

**MINUTES: SPECIAL CALLED JOINT MEETING
City Council, 4B Board, & Parks Board
August 24, 2009**

**PRESENT: Mayor Joe Higgs, Councilman Thomas Muir, Councilman Russell
Martin, Councilman Glenn Ervin, Councilman Andy Garza, Councilman
Robert Patton**

PRESENT

**4B BOARD: President John Payne, Beverly Howard, Jeff Springer, Barbara Martin, Will
Dutton, Beverly Branch, Scott Stephens**

PARKS

BOARD: Robert Koger, Carrie Bilyeu, Cora Harner, Allen Chick

OTHERS

**PRESENT: Mike Brice City Manager, Rose Chavez City Secretary/Asst. City Manager, Dennis
Sims with Dunkin Sims Stoffels**

1. Call Meeting to Order.

Mayor Higgs called the City Council meeting to order.

President Payne, 4B Board, called meeting to order.

Cora Harner, Chairperson of the Parks Board, called meeting to order.

2. Discussion and Input on the Design and Layout of the New Sports Complex.

**The City Manager addressed all the boards and introduced Mr. Dennis Sims with
Dunkin Sims Stoffels. He indicated that this meeting was to allow all the members input
on the design and layout of the new sports complex.**

**Dennis Sims, representing Dunkin Sims Stoffels, Inc. and as one of the owners of the
firm, gave a brief introduction. Their firm is unique, and they are recognized as
landscape architects. In the last 27 years they have worked strictly for municipalities in
Texas, and they strictly do park planning. The majority of their work is in the Dallas-
Fort Worth Metroplex, but they have also worked throughout the State. They have done
numerous athletic complexes, and they understand the mechanics of how those work.
He understands that they will have approximately 40 acres to work with. He is there to
get their input and answer any questions. It is his understanding that this park is
primarily soccer and baseball and/or soccer. After he gets their input he will go back to
his office and produce schematic plans for staff to review. Then they will come back
with some final recommendations.**

John Payne asked if Mr. Sims had a vision on the park.

Mr. Sims indicated he does not have a vision. He needs their input on what they would like to see in this sports complex. He did comment that the park would be irrigated, designed to where it is long-lasting, and ADA-compliant. He does not have a grand scheme on what to plan until after he hears their input.

Barbara Martin addressed concerns with the walking paths for people to be able to walk to the fields. She asked if the fields would be used for soccer tournaments and addressed issues concerning lighting the fields. She also asked if the park should be used as a multi-use complex or is it better to use it just for a single-use complex.

A discussion continued concerning the number of baseball fields that are currently in use and the possibility of having a younger age group playing baseball at Railroad Park.

Bob Koger indicated there is not a baseball field or a softball field that meets all the baseball requirements. They have to share the ball fields. Under this new complex, if some of the fields can be designed for baseball and other fields designed for softball, then they can hold tournaments.

The following issues were addressed:

- **A discussion continued concerning the pros and cons of using the fields for baseball or softball.**
- **The acreage consisting of 40 acres and how much can feasibly be done, taking into consideration the baseball, soccer, and softball fields, and the parking**
- **Parking is based on 50 spaces per field and goes higher for T-Ball complexes that require 60-70 spaces.**
- **Railroad Park ball fields have to be converted whether they stay as baseball or softball.**

Mr. Sims indicated when they try to design a complex they need to try to take the minimum amount of parking to make the complex work. One of the most expensive components in this complex is the parking. If they do not have the monies for the lights in the first phase, then they can conduit the area where the poles are to be placed. Conduit is deeper than the irrigation line. On the issue concerning the walking paths, he advised that everything on the site will have picnic ADA accessibility. Most of the time, this is concrete or a hard surface paths. The baseball fields are unique, and it is best from a maintenance standpoint not to do both soccer and baseball. On the same fields baseball outfielders do not tear up the turf as much as soccer and football. This affects the long term maintenance of the complex. He has seen some cities do adult softball; however, he does not recommend this. The field is a 300-ft radius and the entire field is red clay. If they do this type field and don't have a pitching mound, they can adjust the base lines. It is still not a baseball field, it is a softball field. Baseball fields are different because the only age group that they control is 5, 6, 7 and 8 year olds.

A lot of times the distances are not the same. The problem is you are ruining the pitching mound. The cost to light little baseball fields are less costly than lighting fields for Junior High to High School age groups. Mr. Sims indicated that designing Little League baseball fields to accommodate each age group with their fixed dimensions, plus the soccer fields, then adding the parking and concessions will utilize those 40 acres rapidly. The purpose of the meeting is to take the 40 acres and determine what everyone wants to see in the park. The discussion continued concerning the dimensions of a regulated field.

The discussion continued concerning the property and how many acres are needed to put in soccer fields. Mr. Sims indicated that a soccer field takes at least two acres.

Beverly Branch inquired about the original plan for the park and the number of soccer fields and baseball fields that would be placed at the park.

