

Aurora City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes
Aurora City Hall
City Council Chambers
2 W. Pleasant
Aurora, Missouri
Thursday, January 28, 2021 - 6 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ferguson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor Doyle Ferguson – present
Chairman Pro Tem Jason Lewis – present
Councilwoman Dawn Oplinger – present
Councilman Don McWade – not present
Councilwoman Theresa Pettit – present

Also present for the meeting were Park Board Members Mitch Forrester, Brian Phillips, Logan Gilbert, and Park Board Secretary Courtney Neff.

3. Discussion Of Capital Projects By City Council And The Aurora Park Board

City Manager Jon Holmes presented Council and the Aurora Park Board with a presentation detailing the different aspects of city funds, where they come from, what they can be used for, and the priorities of where those funds should be distributed. Also included in the presentation was the history of the Capital Improvement Tax, a Capital Improvement Tax guide, and the revenue and expenditure history of the tax. City Manager Holmes used the development of the Police and Fire Facility to establish an example and guide of how a large capital improvement project would work.

City Manager Holmes presented ideas from the community on what they would like the next capital improvement project to be, different funding opportunities and partnerships, and the difference between bonds and certificates of participation. One idea the community had suggested was a Recreation Center or Community Center. City Manager built on that idea and gave Council items to consider such as the expense, that the tax will build it but not fund it, and different revenue strategies to consider.

Discussion held between the Park Board, Council and City Manager Holmes on the distribution of funds to the Park Board and how a capital improvement project might effect that funding.

4. Public Comment/Discussion

A citizen desiring to speak on an item may do so at this time. Each citizen is limited to three minutes.

Roy Boyd asked Council and City Manager Holmes if it would be possible to sell land to the YMCA for them to build so we do not have the financial responsibility of a Recreation Center.

Shannon Walker spoke of the work and criteria involved in getting the YMCA to Aurora. It has been tried in the community before and we fell short of their requirements.

Brandy Coulter spoke of facilitating indoor soccer, batting cages and other sport activities for kids so that area kids did not have to travel to play sports. She also stated that if we built a Recreation Center, we need to offer something different to bring in people from other communities.

Heather Boyd spoke of the importance of sports to the kids in our community but also affordability. We need to make it affordable for parents while supporting our children.

Michelle Parbury spoke of adding a Dog Park to the community. Park Board President Mitch Forester addressed this question letting her know that a dog park is already in the works at Baldwin Park.

Marsha Egan also spoke of the affordability of a Recreation Center. The community and its children need a place to go. She made the suggestion of offering free times the community could utilize the center.

At this time, Mayor Ferguson asked each member of the Park Board and City Council to state what projects are currently being worked on and what projects they would like to see the city move forward with.

Mitch Forrester (Park Board) would like to see continued work with the current walking trails built in the park. He went on to state that there are grants to be considered in that process. There was discussion with Councilwoman Pettit and City Manager Holmes about grant options and the grant process. Shannon Walker asked about the drainage on the walking trail at Pate Elementary and if anything could be done about it. City Manager Holmes explained that White Park is in a floodway and that all had been done that could.

Brian Phillips (Park Board) discussed the outdoor equipment going along the walking trail in White Park and the possibility of doing a field for the Monarchs at Baldwin Park. He also discussed the possibility of competition with TR fitness if the city were to move forward with a Recreation Center. Councilwoman Pettit asked how much the baseball and softball fields were used at Baldwin Park. Park Superintendent Justin Janes stated that they are not used regularly. City Manager Holmes commented that Baldwin Park is an underused community asset.

Mayor Ferguson discussed the city's fiscal responsibility and that this might be an opportunity for the city to redo the swimming pool.

Chairman Pro Tem Lewis stated that he would love to see Baldwin Park utilized.

He also believes the city should focus on projects that have grant opportunities and suggested that the city could start on smaller projects to build off of. City Manager Holmes commented that when you start work on city parks you have to make sure that they are ADA compliant and that White Park currently is not.

Councilwoman Oplinger discussed the possibility of a stormwater project, a bike trail along the walking trails and at Baldwin Park, a gate at the cemetery, and tree care at Oak Park. She would also like to see more restaurants in town.

Councilwoman Pettit discussed the Recreation Center and asked if the current city pool had any problems. Park Superintendent Justin Janes stated that the pool currently did not have any problems. Councilwoman Pettit would also like to see streetscape downtown, a larger industrial park, an old plane set up to let people know that Aurora has an airport, a truck route to help prevent road wear and tear on city streets, an electronic billboard, a welcome sign with the city's accolades listed, and improvements to Baldwin Park that would assist in Light the Night. Shannon Walker stated that she would greatly appreciate the help with Light the Night and that an additional power source is needed. Councilwoman Pettit would also like to see a horse trail at Baldwin Park, a splash pad and doing movies at the park.

City Manager Holmes discussed the possibility of a Community Center in a viable downtown building and the different benefits it would provide in the community. Shannon Walker added that having a building like this for larger events would be very beneficial to the community.

Councilwoman Pettit asked about a location for a Farmers Market. City Manager Holmes stated that the intent is for the current pavilion project to house the Farmers Market.

Mitch Forrester (Park Board) took this time to thank the City Council for their help in getting involved members on the Park Board and to thank the city's park department employees for the great job they do.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pro Tem Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m. Councilwoman Oplinger seconded the motion. Motion passed with the following council members voting aye:

AYES: Ferguson, Oplinger, Lewis, Pettit

NAYES: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: McWade

APPROVED:

Doyle Ferguson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Breedlove, City Clerk