



City of League City, TX

300 West Walker
League City TX 77573

Meeting Minutes City Council

Monday, January 23, 2017

6:00 PM

Johnnie Arolfo Civic Center
400 West Walker Street

Council Work Session

The City Council of the City of League City, Texas, met in a work session in the Johnnie Arolfo Civic Center at 400 West Walker Street on the above date at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor:

Pat Hallisey

City Council Members:

**Dan Becker
Hank Dugie
Larry Millican
Todd Kinsey
Greg Gripon
Keith Gross
Nick Long**

Interim City Manager:

John Baumgartner

Assistant City Manager/Director of Finance:

Rebecca Underhill

City Attorney:

Nghiem Doan

City Secretary:

Diana M. Stapp

Chief of Police:

Michael Kramm

Acting Director of Human Resources/Civil Service:

April Patterson

Director of Parks & Cultural Services:

Chien Wei

Director of Planning/Development:

Paul Menzies

Director of Public Works:

Gabriel Menendez

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Mayor Hallisey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and called the roll. All members of Council were present except Mr. Dugie.

Absent 1 - Mr. Hank Dugie

Present 7 - Mayor Pat Hallisey, Mr. Dan Becker, Mr. Larry Millican, Mr. Todd Kinsey, Mr. Greg Gripon, Mr. Keith Gross and Mr. Nick Long

2. **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DOG PARK**

Chien Wei, Director of Parks & Cultural Services, said staff has been working with the League City Dog Park Association and the Parks Board on the dog park project. We have a couple of options we would like to present to the council this evening and hopefully by the end of the presentation get some guidance from the council in moving forward with either one or both of these options as a future dog park. Just to give some history, in 2014 City Council approved \$50,000 for a dog park at the current animal shelter facility. In 2016 City Council approved \$150,000 for a dog park for a site to be determined. Newport Park was one of the options. In September 2016 the Parks Board approved Newport Park for the site of a future dog park pending the buy in by the Newport HOA. In November 2016 the City received a letter from Newport HOA opposing a dog park at Newport Park. In December 2016 the Parks Board voted to table a decision on Newport Park as a dog park location until April 2017 and asked staff to do some community outreach on the project. We will be having a public meeting with the residents of Newport and Ellis Landing at the end February 2017. We are also working with our PIO office to do a survey of the residents surrounding that Newport Park. It is a 9-acre park and at one time had been an HOA park. The HOA lacked the funds to maintain the park and deeded it to the city as a city park more than 10 years ago. At one time there was a pool, which was filled in by the HOA, and now has a playground. The basketball court has been redone. We propose a small and large dog area. The preliminary project cost estimate as of August 26, 2016 was \$113,279.69, with the majority being in fencing of the area at \$53,594.50. The infrastructure is pretty much in place. There are no restroom facilities. If the design was to be done in-house we save the cost of consultants. The other option was Lynn Gripon Park at Countryside. In January 2017 the Parks Board approved Lynn Gripon Park at Countryside for the site of a future dog park. This was the location of the old wastewater sewer plant. Currently there is an enclosed park maintenance building and an open covered area for equipment at the location. The idea is to use the existing parking lot and create a trail to connect to the existing trail which would lead to an entrance to the dog park. We also propose to create an entrance from the rear from the trail system that runs behind the area. When we met with the League City Dog Park Association they favored the idea that the public could either drive to the dog park or bike/walk through our trail system from League City Parkway to Countryside. The area is heavily wooded at this time but would work with the Public Works Department to clear the area in-house and remove the existing fence line. The preliminary cost estimate as of November 2016 was \$173,455.23, however if we clear the area and remove the fence in-house the project is reduced to \$150,000.00. One of the things expressed at the Parks Board meeting was that the League City Dog Park Association felt it very important to have a pond within the large dog park area. In order to have a pond there would be additional cost of \$44,275. The Parks Board made a recommendation approving \$150,395.85 for the dog park and \$44,275 for a pond.

When we looked into maintenance for both options, currently the Newport Park is under contract for mowing so we didn't see any additional cost there. There would be proposed supplies and replacement (repairs/maintenance) cost at \$4,000. For Countryside Park, this facility is not under contract for mowing, but is done by city staff so there is no additional cost for labor. Like Newport there are two line items for supplies and replacement (repairs/maintenance) at \$4,000. With the additional maintenance of a pond we would ask for 1/2 of a maintenance worker (\$23,941) and supplies (\$11,000). Since the pond would not have a pump you would need to manually pump water in to replenish the pond.

