

WORK SESSION—MAY 31st, 2016

Minutes of the Huntsville Town Council Work Session, held at the Ogden Valley Library at 6:30 p.m. May 31st, 2016.

Present: Mayor James Truett
Council Member Doug Allen
Council Member Bill Wangsgard
Clerk/Recorder Gail Ahlstrom

Excused: Council Member Bill White Council Member Mike Engstrom

Citizens: Star Primm Michael Rhodes Ross Mertlich
Kim Wheatley Marlin Jensen John Bond/WC Treasurer
Steve Waldrip

Mayor Truett opened the meeting by explaining that the work session tonight was called to discuss the idea of an Ogden Valley Park District that would include Liberty, Eden, and Huntsville Parks. Mayor Truett remarked that the Town's park means a lot to the Council and to our residents. The Council is very interested in hearing how this concept would impact the Town financially. Mayor Truett turned the time over to Steve Waldrip who presented a power point presentation. (See Attachment #1)

Steve Waldrip stated that there are three separate park districts currently, Liberty, Eden, and Huntsville. Outside of these three entities there are a significant number of houses that doesn't belong to any park district and doesn't pay fees to any park. The numbers in this presentation are from 2014. Eden's Park District assesses a \$20.00 per residence fee and Liberty Park does a mil levy. Huntsville Park was not included in some of this information. Each park, except Huntsville, is a State of Utah Special Service District established by Weber County. Each has an all-volunteer board. Each park reports revenue and expenses to the state, are insured by the state, and audited and overseen by the state. The county doesn't really have involvement other than taxing and appointing board members.

The tax structure and revenue is as follows: In the Eden Park District a residence pays \$20, for a 2nd home, the fee is \$20. In the Liberty Park District a residence pays \$31, on a 2nd home the fee is \$56. East Huntsville residence pays \$0; on a 2nd home they still pay \$0. The thought process is that the Ogden Valley really isn't three separate entities anymore; everyone uses everyone else's parks. There is a shared interest in all of the parks from all of the valley residents. Huntsville Town's tax is not segregated into a park tax. The taxes are brought into the general fund. Marlin Jensen asked if the Mayor knew how much each resident paid to the Park. The Mayor didn't have that information. Mayor Truett stated that Huntsville Park generates about \$15,000 annually from park usage, that figure doesn't include the 4th of July fundraiser. Kim Wheatley asked the Mayor how much it cost the Town to run the park. Mayor Truett didn't have that information available.

CM Allen asked if this group considered adding Memorial Park and North Fork Park into this district. Kim answered yes, during the general planning process this was brought up but this really wouldn't serve the park district. Those two parks are different in their nature and use and would be too ambitious to take on. Kim said if development in the valley goes the way they are projecting, in terms of 2nd homes and recreation, the average valley resident doesn't benefit from the pending boom. But, if we can tie revenues to the 2nd homes there will be money for nice parks. The valley is going to need significant revenue to maintain and run the parks.

Mayor Truett asked how this will work. Steve replied that everyone in the valley will be assessed a park tax and the revenue from that assessment would be divided between the parks. People, Powder Mountain, Snowbasin, and East Huntsville are not included in any park district right now.

Marlin mentioned that there is a 7 acre parcel that has been set aside for a park at the bottom of Trapper's Loop. Janet Muir is heading up an initiative to create a Heritage Park there, with a Norwegian flair, a large piece of land art, an information center, a soccer field, and a walking path surrounding the park. Janet has been working with the University of Utah and the County Commissioners on this project, trying to come up with some federal money to get the park built if she can get the dark sky designation for the park. Marlin feels that this will be a big stretch and will be very difficult to achieve.

CM Allen mentioned that when he was serving on the Planning Commission a few years ago, there was discussion about the Town's 40 acre landfill, at that time they discovered that there is 11 acres of Town property on the south side of the river that no one knew about. This could be a possible site for a future park or campground. CM Allen stated that in his lifetime of living in the Ogden Valley there has been nothing added to the recreation zones. Ross Mertlich remarked that Liberty Park just purchased 2.3 acres west of the existing park, and will be expanding their park.

