like the Board to provide a recommendation to Council suggesting that the vacant lot be designated as a park.

Mr. Kombos showed pictures of the current location of the site. He stated that since the City has saved the cupola, it has been suggested to construct a gazebo and place the cupola on top of the gazebo. It would be more of an older style park with benches and sidewalks leading to the gazebo.

Member Morton stated that if the immediate area was surrounded with small families, then a community park would be a great idea.

Chairman Tinsley stated that one of the problem with parks in Texas is they are not accessible to just walk to. This would essentially be the one of the only parks in town that doesn't have a parking lot.

DISCUSS HOSTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARK PUBLIC FORUMS

Mr. Kombos stated that we have some historically underserved parks in Athens. These three are O. D. Baggett Park, New Haven Park, and Peach Park. He stated at Baggett Park there are many features that need upgrading, and the pool needs some attention. During the summer the pool is filled up, at night the pool is drained and this is done every day.

Mr. Kombos stated that he is suggesting to the Board to host a couple of public forums at all three of these parks to get citizens in the area, and find out what they would like to see in terms of the park.

Mr. Kombos showed a presentation of the three parks with pictures with each park being discussed.

There was much discussion on the pool at the O. D. Baggett Park.

Chairman Tinsley stated that he is in favor of having the forums at the park, to get the citizens involved to get ideas on what can be done.

Member Armstrong stated that the only park with a basketball court is at Baggett Park.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO EXPRESS ITEMS OF CONCERN

There was no discussion.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS THE 24TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2016

Chris Tinsley, Chairman

ATTEST:

Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary