

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2007  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Chairman John Pratt and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Roll Call:**

Chairman John Pratt, and Members Gwen Hulbert, Phillis Chirico, and Earl Wolf. Absent: Larry Wittrup, and Ryan Sweeder.

Motion by **Wolf**, second by **Hulbert**, to excuse Sweeder and Wittrup. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Also Present:

Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson, and Bill Schneider of Wild Types.

**4. Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by **Wolf**, second by **Hulbert**, to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**5. Audience Participation:**

Chairman Pratt called for public comment at this time and there was none.

**6. Action Items**

**6a. Island and Riverbank Vegetation Removal:**

Bill Schneider of Wild Types introduced himself and outlined his proposal. He commented that they would be glad to do the work he submitted a bid for, but has concerns regarding, the lack of an ultimate goal for the project. He knows they have been working on this issue, because he has supplied many of the plants put in there, but he is not sure that there has been some modification to the proposal. He will not be a consultant on the project. He asked the Commission if there is a complete plan in place for the project and if they are comfortable with the plan.

Commissioner Wolf explained that Capital Consultants has been working with the Commission on a Park Plan with the hopes that the island and riverbank being a continuation of McCormick Park. The Commission had the City engineer draw up the plans as the first steps to get results. The first phases have been agreed upon, but the end results, many people thought would be too difficult to achieve. He explained the concept for removing the current plants. The idea is to get the project going and decide what the end result will be later.

Chairman Pratt asked what Mr. Schneider's position is on using volunteers.

Commissioner Hulbert commented that the Commission was originally only going to do the island, but the riverbank is now being included in the work.

Commissioner Wolf explained what was previously done on behalf of the DDA and how the Parks Commission became involved.

Commissioner Hulbert commented that a majority of the public at their hearing wants a manicured lawn and did not want wild species planted. It was explained that the rocks that were put at the riverbank that were too small, and plants with deep roots are helping to keep them in place.

Bill Schneider commented that the way the contract is written he is to only do what the Commission tells him to do. He asked for clarification of his role. He wants to see, whether it is done in phases or not, what the end goal is. Maintenance is an important issue, and the Commission needs to have a clear idea of what is involved financially to complete the project and maintain it. He added that with the issue with fire, when a native landscape is established, it would give the advantage to native plants, and suppress the non-native plants. A fire in this case would just remove the organic matter on this site, but may not suppress it. They would need to selectively spray an herbicide after the fire to really remove the non-natives. He does not know if he would be able to save the plants that were previously planted.

Commissioner Hulbert commented that the Commission's intention was not to save the plantings.

Commissioner Chirico asked if the intention is to keep the quality trees and shrubs.

Bill Schneider commented that the trees are serving a purpose of keeping the soil and rocks in place, and could be preserved by creating a fire break if they are in one area.

Commissioner Hulbert asked if he would identify the trees, because cottonwoods are not wanted.

Bill Schneider commented that he is not a consultant, but believes cottonwoods are perfectly appropriate tree in this context.

Commissioner Wolf recapped what was discussed about the island and riverbank during the public hearing.

Chairman Pratt commented that everyone was in favor of doing something with the island. He explained the history, and the look of the island.

Commissioner Chirico commented that the public wants something that is maintained and cut.

Commissioner Wolf commented that cutting the island regularly is not an option.

Bill Schneider commented that if that is the case, the work that is proposed may not be necessary. The Commission could remove some of the vegetation, and save some of the trees. He reiterated that he needs to know what the end goal is. He commented that woody removal can be done at any time and other plant removal varies on the species.

Commissioner Wolf commented that the engineer from Capital Consultants designed the project with an end result of a prairie look. He asked what kind of low maintenance grassy look could be achieved on the island.

Bill Schneider answered that it is important to have the community perception that the island is being cared for. When nothing is happening, people will feel it is being neglected. Prairie grasses may not be a good fit there because they are long.

Commissioner Hulbert commented that she feels if there were wild flowers on the island that would be acceptable.

Commissioner Chirico commented that she believes the Commission is lacking the end vision of what needs to be done.

Commissioner Wolf believes that the plans are good, but may not be manageable because of problems with flooding.

Bill Schneider commented that there has been money spent on consulting fees already, but they need to have enough money to maintain it. He believes a prairie look can be achieved. He commented that it may take three years to get it going. The first year it will come up and look terrible and should be mowed three to four times, the second year mow it two to three times, and the third year only once. It cannot be burned until the third or fourth year. The community should be aware of what the plan is.

Chairman Pratt agreed that the community would accept the concept if they saw work being done. He is unsure how much the Council is willing to fund as far as the initial costs and long-term maintenance.

Commissioner Wolf believes the Council approved the money for the initial work.

Commissioner Hulbert asked if Mr. Schneider could start on the work without a final result.

Mr. Schneider responded that he could start the work, but would not act as consultant for the project. He was compelled to bid on the project because it is within his community and he wants to see the City succeed. He feels that the plan should be flushed out better, so the end result is successful. He suggested that the plan be flushed out more with the consultants for a more refined plan.

Commissioner Chirico reiterated that the majority of the people want a manicured lawn.

Commissioner Wolf commented that a manicured lawn is not attainable.

Mr. Schneider will e-mail the Chairman with his thoughts on the plan. He does not want to be involved in the project if the Commission is not going to be happy with the end result. The entire Commission needs to buy into the plan and support it.

Chairman Pratt asked what he thought about having volunteers helping with the project.

He responded that the job of removal of the invasive species is very small, but they could use help in stacking things.

Bill Schneider received a large copy of the plan.

Commissioner Chirico commented that the Commission needs a defined vision for the island and riverbank.

**8. Audience Participation:**

Chairman Pratt called for public comment at this time and there was none.

**9. Adjournment:**

**Meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.**

**\*THE PRECEDING MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF A PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING AND DO NOT REPRESENT A VERBATIM RECORD.**

Respectfully Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Holly M. Thompson, Deputy Clerk

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_