

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: September 19, 2023
TO: Park Commission
FROM: Melinda Moritz, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Discussion and Possible Action to Consider Approval of an Ordinance Amending the Leon Valley Code of Ordinances, Chapter 1 General Provisions, Article 1.09 Parks and Recreation, Division 2 Use Regulations, Sec. 1.09.034 - Additional Prohibited Uses and Activities, to Add a Sub-section (h), Prohibiting Smoking in the Huebner-Onion Natural Area Park (HONAP)

SPONSOR(S): Mayor Chris Riley, Park Commission

PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is to consider approval of an Ordinance amending the Leon Valley Code of Ordinances, Chapter 1 General Provisions, Article 1.09 Parks and Recreation, Division 2 Use Regulations, Sec. 1.09.034 - Additional prohibited uses and activities, to add a sub-section (h), which would prohibit smoking in the Huebner-Onion Natural Area Park.

The park is an area with many trees and other vegetation that has been left in its natural state and is frequently overgrown. A fire break is maintained along the perimeter where the park abuts improved properties, but the rest of the area is not watered and the vegetation dies during times of drought, which leaves it vulnerable to fire.

The new subsection would read:

“(h) Smoking or possessing a burning tobacco, weed, or other plant product, or any lighted burning pipe, cigar or cigarette of any kind, or smoking equipment or device, is prohibited in the Huebner-Onion Natural Area Park.”

FISCAL IMPACT

Fires can be extremely costly depending on the resources used to extinguish a fire and whether or not any homes were impacted by a fire.

RECOMMENDATION

At their August 10, 2023 meeting, the Park Commission recommended approval of this amendment.

S.E.E. IMPACT STATEMENT

Social Equity – The HONAP provides a unique natural and undisturbed open space for all visitors and residents of the city. The prohibition of smoking in this park furthers the goal of keeping the park in as natural a state as possible.

Economic Development – The park is a very desirable amenity, which may attract new residents, which may attract businesses to the city, increasing sales and ad valorem taxes.

Environmental Stewardship – Prohibiting smoking in this park will further the prevention of fires that would destroy the ecosystem of this area.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE: _____ DISAPPROVE: _____

APPROVE WITH THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENTS:

ATTEST:

Saundra Passailaigue, TRMC
City Secretary