Kim stated that another idea that has been discussed is that the Unified Park District could also become to operator of The Point. One of the problems with the Forest Service is that The Point is a money maker, the money brought in through American Land & Leisure does not stay in the valley. The Forest Service relies on the Federal Government and they don't have any money. Basically all the profits go elsewhere. There is no money to install additional restrooms or parking areas. Steve stated that a benefit to doing something valley wide is that this has never happened before, and it would give us a unified voice. Steve felt that the revenues brought in from the reservoir ought to stay in the valley. It should be pay here, stay here. Mayor Truett agreed it appears that the County is only interested in money; they see the reservoir as a revenue generator.

Steve reported that Eden and Liberty Park Districts have voted to create one new park district with one board. They are hoping to expand this to encompass the entire valley. Their thoughts on the boundaries would be from Camp Atoka, down the canyon, across the North Ogden Divide to the county line north and south. If Huntsville joined this district then Huntsville would also have people on the board.

They have talked about board members coming from each community. They haven't decided how many board members there will be yet. The park board would have to decide on a uniform tax approach and oversee the combined revenues of the Eden, Liberty districts as well as the additional new revenue. The park board could oversee grants and capital expenditures, and each park could be managed by a local committee responsible for each park that reports to the valley parks board. If there is excess revenue in the park fund, either each park gets 25% or there is an application process to request additional funds for a project, or every four years one park gets all of the money.

Steve explained some of the advantages of maintaining separate park districts. Residents have ownership with their park, fits the historical model of keeping the communities separate, and people don't have to talk or work together. Steve explained some of the advantages to combining into one park district. All valley residents and property owners would pay to support the parks, uniform administration of parks, potential efficiencies with combining maintenance, additional revenue to support all parks equally in the valley, and potential to collect fees from all users who hold events in the valley and want to use our parks. Gail asked how the RAMP grant applications would work. Steve replied that each park would continue to write the own RAMP applications but with additional revenue the requested amounts could be higher.

Mayor Truett said his biggest concern about this is losing control of the park, Huntsville has a lot of homes surrounding the park, if there is a large event it really impacts the residents. Steve remarked that each park district has expressed the same issue. Mayor Truett asked about the fundraisers, will the town be able to retain these funds? Ross replied that he envisions each park retaining the money raised through fundraisers. Ross said creating a Unified Park District will help generate money so each park can do improvements that are so costly. It's critical for each park to maintain their money generators. Each park serves a different clientele. Steve explained that when this Unified Park District is created it will be governed by state statute and Weber County would collect the fees. The bigger issue is that there are events that impact the whole valley. The parks are missing revenue from half of the valley as well as revenue from events and there isn't any mechanism in place right now to remedy that. Residents in the valley have no voice when it comes to events being held here.

Steve stated that if Liberty, Eden, and Huntsville can't come together on the issue of parks, there will be no chance of creating a unified voice for the valley. Mayor Truett said we need to come together and create one voice. This is a very critical first step in uniting the residents of the valley. Steve said he is excited to have Huntsville interested in this idea.

For the combined park district to have a \$120,000 budget from tax revenue, there would need to be a mil levy of .013% (\$363,000 home of resident would pay \$26/year: 2nd home would pay \$47). This would be an additional line item tax on your property tax statement. There is a significant untapped capacity. Every park in the valley would benefit from this tax. The amount of mil levy would be decided through public hearings and the park board. John said initially you would establish a rate that would fit the needed budget. After the budget is approved then it stays put, you would be guaranteed that budget amount each year plus growth.

(See Attachment #2) John Bond summarized that he is hearing three things, cash, control, and community. You can do cash by charging a per residence fee, or tax every piece of property, or charge an impact fee. A park impact fee which will help sustain the level of parks we have. The Unified Park Board will be able to decide which way will be the most beneficial. These same things, cash, control and community can also be dynamics that can't be overcome. John said the county has the tools to see if you want to engage on a larger scale to create an identity for yourselves using the park as a tool to create cohesiveness amongst the valley residents. Helping to create a community is a primary purpose to meet. In the treasurer's office, once they have the agenda and all necessary steps have been followed, they can collect the fee or tax that has been approved.

