

Village of Wimberley

PUBLIC FORUM – PROPOSED PARK

City Hall, 14500 RR 12, Suite 22
Thursday, May 24, 2001 – 7:00 PM

1. **Call to Order** Council Member Tony McGee called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. **Present:** Council Member Martha Knies
 Council Member Matt Manis
 Council Member Tony McGee
 Mayor Linda Hewlett (late arrival)

Opening Remarks

In the absence of Mayor Hewlett, Tony McGee explained how the parkland was acquired. The funding will be from private sources, and the City is in the process of applying for a grant from Texas Parks & Wildlife, which will match other funds and will be used for the development of the park. The State has looked at the land, and we were made to feel that the State was very much in favor of our plans. The County agent that looked at the land said that the property was the "Jewel of Hays County."

We are presently negotiating with the property owners for acquisition of the land. The acquisition is dependent on the City's obtaining a grant. The cost for the land is approximately \$447,000. We are anticipating a partnership with the Lions Club, Hays County, and two foundations. Mark Landy, a registered arborist, made a preliminary review of the property and made a preliminary proposal bid. He felt we should be flexible on definitive land use—conservation of habitat and integrity of the flood plan. We should allow free and safe access. People will be directed in areas, thus avoiding home sites. Some debris will remain for protection of the fundi and preservation. We also need to be ready to redefine our proposal.

The property will be developed with park benches and picnic table. We will discourage glass. Every time we visit the site we find something new. Park Committee found a cave in the cliff. The cliff protects the view from the Village Square. There is an old stacked rock wall, built by Dorothy Kebow's grandfather.

The entrance to the park will be where the Relax Shack was located (immediately west of The Lumberyard). The park will be kept as natural as possible. Maps, brochures will be available for visitors. There will be 2-4 self-composting toilets. Each unit flushes 43,000 flushes a year. There may be an area for children to play; and there will be a walk through a winding pristine park area—wetland. We get points for Wetland. The park will be ADA accessible.

Report from Park & Recreation Committee

Committee Members: Martha Knies, Chris Kusack, Kathleen Cline, and Dell Hood.

Martha Knies addressed the need for a Master Park Plan. She pointed out that there are quite a number of rare species, i.e. green dragon. The Committee is very aware of the flora, and it is their aim to protect fragile parts. Here will be a filter for the runoff, and everything will be handled in an environmentally sensitive manner. This will provide access to the creek for locals and visitors.

At the first meeting held last December there was voice from the community for the need for hiking and bike trails, etc. There has been a lot of brainstorming, trying to find a "dream" place. The 7+ acres give us a rare opportunity to preserve this green space recreational and educational area. There is much to be done, but the rewards are well worth the effort.

Linda Hewlett pointed out that some of the debris would be retained as it protects the trees and downstream areas. People across the creek have expressed their concerns; however the paths will be directed away from those homes. We intend to be good neighbors.

Tony McGee said that having a park in the community would require security and that he had discussed this with Sheriff Montague, who has agreed to provide periodic patrol of the area. A definite time for closing will be established and that closing time will be enforced. Hays County will provide additional patrolling on a cost basis. Texas Municipal League's liability insurance will cover the park at no additional cost. He also emphasized that it will be the responsibility to keep the areas clean and to maintain the park. There will be no alcohol and no swimming hole. Texas Parks & Wildlife has done a great deal of research on the area. They believe this area to be pristine with its access to water and are encouraging this as Wimberley's first park.

Joe Holland spoke up saying that he was here to see if we want a park. "You guys have made up your mind." He pointed out that there would be a parking problem and he felt other sites would be better. He also felt that there were environmental problems and that citizens should be given alternative locations.

Linda Hewlett advised that no other property is for sale that would be suitable for a park.

Tony McGee pointed out that there is private parking available and that he believed that the City Council would soon be announcing additional parking areas that would take care of the Square parking.

Ashley Gibson lives across the creek from the proposed creek. She stated that no one approached them. Now she hears soothing sounds but if the park is put in there will be trash, lawsuits, security problems, etc. Sheriff's security will not be enough. People need access to the water? They already jump in at her property. She said that she would have no protection without a fence. There are liability problems. Three picnic benches are asking for problems as they would be near the falls. There would be no stopping the problems. She also pointed out that the property is in the flood plain; and that she felt very little thought was put into the plan. Assaults were possible and this would cost us [adjoining landowners] our security. She felt that a great picture had been painted to "sell the park."

Clint Frankmann said this was a springboard for the bridge. Get the bypass before the bridge is repaired.

Linda Hewlett said that wasn't so, that TxDOT would repair the bridge, but there would be no temporary bridge.

Dorothy Kerbow expressed her concern that a bridge would end up in front of her place.

Linda Hewlett said that this was not true.

Al Sander expressed his opinion that the park was for the greater good of Wimberley. He said that the Roads Advisory Board is working hard on the long-range planning for traffic in Wimberley to get it off 12. They are looking at every option, not just one option.