John Baumgartner, Interim City Manager said at Countryside, one of the things in this option while we have some professional services designated to it, until we clear the land and see what is below the brush and how the fence goes up we may or may not have to use the professional services.

3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT

John Baumgartner, Interim City Manager said Candace Blalock is our project manager on staff and works in the Engineering Department. Daniel Menendez is with Huitt-Zollars, our consulting engineer for the project. I was asked to give an update on the project.

Overview

Where we started - on May 10, 2016 the downtown presentation was presented at the City Council meeting. We talked about major concepts/components, gathered some stakeholder input, and sought a transformative project to energize the downtown area. At that meeting we also authorized Huitt-Zollars to start the design process. Where we are - Candace, Daniel and I have been busy out there refining designs with consultants and integrating the stakeholder input. Where we are going – we are currently bidding the individual phases.

Downtown Revitalization Project Phases

We tried to break it down into achievable pieces and I will talk about that as we go through the different phases. The project is part of the city's Capital Improvement Plan (ED1503). Phase 1, Conceptual Plan and Public Outreach, Fountain, Park Avenue, Ornamental Fence. Phase 2, Muldoon's Run/Alternative Designs. Phase 3, League Park. Phase 4, Main Street. It is part of the overall economic development for the downtown area, which begins at Highway 3 and proceeds down FM518 to Iowa. There is some conversation as to if we should extend it/not extend it. It includes Park Avenue reconstruction and a reshaping of League Park in its entirety.

We have provided you a summary of what we have invested in this project and what the total estimated cost. The infrastructure is just a piece of the project so we tried to outline what the city has committed to today. For the design portion, Huitt-Zollars to date is \$918,658 and to date we have paid \$361,427. We have acquired land and ideally the land is part of two phases. First to help us put in place land so there can be a catalyst project there and secondly the smaller parcels help us with assembly of land at some time in the future. Some improvements that we do during the year periodically reinvest in water and sewer infrastructure and we have done some of that down there. Part of our trails plan includes downtown trails, and along with traffic signal reconstruction will be done parallel with some of the bigger infrastructure projects as we go along.

Some of our stakeholder outreach included meeting with the Downtown Association, Parks Board, Founder's Square representatives, Friends of the Butler Oaks, 4B Industrial Development Board, League City Proud, Garden Club, Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Historic Commission, and have had two public input sessions at the Civic Center. All of them have provided various input on the project, mostly relative to League Park and less with Founders Square and the potential to build a turn lane on FM518 to include acquisition of right-of-way that impacts their parking area. We are still having conversations with that which is not in the immediate phase. The Main Street phase has a little more challenges because in the perfect world we will acquire some right-of-way between Park Avenue and Highway 3.

Major Project Topics

League Park, Park Avenue, Main Street, Related Topics (peripheral projects not part of the core project) such as Parking Garage, Property Acquisition, Hike and Bike Trails, Form-based Code. Opportunities Moving Forward – Railroad, Council Direction and Input. The railroad owns a piece of League Park, without question 50 feet from the center of the rail which takes them half way out to the parking lot but really a little less than that. The southern part of the park from 2nd Street to FM518, they at one time owned a reversion clause in that and then what used to be Railroad Street has the same reversion clause. We argued that perhaps that reversion clause should have been implemented. They say they still own it, but if they don't own it we don't necessarily own it, so it is certainly a topic for going forward. One of the major issues associated with that is on the land they own they don't want to see the water feature or the fountain. They would agree to continue to lease for us which we have done for the last 20 years and what they want in return is a little bit of cash but mostly for us to maintain the right-of-way from Clear Creek to the south city limit line. Realistically today we maintain everything along League Park and Dickinson Avenue on the one side, so we maintain probably half of it today just because we have a higher standard than they do as far as maintenance of the grass. There is a value to that. That is a linchpin in the park piece going forward. The park design is probably 95% complete but it includes a fountain and Muldoon's Run in it.

