

Improvements at Hatley Field

From Jeff Marx [REDACTED]
Date Thu 11/13/2025 12:38 PM
To Makayla Rodriguez <mrodriguez@rollingwoodtx.gov>; Alun Thomas <athomas@rollingwoodtx.gov>

Makayla,

Please forward to Council, Parks and RCDC.

Dear Council, Parks & RCDC,

As we prepare to discuss the proposals for Hatley Field at the Parks meeting, I wanted to share my position and recommendations, informed by extensive conversations with community members. My primary stance is that the Parks Commission should seek broader public input before advancing any spending proposals.

To further ensure we capture the full range of community perspectives across all generations, I encourage the Parks Commission to conduct a comprehensive survey on Hatley Field's future development before approving any new spending. This would provide quantitative data to complement the qualitative feedback that has already been gathered.

Key insights from my outreach include:

- Underutilization and Desire for Versatility:** Many residents I've spoken with feel they don't use Hatley Field as often as they'd like and are eager for more multipurpose opportunities. Suggestions ranged from family-friendly activities like movie nights and kite flying to sports such as lacrosse, football, and soccer.
- Strong Support for a Dog Park:** There is overwhelming enthusiasm for having a dog park at Hatley Field among dog owners, as it fosters community building and provides a valuable recreational outlet.
- Concerns from Little League Families:** Parents involved in Little League strongly oppose sharing ball fields with a dog park, citing safety and maintenance issues.
- Size and Placement of the Dog Park:** Dog owners are divided on the need for such a large space, and many dog park users that I spoke with advocate for a smaller space. I couldn't find support for the current size of the dog park among those who don't use the dog park. Additionally, while some mentioned a need to improve parking lots, none that I spoke with expressed concern about potentially losing the back lot to a dedicated dog park.
- Public Interest in a Registration Process:** Numerous community members have expressed interest in implementing a registration process for dog park usage, which could help manage access, ensure responsible use, and potentially generate minor fees to support maintenance.

With these points in mind, I propose the following fiscally conservative approach, emphasizing private donations and partnerships to minimize public expenditure. Further community input can help improve these recommendations.

- Prioritize Private Funding:** Leverage offers like the one from Western Hills Little League to build new ballfields. This should be discussed in an upcoming Parks meeting with ample opportunity for public input. We should explore private donations as the first option before approaching the RCDC for any funding requests.
- Dedicated Dog Park:** Establish a fenced dog park on the back parking lot, extending into portions of fields 3, 4, and 5 if needed. Ensure sufficient space remains in these areas to accommodate three ballfields.
- Enhance Multipurpose Use:** Remove the fencing around fields 3, 4, and 5 to allow for flexible, community-driven activities when Little League does not have games.
- Field house improvements:** Solicit community input regarding how to best modernize the field house.
- Irrigation and Field Improvements:** Consider upgrading irrigation and sod to maintain quality and usability. I don't think it is fiscally responsible to put dogs back on top of new sod.
- Parking Enhancements:** Improve the front and side parking areas for better accessibility.

This balanced plan aims to address diverse community needs while being mindful of costs. I believe incorporating more voices through public forums will lead to even stronger outcomes.

Best regards,

Jeff Marx