

Memorandum



To: Mike Geisel, City Administrator

From: TW Dieckmann, CPRE
Director of Parks, Recreation & Arts

Date: 10/30/2023

Re: Railroad Park discussion

I was contacted via email September 27, 2023 by PRACAC member, Dr. Alan Polite. He had not been to a PRACAC meeting for about a year, so we had not met. I was happy to accept, and offered to meet he and his wife at Logan Park that afternoon. We had a good introduction, and covered a variety of topics.

Dr. Polite sent me a follow up email September 28, 2023. He requested to develop Railroad Park, and gave me directives on work he wanted me to research. This was not a PRACAC request. He contacted me on his own.

I respectfully declined with the following email text. "Hi, Mr. Polite. Thanks for your time yesterday. As I mentioned, this project is not funded and is not a priority at this time. It is not mentioned as a high priority in the 2019 parks master plan. And we are currently working on other projects that are funded. I can appreciate your personal interest in the project. But it would require support from the parks advisory board, the department, city leadership, and city council. We just did a master plan for Central Park that is unfunded. We are in process of an aquatic center feasibility study. Depending on the results, the next steps are unfunded at this time. The amphitheater is undergoing some upgrades. Same with the valley athletic complex. We did put in a very popular 18-hole disc golf course at Railroad Park a couple years ago. It uses the majority of the property. Sorry, but this project is not a current priority for us."

I informed PRACAC Chair, Barbara Briggs, of this conversation September 28, after I replied to Dr. Polite. We decided to place the topic under new business on the agenda for our October 18, 2023 PRACAC meeting. I was out sick, but sent Superintendent of Recreation, Kari Johnson, to cover the meeting because our aquatic feasibility study presentation was also that night. It is my understanding Dr. Polite requested PRACAC to recommend a feasibility study be done on developing Railroad Park. It was not approved, but Kari recommended he contact you, Mr. Geisel, for more background on the challenges facing that property.

That conversation occurred October 25, 2023, and Dr. Polite requested to be placed on the Parks, Recreation and Arts Committee of Council agenda for our meeting November 1, 2023. Chair Mary Monachella and I spoke, and she approved placing it on the agenda. That brings us to today.

After a discussion among staff October 27, 2023, we discovered a feasibility study for Railroad Park had already taken place in 2019. That study is attached. It includes feasibility notes, a GIS map markup, FIRMette with Floodplain information, and bridge conceptual cost estimate. I also attached an aerial map of the property area, including parcel delineation lines, from our city GIS mapping tools.

In summary, staff do not recommend developing Railroad Parky. We feel the current 18-hole disc golf course is the best use of this Floodplain property, and have had no citizen requests to develop it further. We respect Dr. Polite's request and contributions to the City. But, the attached 2019 feasibility study appears to confirm and support our position. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the topic.