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Minutes of Wimberley Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting  
March 11, 2001

1. The Parks and Recreation Committee of the Wimberley City Council met at City Hall on March 11, 2001 at 5:00 p.m. Council member Martha Knies and committee members Kris Cusack, Kathleen Cline, Fred Franz, Dell Hood, Jane Morton and Thad Nance were present. Also present were Mayor Linda Hewlett and Ken Gruner, Chair of the Lions Club Park Committee.

2. Minutes of the February 21, 2001 meeting were approved as submitted.

3. Martha introduced Ken Gruner, who described the efforts of the Lions Club of Wimberley to acquire land for a Lions Park that would be open to the public. In April 2000 the Lions board of directors decided to acquire land for a park and named Ken as chair of the committee. The group developed a Vision statement which describes the proposed park as "a quiet place with the natural beauty of the Hill Country as its centerpiece." A prospective site was identified - a seven-acre tract on the south side of Cypress Creek between the Relax Shack and the Wimberley cemetery, along the Old Kyle Road, offered for sale by Eddie Gumbert. The site is available as a single piece or in three separate parcels; the price for all seven acres is \$600,000. The Lions began setting money aside and planning on how to raise the full amount, but because this amount is higher than the Lions had planned on, they began looking for grants. Because the Lions Club is neither a local government entity nor has IRS status as a 501.c.3 tax-exempt group, it is not eligible for many grants nor able to receive tax-deductible funds. Ken talked with several possible grantors, most of which were encouraging provided the Lions get their tax-exempt status. Now that there is a city government in place, the Lions are interested in working with the city council on acquiring this site as a public park.

Mayor Hewlett then described the three separate tracts and the possibilities each has for park land, with maps. Two of the tracts were recently appraised by an independent appraiser at \$342,000, and the asking price for the third tract alone is \$105,000. She strongly favors the city, working with the Lions Club, acquiring all seven acres, with the tract where the Relax Shack has been becoming the park entrance. She thinks that if we do not take it all now, someone will build on what we do not buy and spoil the overall beauty of the site and its appeal as Wimberley's waterfront park. She argues that future generations of Wimberley citizens will praise our foresight if we try to get all of the site now, and not spare us if we do not make the effort. She thinks the city should offer less than \$600,000, based on the appraisal the Lions paid for, and that we will not have major problems in getting financing. The Mayor asked for opinions and ideas from the committee.

After brief discussion, committee members agreed that the city should commit itself to acquiring all three tracts and creating Wimberley's central city park, which would be a focal point for both visitors and residents. Dell Hood proposed a motion that the Parks and Recreation Committee formally supports the City Council in approaching the sellers to negotiate for the land and creating a public park on it; the motion was seconded by Jane Morton and approved unanimously by the committee. There was discussion of how the park should be named if it is acquired. It was agreed that the city should be open to offering naming rights for parts of the park to donors of significantly large amounts toward the purchase price, but that any names used for the park should have local roots, significance and recognition.

4. The committee thanked Mayor Hewlett and Ken Gruner for their presentations.

5. Martha expressed sadness at the fact that this proposal has come up at the same time as the request by the Emily Ann Theater for the committee's support in buying the 6.7 acre tract discussed at our last meeting. She would like to be able to find some way to support the Theater as well as the Lions Club. She noted that both efforts will be applying to the same granting organizations to finance land purchases, and that only one of the two will be supported. It is possible that whichever is not supported at first would still have a chance at subsequent rounds of funding. The committee agreed that both projects are worthwhile but seemed to think that a city park along Cypress Creek would be more important to the future of Wimberley and should have a higher priority. Kris said our position should be to support and encourage the Theater in its efforts and to provide a statement it can use in grant applications making clear the city's support, and to make it our next park project.

6. Copies of the Parks and Recreation master plan from Dripping Springs were passed out to all committee members. Dell asked that everyone read through it and bring suggestions for how we can rework it to our needs at our next meeting. He submitted for discussion a draft Goals and Objectives statement and a short history of Wimberley, which should be part of a master plan. Committee members suggested corrections and accepted the revised versions.

7. Jane Morton has taken over the task of collecting all information on the inventory of park and recreation resources and putting this into a database. She asked how detailed the information needs to be; the committee agreed that we should include now as much as we can reasonably get so we can complete the inventory soon. However, as the committee responsible for parks and recreation for the city, we should try to get as much information (location, size, ownership, availability to public, etc.) about each facility as we can, so that our data base is as complete and accurate as possible.

8. The next meeting of the committee was set for 5:00 p.m. Sunday, April 1. The committee adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Recorded by Dell Hood