League Park

Topics of Input – flexible venue for park events, further beautify, parking for daily use, Muldoon’s to be interactive, move the turtle ponds, nature walk along Muldoon’s, keep some of the string lighting used for special events, year-round, proposed fountain design was reworked, access for utilities (water/power). Considerations/Products – Base Map, overlays (food trucks, Holiday in the Park, vendors), plan for peak/event parking, turtle pond removed / turtles returned to their natural habitat.

Roadway

Topics of Input – pedestrian crossing at Milby’s Corner, traffic congestion, traffic calming/reduced speed limit.

Considerations/products – signal timing / wide sidewalk, push button pedestrian crossing, optimize alignment of Park and Main, access management curbing (especially on Main, west section), review options for left turns (add northbound at Perkins Ave, restrict northbound left at Park, add southbound at Park, add northbound at N. Michigan), review split phasing for Park Ave signal.

Streetscaping

Flower baskets and banners on lighting posts (acorn style), canopy created from flag holders, benches and trash receptacles, brick pavers tying building façade to street, LED lighting, irrigation of planters, street tree installation, updated wayfinding signage, bike facilities.

Schedule for Design Completion - Part of the City’s Capital Improvement Plan

Phase 1, Conceptual Plan and Public Outreach, Fountain – complete February 2017; Park Avenue – March 2017.

Phase 2, Muldoon’s Run – February 2017

Phase 3, League Park – March 2017

Phase 4, Main Street – December 2017

All of the above summarizes the base downtown redevelopment plan. We will now talk about some of the peripheral items and where we are on that. We talked about a multi-story parking structure with retail and residential wrapping, which perhaps blends with downtown aesthetic while increasing parking density. Possibly for reserved retail parking to support existing businesses. Market Study to determine local market demands related to a transit element of this. Based on what we heard at the meeting when we talked about the garage, based on the additional outreach we have done, there is little if any support for the transit and that was brought forward only to pursue FTA funding. Unless I hear something different from the Council I wouldn’t propose to move forward on any of that.

Property Acquisition

At the time we bought the blue building it was strategic investment for a catalyst project to blend in with our infrastructure to look at some sort of third party partnership. We are not in the retail business, we are not in the development business, I still think that is the right long term strategy if we are not going to pursue any FTA funding. We have gone through acquisitions for 144 Park Avenue, 145 Park Avenue, 319/321 Plymouth and 318/320 East Main Street. Moving forward, do we want to continue buying property at this point in time or do we want to stop? We had talked to both the Amegy Bank and Mason's Lodge. There are no business deals that work for them or us at this time. I think when we get done with the street scape we will get some interest in the property at 144 Park Avenue and come up with an appropriate partnership to see it developed by some third party. As you own the property certainly you can set standards for development moving forward, that would be our concept still.

Hike and Bike Trails – connections to the downtown included:

Segment one completion FY 2018, 10' wide trail along railroad track from Walker to Main Street, then 6' wide trail along Park Avenue to Trailhead at the north end of League Park.

Segment two completion FY 2019, 6' wide trail along 3rd Street from Wisconsin (possible in alleyways) from Trailhead to Heritage Park. There has been no outreach with the neighborhood or public input with this trail.

Form-base Code

We have contracted with our consultant. New design review standards are in progress. It only affects new development, current structures are unaffected. Proposed regulations will be workshopped between the Consultant, Planning & Zoning Commission, Council and the Historic Commission. And will require Planning & Zoning review and final approval from City Council in the form of an ordinance.

Next Steps & Opportunities

We talked about the railroad in League Park and that is a key for us. The railroad owns portion of League Park and a portion has disputed ownership impacting construction start. Early phases moving forward subject to direction and comments from Council

4. **CONDUCT A WORK SESSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO RECEIVE INFORMATION CONCERNING AGENDA ITEMS APPEARING ON THE MEETING AGENDA FOR THE JANUARY 24, 2017 MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEAGUE CITY.**

NO VOTE OR ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON ANY ITEM UNDER CONSIDERATION

5. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:56 p.m. Mayor Hallisey said, there being no further business this meeting is adjourned.

**PAT HALLISEY
MAYOR**

**DIANA M. STAPP
CITY SECRETARY**

(SEAL)

MINUTES APPROVED: February 14, 2017