The City Manager indicated that they originally had 3 or 4 baseball fields and 6 to 8 soccer fields. He recommended that they try to not think about a number but allow the architects to make the best use of the land.

Barbara Martin expressed a concern that when this was presented it was about soccer, not softball or baseball. She indicated that as soon as these fields are built, soccer will start to multiply since it is in town. She asked if the master plan was to make this multi-use or if two years from now they need to be planning for a baseball complex somewhere else. She continued to express her concerns concerning a multi-use complex.

The City Manager indicated that soccer may have been the driving point, but no one ever said we did not need baseball fields.

Mr. Koger indicated in their Parks Board meetings that when they did their master plan, they indicated they needed dedicated baseball and soccer fields. This is what they discussed and planned from the beginning.

John Payne, President of the 4B Board, said they needed to get back to where they need to be, whether they need to have baseball and/or soccer fields. His other concern is that restroom facilities are adequately built and are centrally located. John Payne expressed a concern that it is upsetting to know that once again they have to redesign Railroad Park. The 4B has spent so much money, not counting all the volunteer work to get it completed. It is frustrating and he wants to make sure this park is done correctly.

Discussion continued concerning the improvements to Railroad Park and the possibility to leave Railroad Park for younger children.

The members discussed the following issues at length:

- The amount of trees left on the property**
- The amount of property that is in the flood-plain**
- The risk of building baseball fields in the flood-plain**
- The soccer fields will be built in the flood-plain**

- The location area for the pavilions
- The complex to be a dual complex
- The revenue source and tournament possibilities for adult softball

Councilman Patton indicated that it was obvious that there have been a lot of opinions that have been made. The City wants to build a complex that is long lasting and will draw people into Sanger. This is the first one that will be developed, and it is important we build it top notch and future sites will be just as good. He wants everyone to focus on what direction we need to take. In his opinion, he thinks we need to get involved with youth soccer activities. We have development structures for football, little league baseball, and softball. We have those building links in process, and we don't have anything for soccer. We need to develop the components of the land to be turned toward soccer fields. If we build one or two smaller fields for softball or baseball he does not have a problem. He wants to have flexibility to move things around, and to have adequate parking. He proposed to consider moving in this direction.

Councilman Muir indicated that there was a broad community use for this area. If we have tournaments then they have the picnic areas to use. He expressed a concern that if they had a master plan to where they make one facility look really good and then meet the other needs that are out there, then they can look at longer term projects instead of cramming everything into one project. He also agrees that it is important that we develop the complex with the intent that we want the appearance to have an impact on people when they come into town. The cost to him is another obvious thing, especially if there is a possibility of having to redo the Railroad Park. If we could put in a soccer field that is cost efficient and have a nice green area as you come into town, then we can take some of the money to upgrade and adjust the other field. He indicated that the tournaments versus the ongoing play, he likes the idea of drawing people; however, he does not think there will be a tournament every weekend. He thinks the idea of tournaments and economic development is great, but the park, in his opinion, is getting done for the kids and the general community that are here. If we can take it and possibly have some tournaments it is fine; however, it will not happen often enough to have a major effect. Unless it could be some sort of a master plan, then he does not know how you can phase this to fit and meet all the objectives that everyone has talked about. If we can be good at one project, then we can expand and plan to make the other facility better.

The discussion continued concerning the 125 parking spaces per acre. The concession stand will need at least half an acre. The location of the restroom facilities was discussed.

Bob Koger emphasized that every single sports group needs its own identity. If the fields are shared, then they don't have this. They need baseball, softball, and soccer fields. Soccer is not as big as it will be, and currently, they are not big enough to have their own league. He would like every sport to have their own area.

Councilman Garza inquired about the 100-plus acres the City bought some time ago.

This land was bought for the new sewer plant with the intent that the rest of the area would be utilized for soccer, baseball fields or whatever. No one has talked about this and he would like for someone to take this into consideration.

City Manager indicated that the problem with this property is there is not any access, and to get access will be extremely expensive. Also, the advisability of building a park next to a sewer plant is a concern. He does not think this sends a good message to the community.

The discussion continued that Gainesville has their park next to their sewer plant.

The City Manager continued to discuss the road that will access the property. The road will not be in the park and it will be at the far north end of the property.

Mr. Sims indicated that all the elements that were discussed will be considered in the planning phase. He will take a look at Railroad Park to determine the feasibility.

Jeff Springer indicated that there seems to be a strong consensus that there are two places to consider in the long-term planning. The long-term is getting baseball, softball, and soccer complexes that will look nice and need to be tournament ready. They have to determine the most economical way to get to the long-range plan.

Mr. Sims indicated he will need at least three weeks to bring back a presentation.

There was a citizen who expressed a concern regarding the road since she lives behind this property. She has heard it will be a four-lane road and wanted to know how close it will be to her property.

The City Manager indicated the road will start as a two-lane road. The road in front of her house will take a turn and go on the school's property and go south from there. It will not come any closer to her house.

The City Manager thanked everyone for their input.

3. Adjournment.

Mayor Higgs adjourned the work session.