Frank Austin stated that it was the intent of the studies [on traffic] to make suggestions for today, which are compounded in the future. Any suggestion is written down. Committee gets a lot of suggestions and that they would be derelict not to put down every possible traffic solution. Many of the suggestions may not take place for as long as 20 years.

Tony McGee said that several council had met with TxDOT and that they had funded a study for a route only—no bypass within the interior of the city. Cost of putting in a bridge is impossible! "I will guarantee it will never happen."

Dorothy Kerbow said that she didn't want anything across the creek. Concerning the Bond issue, the "road will kill us" crossing Cypress Creek. Noted that her friends go to Landa Park and locals hardly ever go to the park. She said that Canyon Lake was closing parks. We should visit Landa Park on Sunday or Monday to see how much there is to clean up.

Sally Caldwell said that a park is the greatest legacy we can leave. These 7+ acres of green space is desperately needed.

James Newsom (216 Mill Lane). How can we keep people from trespassing? Lock up the property? Retaining walls, picnic areas. We can't keep people out of the creek and our yards. He asks for assurance.

Linda Hewlett This land is for sale. If we don't purchase it, it is open for many other uses.

Tony McGee emphasized that part of this is flatland and it could be developed with apartments or condos. Regardless, the attached land is extremely valuable. The City is obligated to provide security, and that will be done to help protect those around the park.

James Newsom asked what would be installed beside tables.

Linda Hewlett said benches . . .

Tony McGee stated that the City had \$5,000,000 in liability insurance.

Kay Henderson wanted to know why the low water bridge was closed. She stated that at the Chamber they deal with visitors whether they like it or not. She stated that Wimberley had very little to offer and that a park for visitors would provide a place to go. Maybe there would be less trespassing if they had a place to go.

Matt Manis stated that there was a 4-minute spot on TV about Wimberley.

Martha Knies presented a recent Hays County survey of the needs in the area. The greatest response was for a need for river or creek access. (See attached report) Martha further pointed out that the Parks & Recreation Committee had reviewed all available land, and there simply was

nothing else available for a park. A committee of volunteers would maintain the park and that the park would be something we all could be proud of.

Dell Hood said that there were no other parks. We had no alternatives and that the problems of trash and security could be overcome. We need to be better than the 3rd world countries. Trash is already here. We need recreational areas for our families. This is an opportunity that has come to us.

Max Stevenson said that 1995-96 he chaired a committee on Community Center and Parks. He investigated clear up to Marble Falls. Wimberley is behind times. Marble Falls made a park in the floodplain. We had people with the same conclusion—we couldn't do it—we had no money. When we were looking at property, the No. 1 piece of property we saw was in Wimberley. Other land here is the 10 acres by the transfer station. We could develop a golf course. Seven acres is a good start—70 would be better—but we need to do something. Wimberley needs a community center and a park. What can we do to make this work?

Linda Hewlett. We have two priorities—the Community Center and the Park, with grants from Texas Parks & Wildlife.

Jan Allison (volunteer at the visitor center). People constantly ask if there is a park. We have to apologize. We depend on tourists for our survival, but we have nothing to offer visitors. Property owners have real concern, but volunteers can work together to solve the problems.

David Baker (Ch. P & Open Space). People visiting have no access. We have an opportunity and we need to take advantage of our great need. How can this be managed? Access without destroying area. Management with volunteers. Sheriff can be called if there are problems. A master plan is being prepared. There are 3.5 million in grants available for investment and additional grants in the future. David urged everyone to vote on Prop 2.

Deanne Story. The problems are real but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. We need to have faith. All the walks in England are through private property. This flood plain property is a natural area, perfect for education and preservation. It would be the heart and soul of Wimberley.

Gerin Hood. We need access. Those of us who have water need to share. Some of us aren't rich and can't afford waterfront property, but we need to have a piece of waterfront to look at. Both the citizens and the visitors need a place to go.

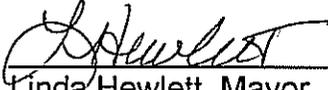
Mac McClure. We need to look at both sides. He encouraged open forum letters to the editor [Wimberley View].

Linda Hewlett. You can send letters to the Chamber web site.

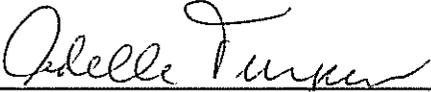
Jean Robinson (not a resident) works for grant writing firm. Property caught her sight. We need to keep Wimberley new and fresh. There is no place to look and think. TX Parks & Wildlife has grants available July 31-Jan 31 and will match funds 50-50 to develop the park. If nothing else we should acquire and hold the land. That will make it secure. You will need restroom facilities. There are, of course, other money sources available, but the land acquisition is most urgent. Wimberley needs green space.

Linda Hewlett. Waiver of retroactivity is required and then approval. Caveat for waiver permission to purchase and then request funding. "It is heartening to see everyone out. The people run the Village. We now have 100+ volunteers. Everything starts in a citizen committee. That's the expertise here."

Dismissed into executive meeting at 9:10 p.m.



Linda Hewlett, Mayor



Adelle Turpen, City Secretary

