

Bond Advisory Committee

November 19th, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Upstairs Conference Room – Civic Center

The Bond Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, November 19th, 2014 at 2:00 pm in the Upstairs Conference Room, Civic Center, 1100 North 6th Street, Abilene, Texas. Stormy Higgins, Chairman of the Committee was present and presiding with the following members: Jack Wilson, Sylvia Leal, John Hill, Shannel Anderson, Sam Vinson, Mike Dunnahoo, Brent Casey, Dr. Allison Garret, Rev. Lankford and Michael Hernandez. Committee members absent were Carissa Platt, Terry Johnson and Lt Col. Mike Harner. Various members of the City Staff were also present

Stormy Higgins called the meeting to order.

Chairman Higgins stated that the committee has been given the minutes from the November 5th meeting and there being no additions, corrections or deletions to the minutes as presented, Rev. Izlar Lankford made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Jack Wilson made the second motion carried.

Chairman Higgins opened the public hearing and the committee heard from the following citizens:

- Keith Garner – for the Zoo projects
- Judy Godfrey – for the Lake Kirby Project
- Morris Stevens – had concerns regarding the fence project around Lake Kirby
- Candy Reagan – spoke for a Soccer Complex
- Dan Cummings – for the Baseball Stadium
- Gary Clevenger – land owner on Cedar Creek - against the project for Cedar Creek

Chairman Higgins closed the public hearing.

James Childers Director of Community Service briefed the committee on two revised projects.

Scaled Back Recreation Center

- Development and Construction of a City-Wide Serving Recreation Center
- Cost - \$9,000,000.00
- Scaled back version of the original project proposed earlier

Why Revisit the Project?

- Since the September 3rd presentation, Community Services staff has continued to research this project and engage potential partners in the community
- This has led to 3 principal reasons why we're presenting a revised concept:
 1. This is still one of the critical projects identified by our newly adopted Parks Master Plan and addresses our Parks and Recreation Systems most pressing need

2. Staff has had the opportunity to further vet the project and home in on a lower project cost that can still provide a great product to the public
3. Potential Public/Private partnership opportunities have presented themselves since September that could further drive down construction cost/maximize tax payer funds

1. Still Our Most Pressing Need

- Our Current Recreation Facilities are on average 40+ years old and are in a deteriorating state
- Not addressing our aging facility infrastructure will eventually lead to service disruption due to closing facilities
 - Similar to the decision made in August of 2014 to close Chavez Recreation Center
- Video Tour of our current facilities

2. Better Handle on Cost

- We've been able to perform more research and engage more industry insiders since our September presentation
- We have confidence that we can build a facility that can meet the needs of the community for \$9,000,000
- Facility can be designed to allow for an indoor aquatic expansion in the future

3. Potential Partnership Opportunities

- Staff began dialog with a private entity about potential project partnership opportunities since the September presentation
- Two separate operations with shared space
 - Joint construction could potentially lower construction costs
 - Could allow for maximizing both bond and private funds

Revised Zoo Enhancements

- Funding of the rest of Phase II and Phase III with the exception of the Madagascar Exhibit – Cost \$1,023,096
- Funding of the rest of Phase II and Phase III – Cost \$2,077,296

Gift to Match Bonds Funds

- The Committee currently has the Zoo Maintenance Facility (\$447,104) and Animal Hospital (\$725,600) in serious consideration in a potential bond election
- A benefactor has approached the Zoo offering to make a donation to the Grover Nelson Foundation to privately fund the animal hospital and maintenance facility
 - The Grover Nelson Foundation is an independent 501c3 non-profit that generates and holds funds in support of the Abilene Zoo

- The gift is contingent on a bond funding additional zoo projects that match it 2 to 1 or 1 to 1 at a minimum

2 to 1 Option

- The funding of the rest of Phase II and all of the Phase III would constitute to a 2 to 1 match of the gift
 - Anteater exhibit \$278,676
 - Entry Exhibit \$298,620
 - Madagascar Exhibit \$1,054,200
 - Upgrades to the Fish Pier \$105,000
 - Jaguar Facility \$134,400
 - Bird Rehab Facility \$206,400
 - Total \$2,077,296

1 to 1 Option

- The funding of the rest of Phase II and Phase III minus Madagascar would constitute a 1 to 1 match of the gift
 - Anteater exhibit \$278,676
 - Entry Exhibit \$298,620
 - Upgrades to the Fish Pier \$105,000
 - Jaguar Facility \$134,400
 - Bird Rehab Facility \$206,400
 - Total \$1,023,096

Benefits of Funding Additional Phases

- Though the animal hospital and maintenance facility are much needed projects for the zoo, they have the disadvantage of being projects that the public cannot access and derive direct enjoyment
- The gift frees up capacity to fund projects that zoo patrons can experience firsthand during their visits
 - The exhibits in Phase II will provide opportunities to quickly show progress on bond projects to the public

The bond committee had the following discussion: 1) the committee began with the following items for discussion - top 25 street projects; 4 Civic Center projects; 7 Public Safety projects; 2 Zoo Projects; 4 Parks Projects and 2 Airport Projects; 2) Cedar Creek Water Way (majority wanted the Water Way kept in the project list; 3) Add to the list the revised recreation center @ \$9,000,000; 4) animal shelter projects added; 5) Civic Center items stayed in - items 82-85; 6) public safety items stayed in 92-98; 7) Zoo items stayed in with the match being available; and 8) Airport – item 129 stayed on the list.

Chairman Higgins announced that the next meeting will be on December 3rd and the committee will continue with the discussion of the proposed projects.

Chairman Higgins adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Danette Dunlap, TRMC
City Secretary

Stormy Higgins
Chairman