John went through the 2016 data documents and projected "What if the entire upper valley area participated in a park district-generating \$100,000 per year." There are 1,638 residences in the Eden Park District, 256 residences in Huntsville, 787 in Liberty Park District, 887 residences that are not included in any park district and 16 homes that are in both Liberty and Eden Park Districts. For a \$100,000 home at a proposed tax rate of 0.0000856 the annual park fee would be \$24.94. "What if just Liberty and Eden areas participated in a park district-generating \$100,000 per year?" On a \$100,000 home at a proposed tax rate of 0.000165 the annual fee would be \$40.97 per year. The question with a tax rate is to figure out how much money you need. A \$100,000 house is taxed at \$55,000 of market value, land is taxed at 100% market value, and commercial is at 100% of market value. Kim explained that what will happen with this proposed taxing entity is that second homes will end up paying more and modest residences will pay less. For Eden, where their park district charges a fee per residence their taxes would go down. There was some discussion about the new proposed park at the base of Trapper's Loop and whether it should be included in the proposed budget for four parks now instead of adding it later and having to have a tax increase in a few years. Marlin remarked that it might be a more compelling argument for the East Huntsville residents who will be taxed for the first time, if there was going to be additional park. This group would be short sighted when drawing the boundary if they didn't include everything in the Ogden Valley.

John read the Weber County Commissioners approval in regards to the 7 acre park at the bottom of Trapper's Loop. Weber County reserves the right to determine the timing of park property, the park conveyance, the parks design, and how the parks facilities will be constructed. Weber County agrees to accept the community park property through a deed. John said when the County accepts it from the Holding's he suspects that it would become a community park. If there is an agenda to suck this new park into, with a funding source, it will have great value.

Steve mentioned that the numbers do not include impact fees or usage fees. Steve stated that the Utah Association for Special Districts is designed to help special service districts created under state law. Liberty and Eden Parks is already a member of this. Steve reviewed the combination and annexation outline of procedures that will need to be followed to create a new Ogden Valley Park District. (See Attachment #3) Liberty and Eden Park Boards will adopt a resolution to make a boundary adjustment.

Notice of resolutions will be published and joint public hearings will be held within 60 days of the resolution. Items to be discussed in the hearing are: intent, description, financial and serve impacts on property owners, and contact info. The adjustment will be approved unless protests are filed before the public hearing and property owners with 50% of the land area and 50% of the assessed land value; OR, registered voters equal to 50% of the votes cast in the last general election for the office of governor. Steve feels that Liberty and Eden residence will join without much fuss. Concurrent with these steps the park boards will enter into an agreement to assign all of the assets over to one park board. The park district boards will adopt the resolution; it is filed with the Lieutenant Governor's Office. Half of the Liberty and Board members will resign and appoint two members to the board from the Eden Park, so the new board is a mix from both communities. Once the two park boards are together, the process then moves to an annexation procedure.

Huntsville Town will be a separate process; the annexation will go around the Town but will not include it. Huntsville Town will have its own vote by the Town Council as to whether to join the park district or not. Steve commented that the commissioners have agreed to adopt a resolution to annex the proposed land if there is a community consensus to move forward. The alternative would be that there would need to be a vote. The Commissioners don't want to be dragging the valley residents; they want this new board to be pushing them. Kim doesn't agree that this will be an easy process. This new idea will need to be explained and marketed as much as possible. Doug clarified that Liberty and Eden will need to go through all the steps and finalize things first and then Huntsville Town can join. This will become a community wide thing. Mayor Truett asked when they will be ready to begin the process. Steve replied that they have already started. It will probably be a four month process.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Gail Ahlstrom, Clerk/Recorder

James A. Truett, Mayor