



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
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Submitted By: Kelly Schmidt, Parks & Community Services Director and Michelle Fischer, City Administrator

Council Meeting Date: 8.11.2020

Agenda Item Wording: **Presentation on Hays County Parks & Open Space Commission's Recommended Projects submitted by the City of Dripping Springs, the Dripping Springs Skate Park Inc., and TIRZ Board No. 1 & 2.**

Agenda Item Requestor: Mayor Bill Foulds

Summary/Background: In March of 2020 Hays County and members of POSAC called for projects to be considered for inclusion in a potential Hays County Parks & Open Space bond initiative and/or a partnership program. City of Dripping Springs City Administrator Michelle Fischer and Parks and Community Services Director Kelly Schmidt met with Karen Ford on April 16 about the call for projects.

Two projects were identified in the Dripping Springs' Parks and Community Services Department that were stymied due to lack of monetary resources: the Dripping Springs Skateboard Park and the donation of Rathgeber Natural Resource 300 acre park, which is a part of the Headwaters Development Agreement's Parks and Open Space Plan. These two projects met the criteria listed in the Hays County 2012 Master Plan as priorities for Hays County residents in the Dripping Springs area.

On May 13, 2020 Skate Park Initiative representative Dennis Baldwin and Parks and Community Services Director Kelly Schmidt presented both projects to the Hays County Parks and Open Space Commission on a Zoom call during one of the Commission's open meetings.

Two site tours of Rathgeber Natural Resource Park were hosted by Parks & Community Services Director Kelly Schmidt & Dick Rathgeber's grandson, Robert Ellis. On June 15, Studio Balcones Architecture team and Park Commissioners Ballman, Fougerat, & Zarbough braved a Texas summer afternoon to explore the Rathgeber site and were inspired by its potential. Studio Balcones was instrumental in assisting with developing a vision for the park that could tell the story of its potential. Collectively the tour inspired the mantra that Dir. Schmidt submitted along with the POSAC

Project Information Form; **Preserve** (the land), **Protect** (the resource) & **Connect** (the people).

Director Schmidt was contacted by Karen Ford conveying that the POSAC wanted to tour the Rathgeber site. A second site visit was then scheduled to accommodate the request. On June 27, seven POSAC members along with Karen Ford and City of Dripping Springs officials, Mayor Bill Foulds, Mayor Pro-Tem Taline Manassian, Parks Commissioner Paul Fushille, City of Dripping Springs Maintenance Director Craig Rice and Capital Area Boy Scouts Support Services Director, Rick Dennison were given a tour of the 300-acre gem.

The TIRZ Town Center Square & Pavilion Project and the Old Fitzhugh Rd. Multi-Use Trail Project were submitted by the city's TIRZ Board and sponsored by Commissioner Walt Smith. TIRZ Project Manager Keenan Smith and City Administrator Michelle Fischer prepared the applications to POSAC and Mr. Smith presented the projects to the POSAC on June 24th. These two projects met the criteria listed in the Hays County 2012 Master Plan as priorities and were submitted in the Urban Park and Connectivity categories.

On July 27, the Hays County POSAC presented their recommended projects to the Commissioners Court. Rathgeber Natural Resource Park was named as a Tier 1 project and the Skateboard Park, Town Center Square & Pavilion, and Old Fitzhugh Rd. Multi-Use Trail were named as Tier 2 projects.

Staff worked with consultants and volunteer advisors to estimate the costs of the projects and develop timelines. Based on the estimates, the requested Hays County funding amounts were: Rathgeber Natural Resource Park: \$7,500,00; Skate Park: \$550,00; Town Center Square & Pavilion \$4,480,600; and Old Fitzhugh Rd. Multi-Use Trail: \$1,305,000.

The total funds requested for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects submitted to POSAC was \$94,969,525. POSAC recommended a bond initiative in the range of \$75-80 million, with \$60-65 million going to the Tier 1 and 2 projects, and \$15-20 million being set aside for future projects. POSAC has requested to continue to work with the County to evaluate projects and recommend funding levels.

Should the bond initiative pass, staff will prepare grant applications for the projects to Hays County based on the recommendations of the Parks & Recreation Commission and TIRZ Board, and the direction and approval of the City Council.

**Commission
Recommendations:**

The Parks and Recreation Commission supported both the Dripping Springs Skate Park and Rathgeber Natural Resource Park unanimously as an advisory body to Council. The TIRZ Board unanimously supported the Town Center Square & Pavilion and Old Fitzhugh Rd. Multi-Use Trail projects.

**Recommended
Council Actions:**

No action needed at this time.

Attachments:

POSAC Recommended Project List with Map; POSAC Webinar Presentation to Public; Presentations to POSAC, Studio Balcones Rathgeber Natural Resource Vision report, Letters of Support DSISD & Freehold Communities.

Next Steps/Schedule:

Monitor status of bond initiative; continue to work on identifying other funding resources for projects.