

Special City Council Meeting August 24, 2020 (Monday, August 24, 2020)

Generated by Jennifer R Sorrell on Tuesday, August 25, 2020

Council Members present

Councilmember Jeff Doherty, Councilmember Lee Fronabarger, Councilmember Tom Grant, Councilmember Carolin Harvey, Councilmember Adam Loos, Councilmember Jessica Bradshaw, and John M Henry

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM

1. Preliminaries to the City Council Meeting

Procedural: 1.1 Roll Call

Procedural: 1.2 Citizens' Comments and Questions

Procedural: 1.3 Council Comments, General Announcements, and Proclamations

Councilmember Loos asked why the Council meeting was not being hosted by Zoom for this meeting, noting that at the last meeting there was a concurrence to consider other options. Mayor Henry remarked on the communication received from the City Manager about Staff's investigation of utilizing Zoom. Councilmembers weighed in on their preference for utilizing GoToWebinar for the time being and still looking for additional options to enhance citizen participation.

2. General Business of the City Council

Discussion: 2.1 City Council Discussion of Maintenance and Operation of Turley Park and Tatum Heights Park Beginning August 31, 2020

Council received an email proposal from the Park District to trade a parcel near ET Simonds for Turley Park.

1. Discussion of any issues related to the potential lease of city property for Kid's Korner.

It was noted that the Kid's Korner/former post office building lease was included in the initial Turley Park lease. At the last meeting, Council had suggested a monthly fee of \$500.00 for the lease to run through either the fiscal year, mid-June, or until the end of June 2021. The ending date can be discussed by the two bodies at the joint meeting on August 31.

2. Establishment of a City of Carbondale Parks and Recreation Foundation to assist with fundraising.

There was a concurrence by the City Council to pursue the establishment of a foundation to raise funds for the improvement and maintenance of the parks. Councilmembers inquired as to which parks would benefit from this foundation, as well as which organizations. Additional questions and comments pertained to the composition of the foundation

appointees. It was suggested that while the City may have initial involvement in establishment of the organization, that it eventually be self-sustaining and operated without City Staff involvement. Council expressed concern about it being clear to donors how their funds would be used, which parks would be receiving those benefits, and making it clear in the bylaws of the foundation. There was an inquiry about donations or bequests left for City improvements being tax deductible.

3. Staff will provide an update on the \$1.245 million Fast Track grant for improvements at Evergreen Park.

City Manager Williams acknowledged the efforts of Public Works Director Henry and Maintenance and Environmental Services Manager Robert Hardin in processing the lengthy grant application within approximately one week. The funds will be used for accessibility improvements including rebuilding the roads and parking lots at Evergreen Park, demolishing and rebuilding the two restrooms, and placement of some sidewalks.

Council asked if funds could be used for other improvements should the bids come in under budget and offered to donate trees. Council then discussed whether the City should pursue discontinuing the lease and assuming the maintenance of Evergreen Park. City Attorney Snyder indicated that the City would have to provide a year notice beginning in October and that a legal battle might follow. It was suggested that the City should ask the Park District about their interest in maintaining the lease with Evergreen Park before taking any action. The Council indicated their general interest in pursuing the maintenance of Evergreen Park

4. Programming ideas that Council may have for Turley and Tatum Heights parks.

Councilmembers suggested basketball contests at Tatum Heights with the new basketball courts; Sunset Concerts, other music-oriented events, and puppet festivals at Turley Park; encouraging the public to arrange for their own events at the parks. There was a question if the hiring of someone for programming was consistent with the idea of the referendum question which centered on exploring merging. Council discussed the referendum results while simultaneously taking on a parks department.

5. Vision for parks organization within city government.

Council discussed whether Parks should be a department or division in the organizational structure; it was noted that the head of either the department or division should be answerable directly to the City Manager. The transitional ad hoc division comprised of employees from several departments was laid out by the City Manager and discussed by the City Council. The properties which would fall under this division or department was discussed. Whether or not to include a person with programming experience was discussed. Looking at the operations of other cities which operate parks was recommended.

6. Status of leases at Superblock (expires 11/19/2022) and Evergreen Park (expires 2038).

Council again suggested asking the Park District if they are interested in continuing their lease, this time for the Superblock. Discussion about the possibility of revenues from the rental or programming at the parks was raised. City Attorney Snyder noted that lease termination would require the City to prove a breach of terms in order to end it. Council asked if there was a means for the Park District to automatically renew the lease; City Manager Williams stated that 60 days prior to the end of the lease, a letter of nonrenewal could be sent. It was suggested that the sales agreement to District 95 be reviewed. It was recommended that the discussion with the Park District's interest be done publicly. Waiting until the lease expires was also suggested.

There was a brief aside about the planning and running of the joint meeting on August 31.

7. How will parks maintenance and operation be funded?

Recommendations for funding included reallocating part of the package liquor tax and increasing the cannabis tax to 3%. Concern about the local tax funding if the City should lose population and home rule authority was raised; Council inquired about the referendum which would go before the public if the population falls below 25,000 and commented on how the electorate would respond. The public's response to the locally imposed taxes was also discussed.

Council provided direction on the itemized maintenance and costs already identified by Staff at Tatum Heights and Turley parks. Additional input included the utilization of volunteer work from SIU and the public. Council provided additional suggestions to consider with the signage mockups. It was recommended that the Park District be asked if they have any information in their records about requirements for utilizing shake shingles, since the gazebo may have been donated for the public's use. The change in maintenance for the butterfly garden was discussed; the City's arborist has located a likely organization to assist. Council asked that the progress in improvements be documented by photos or video.

Jane Adams recommended inclusion of Green Earth parks for support by the proposed Foundation.

3. Adjournment of the City Council Meeting

Procedural: 3.1 **Adjourn meeting**

There being no further business to come before the public body, the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Jennifer R. Sorrell, City Clerk

Date